

NATIONAL ISLAM IN THE CONTESTATION OF IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

This article explores the contestation of ideology and commodification of identity within Indonesia's political democracy. The interplay between religion and the state presents significant challenges, influencing political movements aligned with religious convictions. Employing a political sociology approach, this study examines the contention between factions advocating for the integration of religion and the state and those supporting their separation. Additionally, the analysis considers the relationship between identity commodification and ideological contestation, highlighting Pancasila's role as a national consensus. A qualitative methodology provides in-depth insights, incorporating content and descriptive analysis to process information from various documents. Primary materials for this research encompass documents related to Pancasila values, identity commodification, and political contestation. The politicization of identity in Indonesia, characterized by the dichotomy between nationalist Islam and secular nationalism, is depicted as a strategic maneuver aimed at achieving power dominance. There are three political groups that will continue to color Indonesian politics because they have different perceptions of the relationship between religion and the state: Islamist groups who want to unite religion and state, secular groups who want to separate religion and state, and accommodative groups who place religion as a source of ethics and the moral basis of policy.

Tulisan ini menggambarkan kontestasi ideologi serta komodifikasi identitas dalam perjalanan demokrasi politik di Indonesia. Problematika penyatuan dan pemisahan agama dengan negara memengaruhi munculnya gerakan politik atas nama agama. Kontestasi antara kelompok penyatuan agama dan negara berhadapan dengan kelompok pemisahan agama dan negara dikaji dengan pendekatan sosiologi politik. Pendekatan ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan hubungan komodifikasi identitas serta kontestasi ideologi dengan keberadaan Pancasila sebagai konsensus nasional. Tulisan ini menggunakan metode kualitatif yang menjelaskan data secara deskriptif. Pengolahan data berdasarkan sejumlah dokumen dilakukan dengan metode analisis konten menggunakan metode deskriptif analisis. Sumber primer penelitian ini adalah dokumen yang berkaitan dengan tema nilai-nilai Pancasila serta komodifikasi identitas maupun kontestasi politik. Politik identitas di Indonesia, yang ditandai dengan dikotomi antara Islam nasionalis dan nasionalisme sekuler, digambarkan sebagai manuver strategis yang bertujuan untuk mencapai dominasi kekuasaan. Ada tiga kelompok politik yang akan terus mewarnai perpolitikan Indonesia karena memiliki persepsi berbeda atas relasi agama dan negara: kelompok Islamis yang ingin menyatukan agama dan negara, kelompok sekuler yang ingin memisahkan antara agama dan negara, serta kelompok akomodatif yang menempatkan agama sebagai sumber etika dan landasan moral kebijakan.

Keywords: contestation; ideology; national Islam; politics

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Introduction

National Islam refers to a group of Muslim communities who embrace both their religious identity and the foundational Indonesian national ideology, *Pancasila*. This identity has evolved alongside Indonesia's democratization political competition through general elections (*Pemilu*). Thus, the framing of political group identities and the polarization between allies and opponents to mobilize the electorate (the eligible voters) often relies on religious identities. This phenomenon persists due to ongoing debates within the Islamic political paradigm concerning the integration of religion and the state, the separation between the two, and a symbiotic relationship where both are mutually reinforcing (Khamdan 2022, 25).

Political groupings in Indonesia have been categorized differently over time, depending on the criteria used. Kevin Raymond Evans describes the

political landscape in terms of a right-left ideological and a populist-elitist divide (Evans 2003, 15). The “right” represents mass religious-based parties, while the “left” is associated with secular political parties. Religious groups are further divided into Islamic and non-Islamic parties, while secular groups are distinguished between nationalist and Marxist groups. Before Indonesian independence, political contestations were often categorized based on Islamic and nationalist groups (Anshari 1997). However, this dichotomy is now largely outdated, as national and regional political powers have converged, giving rise to a unified Islamic-national identity known as *National Islam*.

The integration of religion and politics in Indonesia has manifested in three primary paradigms. The first is the integrationist paradigm, which advocates for the inseparability of religion and state, as exemplified by the Shiite theocratic model and Abû A'lâ al-Maudûdî's theocratic vision (Baroudi 2023). The second is the symbiotic paradigm, which positions state leadership (*imâmah*) as both a continuation of the prophetic mission and a system for managing worldly affairs. This view, supported by Abû al-Ḥasan al-Mawardî outlining the perspective of Islamic government in *Adâb al-Dunyâ wa al-Dîn* and *Aḥkâm al-Sulṭaniyah*, argues that the role of the leader is to safeguard religious principles while maintaining worldly order (Abbasi 2021). The third is the secular paradigm which asserts that Islam has no direct connection to the political system, as leadership belongs to worldly domain, not a part of a religious system. This separation of religion and state was notably advanced by 'Alî Abd al-Razîq (Pramono & Sahidin 2023).

At the beginning of the 1998 Reformation, Indonesia experienced political liberalization which allowed the establishment of political parties without restrictions. Political orientations, including those based on religious identities, resurfaced as political parties grew, similar to the developments seen in the 1950s. A total of 141 political party entities were legally recognized by the state, of which 48 were successfully verified as participants in the 1999 elections. These political parties were founded on various orientations, including gender, ethnic identity, past political ideologies, and religion.

The political landscape of the parties participating in the 1999 election, marking the beginning of the reform era, illustrates the appeal of religious identity as a strategy for electorate mobilization. At least 20 political parties identified with Islamic ideologies and were mass-oriented towards the Muslim electorate, categorizing them as Islamic parties. In contrast, three political parties in non-Islamic circles adopted Christian and Catholic identities. The ideological contest in the 1999 election can be categorized

into nationalism, religion, and socialism. While *Pancasila* was widely accepted as the overarching ideology of political parties, it was no longer imposed as the sole principle by the state. Each open society could establish its political ideology freely, except for communism which has been banned since 1966.

Elections serve as a vital political instrument to ensure the progress of a nation's democratization, rooted in equality and freedom. Democracy is characterized by inclusiveness, allowing every individual the right to vote directly or be elected (Khamdan 2022, 345). Elections offer opportunities for broad participation in political activities, including decision-making, policy implementation, and the evaluation of political policies. In addition, elections provide a mechanism for accountability, allowing citizens to remove ineffective leaders or endorse policies that reflect their values and aspirations. Studies indicate that inclusiveness in the electoral process, particularly the ability to vote and stand as candidates, is central to democratic integrity. By allowing all eligible individuals to participate in the electoral process, societies promote a sense of inclusion and political equality. Furthermore, the laws governing voter and candidate rights play a crucial role in shaping how inclusive elections are, which in turn affects the quality of democracy (Schmid et al. 2019, 699).

The polarization observed in the 2014, 2019, and 2024 presidential elections, as well as in the 2017–2018 regional elections, highlights the practice of mobilizing support through identity commodification. The 2014 election saw polarization along the lines of nationality versus diversity, which intensified in 2019 as Islam versus nationality. In the 2024 election, polarization is expected to persist, framed around continuity versus change. These political contestations have increasingly fostered intolerance and radicalism. The growing identity-based sentiments in Indonesia are influenced by the phenomenon of the majority perceiving itself as a minority (Brendan 2015).

The consistent electoral defeats of Islamic parties or those with an Islamic voter base in national elections have contributed to the strengthening of Islamic groups in certain regions. The intersection of religion and politics often becomes a contentious issue in the democratic process. The repeated defeats of Muslim-based parties, particularly during the reform era through the 2019 election, have reinforced the perception that, despite being the majority, Muslims feel marginalized from political power (Khamdan 2022, 5). Habib Rizieq Shihab, the leader of the *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI), fueled populist sentiments by portraying Muslims as under threat from minority groups. This movement, known as *Aksi Bela*

Islam (ABI: Defending Islam Movement), has also led to economic initiatives, such as the establishment of 212 Mart, in what is described as “economic jihad.”

The political preferences between Muslims and non-Muslims are largely shaped by their respective positions as majority or minority groups. In areas where Muslims dominate political authority, they are often stigmatized as intolerant when they do not support non-Muslim candidates. Conversely, in regions where non-Muslims hold majority power, their intolerance tends to be more pronounced than when they are in the minority. This intolerance is not necessarily rooted in religious differences but is often driven by the privileges associated with being part of the larger group. As a majority, there is a tendency to feel entitled to certain advantages (Aspinall et al. 2020, 510).

Political theorists can benefit from broader scholarship to establish political contestation as a core feature of ideological politics. This approach challenges the notion of ideology as static blueprints, disconnected from the contingencies of political action (Ewing 2021). Political ideology can also be examined through the lens of political theology, where various sacred experiences are interpreted as forms of ideological discourse. Although sacred elements are not easily categorized within existing ideological frameworks, they are prevalent in many contemporary phenomena (Martin & Newman 2023).

The commodification of identity as a political tool refers to the way in which identity construction is used to accumulate political power or influence social movements. This process involves transforming identity in connection with struggles for hegemony, power, resistance, identity restoration, and the creation of a common enemy (Khamdan 2022). However, the presence of identity politics also carries the risk of causing national disintegration (Harahap & Utomo 2024). The transformation of identity politics in Indonesia, for instance, has had a significant impact on shaping both social and political movements in the struggle for power, including the evolution of *National Islam* in the political sphere. Understanding this political contestation is essential to grasp the dynamics of how identity politics has been utilized over different periods, as well as the backgrounds of various social and nationalist movements in Indonesia.

Previous research on the contestation of Islamic political groups and secular political groups, such as that by Martin van Bruinessen in 2014, focused on the influence of Arab identity in Indonesia’s Arabization process. Bruinessen explored how Arab identity was perceived as more prestigious than local and regional cultures in Indonesia, leading to a perception of Arab

superiority. This perceived superiority contributed to the formation of a minority or inferior mentality among some Indonesian Muslims regarding Arab identity (van Bruinessen 2015). The resulting superiority complex of Arab identity had social implications, as it reinforced the notion that non-Arab forms of Islam practiced by Indonesian Muslims were less legitimate or authentic. The perceived Arab superiority thus played a role in shaping not only religious but also political hierarchies in Indonesia, contributing to broader societal tensions between ethnic groups.

Similarly, Najib Burhani conducted research on ethnic contestation in 2017, focusing on Chinese ethnicity. He found that, for a certain period, the Arab ethnic minority held more dominant political positions of power in Indonesia compared to other minorities, such as the Chinese (Burhani 2017). Mitsuo Nakamura, a cultural anthropologist from Chiba University in Japan, studies the relationship between Islam and democracy in Indonesia during the 2004 presidential election. Nakamura concluded that the contestation in the 2004 election reflected Indonesia's political typology, which continues to use religious identity as a means to win the sympathy of Muslim voters. The convergence of political parties led to a form of politics of accommodation, with parties portraying themselves as both pro-Muslim and nationalist (Nakamura 2005).

This article differs from previous studies on identity politics and political power competition, as it places greater emphasis on the contestation of social movements and their influence on political dynamics in Indonesia. The study explores the competition among various ideological perspectives within the context of power politics in Indonesia from 2014 to 2024. The analysis focuses on political contestation strategies aimed at voter mobilization and the use of political resources to serve the interests of specific ideological factions. Additionally, the research elucidates the psychological dynamics between voters and political contenders, with particular attention to the use of identity stigma as a strategy for mobilization.

Research Method

This article employs a qualitative method, presenting data descriptively to facilitate an understanding of data as an interpretive construct with multiple dimensions. The data is derived from literature related to political contestation, incorporating triangulation of document data and unstructured interviews. The research draws on both sociological and historical approaches. Primary sources for this study include documents on identity commodification and political contestation in Indonesia. Data is

analyzed through content analysis, utilizing a descriptive-analytic method. This involves examining communication patterns, as well as interpreting codes and content both quantitatively and qualitatively. The research process includes several stages: decomposing data, comparing, grouping, sorting, and linking different data points. These steps are then integrated through interpretation, allowing new data to complement or replace existing findings.

The study uses a social critical approach based on Manuel Castells' theory of identity construction, which argues that identity is shaped by power/legitimation, resistance, and project-based initiatives. Each type of identity formation process, in Castell's perspective, results in varying societal outcomes (Castell 2010, 6-9). This research examines the contestation of political identities by mapping their historical connections and evolution over time. The focus is on how identity commodification interacts with power dynamics to influence political movements. By analyzing these relationships, the study aims to reveal the development and shifts in identity politics in Indonesia. This approach highlights the significant role of identity in shaping political contestation.

Results and Discussion

Religious Identity and Theological Solidarity Against Colonization

The historical contestation between Islamic and national ideologies can be traced back to the colonial era. The Catholic expansionist drive and the pursuit of commodities, especially for the spice trade, were championed by the Portuguese and Spanish Catholic Kingdoms. In 1488, a Portuguese expedition led by Bartolomeu Dias successfully reached the southern tip of Africa, known as the Cape of Good Hope (Wijaya 2022). In 1492, Spain funded Christopher Columbus' expedition, which led to the discovery of the American continent. This discovery spurred the Portuguese king to send Vasco da Gama on an expedition in the opposite direction, reaching Calicut, India, in 1498 in search of spice producers (Girija 2023, 256).

Upon arrival in India, the Portuguese faced resistance from Arab and Chinese trading communities, preventing them from establishing a trade mission with the local ruler. Vasco da Gama's entourage was seen as an extension of the Crusades, with the dual mission of conquest and Christian evangelization (Fuentes 2023, 160). Portuguese trade interactions along India's coast helped establish an international spice port in Malacca. In August 1511, Alfonso de Albuquerque successfully conquered the Sultanate of Malacca, which was followed by the Portuguese expansion to spice-

Theological solidarity emerged when the Islamic Sultanate of Demak in Java resisted the Portuguese conquest of Malacca. Founded in 1482, Demak sent a naval fleet in 1513 on its first jihad expedition, led by crown prince Pati Unus, consisting of 100 ships and 5,000 troops. After becoming Sultan of Demak in 1521, Pati Unus launched a second expedition with 375 ships (Nasution & Himawan 2021, 7). These jihad expeditions were partly a response to the Spanish Catholic Kingdom's conquest of the Sultanates of Sulu and Mindanao (Donoso 2023, 35). Pati Unus died in the second battle, earning him the title *Pangeran Sabrang Lor*.

The defeat of the Islamic Sultanate of Demak against the Portuguese in Malacca influenced several non-Muslim kingdoms in Java to forge peace treaties with the Portuguese. In 1522, the Sundanese Hindu Kingdom of Padjajaran, based in Pakuan (inland of Bogor), granted the Portuguese an autonomous region to monopolize the pepper trade from Banten. Francisco de Sá anchored at Sunda Kelapa Harbor on July 29, 1527, and raised the Portuguese royal flag in line with the agreement between Henrique Leme and the king of Padjajaran (Faizin 2023, 170). The third jihad expedition was launched by Sultan Trenggono, who sent forces led by Fatahillah to seize Sunda Kelapa from the Portuguese and their Padjajaran allies in 1527. The Demak troops were joined by the Cirebon community under Sunan Gunung Djati, along with Malay and Javanese Muslim groups residing in the Sunda Padjajaran region. The port of Sunda Kelapa was captured by Muslim forces on June 22, 1527, which coincided with 22 Ramadhan 933 H, and was named Jayakarta, meaning "complete victory," referencing the Fathul Makkah event in the Q.S. al-Fath [48]:01 (Hasyim 2021, 10).

After Sultan Trenggono's death, leadership of Demak passed to his eldest daughter, Ratu Kalinyamat. Under her rule, the Demak Sultanate established a maritime defense alliance with the Sultanates of Ternate, Tidore, Johor, Aceh, and Malacca. This coalition, led by Queen Kalinyamat, launched a joint attack against the Portuguese in 1550. Based in Jepara, Queen Kalinyamat sent 40 ships and 5,000 troops to join the fourth jihad expedition with the Sultanates of Johor and Aceh to besiege Malacca. The effort to expel the Portuguese continued in 1573 during the fifth jihad expedition (Nurhayati 2023, 25).

The fifth jihad expedition marked Demak's last maritime battle against the Portuguese, prompted by an invitation from the Sultan of Aceh, Ali Riayat Syah. The Demak maritime fleet, consisting of 300 ships and 15,000 troops, was delayed and arrived in Malacca in October 1574. Aceh's naval forces had already launched an earlier attack, resulting in defeat. Nevertheless, the Demak Sultanate fleet besieged the Portuguese for three

months. The Jepara naval fleet's siege indirectly supported the Islamic Sultanate of Ternate, led by Sultan Baabullah, in driving the Portuguese out of Maluku in 1575, as the Portuguese forces were delayed in sending reinforcements.

In 1602, the Dutch trading company established the *Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie* (VOC) also known as the East India Trading Company. Within a short period, the VOC was able to surpass the dominance of the British East India Company (EIC), which had previously controlled much of the trade in Asia. Trade rivalries prompted Jan Pieterszoon Coen to launch maritime military action to seize key trading ports in Indonesia (Wirjomartono 2020). On May 30, 1619, the VOC captured Jayakarta from the alliance of the Sultanate of Banten and England, subsequently renaming it Batavia on March 4, 1621, after the ancestors of the Dutch Batavian people.

The VOC's occupation of Jayakarta, representing the Dutch Protestant Kingdom, prompted the Islamic Mataram Sultanate to expand westward. Sultan Agung as the king of Mataram, launched his first military campaign against Batavia in 1628. However, despite a month-long siege, the Mataram forces were defeated by the VOC, which reportedly used a strategy of contaminating the battlefield with fecal matter. Mataram's resistance continued in 1629 under the leadership of Tumenggung Bahurekso and Ki Mandurareja, who attempted to dam the Ciliwung River. Despite successfully infiltrating Batavia and killing Jan Pieterszoon Coen, the Dutch forces ultimately prevailed over the Mataram resistance (Darmawijaya 2010).

After Sultan Agung's death, Dutch influence in Mataram intensified, particularly in the appointment of subsequent rulers. This interference led to frequent disputes over the royal succession, weakening the Mataram Sultanate. Over time, the kingdom fragmented into smaller territories under Dutch control, culminating in the division into the Kasunanan of Surakarta and the Sultanate of Yogyakarta in 1755, followed by the creation of Mangkunegaran in 1757 and Pakualaman in 1813 (Lombard 1996, 46).

Resistance against Dutch colonialism on a wide scale was displayed in the Diponegoro War of 1825-1830. The war lasted from the tip of East Java to Cirebon, and in political psychology it united the Islamic boarding school community, Sufi or tarekat clerics, and a number of nobles (Meideri & Prakoso 2021). Notable figures such as Pakubuwono VI and Sheikh Kramat Jati, a descendant of Habib Hasan bin Thoha bin Yahya, were connected to the royal family through marriage to descendants of Hamengkubuwono II. Prince Diponegoro, the eldest son of King Hamengkubuwono III, was also a student of Kyai Hasan Besari at the Gebang Tinatar Islamic Boarding

School in Tegalsari, Ponorogo. During this period, the Tegalsari Islamic Boarding School accommodated approximately 3,000 students, making it a significant center for Islamic education, particularly for the royal families of Yogyakarta and Surakarta (Margana 2004).

The resistance led by Diponegoro had a profound financial impact on the Dutch Protestant Kingdom. The war cost the Dutch around 20 million guilders, equivalent to approximately 3 billion US dollars in modern terms. This conflict also triggered Islamophobia among the Dutch colonialists, as the Diponegoro army shifted its strategy to build solidarity through Islamic boarding schools and pilgrimages to Mecca. The Hajj pilgrimage became a key medium for the formation of international *ulama* cadres, fostering a collective identity as the Al-Jawi community and facilitating the transmission of religious knowledge (Fata 2022). This *ulama* cadre and the growing sense of patriotism were nurtured in *Haramain*, fostering the spread of national consciousness and a spirit of nationalism, which manifested as *jihād fī sabīlillāh* against colonial rule.

In response to the growing Islamophobia, the Dutch instituted several educational reforms designed to align with their colonial goals. By 1901, institutions such as MULO (*Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs*) at the junior high level, HBS (*Hogere Burgerschool*) at the high school level, RHS (*Rechtschooge School*) for law, STOVIA (*School tot Opleiding van Indische Artsen*) for medicine, and THS (*Technische Hoogeschool*) for engineering were established. These Dutch institutions, along with indigenous Islamic boarding schools, fostered a contestation between national and Islamic identities (Khamdan 2022). Over time, Islamophobia in the region gradually diminished, as seen in policies that began to provide greater opportunities for Muslims to exercise their rights as citizens. This decline in Islamophobia is attributed to demographic shifts, social and cultural factors, and political events that have influenced societal acceptance of Islam (Taraki et al. 2024).

National Islam and the Struggle for State Power

Society's political perspective is often shaped by its understanding of history and world events, dividing political ideologies into two opposing camps that are simultaneously moral and ideological, without aligning with neutral perspectives like political realism (Gerson 2022). During the Dutch colonial period, Islamophobia further strengthened the resistance movement among the *ulama*, aiming to diminish the influence of the Dutch Protestant Kingdom in Indonesia. While the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC) was dissolved in 1799, its operations in Indonesia were directly continued by the Dutch through a governor-general. The Dutch

introduced ethical policies that included offering educational scholarships to certain members of the nobility, both in Indonesia and the Netherlands. These policies led to the emergence of a new, educated group with a strong national identity.

Initially, the *ulama* focused on cultural resistance through social movements and Islamic boarding school-based education. However, this evolved into a political aim centered on achieving an independent Indonesia. On September 21, 1937, *ulama* from various groups and organizations founded the *Majlis Islam A'la Indonesia* (MIAI), a federation that united 13 prominent Islamic organizations. They were significant groups from different regions of Indonesia, representing various religious, educational, and social interests. However, detailed historical records about all 13 specific organizations are not always consistently listed in sources. Some of organizations included are *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), *Muhammadiyah*, *Al-Irsyad*, *Persatuan Islam* (Persis) (Rachmanto et al. 2023). The formation of MIAI was instrumental in countering Dutch efforts to create divisions among the *ulama* and Islamic political parties in the Dutch East Indies.

MIAI helped construct a common enemy in colonialism, which was perceived as preventing native Muslims from freely practicing and promoting Islamic teachings. As World War unfolded, involving numerous countries and their colonies, the political stance of the *ulama* and Islamic leaders in MIAI shifted. Their focus was no longer tied to the Islamic Caliphate issue, previously influenced by Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Their commitment to an independent and sovereign Indonesia helped resolve internal debates on religious practices. The unity between *ulama* and *santri*, most of whom were connected through the Diponegoro War network, remained strong until the outbreak of the World War.

Japan's victory in the Asia Pacific War boosted the confidence of several Asian nations to pursue independence. In Indonesia, Japan swiftly defeated the Western imperialists within nine days, securing control over the region. Following this, Japan implemented political policies that banned political parties and organizations, significantly changing the political landscape. Despite the ban, a few major parties remained active at the onset of the Japanese occupation, including the Indonesian Islamic Syarikat Party (PSII), the Indonesian Islamic Party (PII), and the Great Indonesia Party (Parindra). Before the Japanese occupation, Parindra had frequent clashes with *Majlis Islam A'la Indonesia* (MIAI), a federation of Islamic organizations, due to Parindra's propaganda supporting loyalty to the Dutch during World War II. In contrast, MIAI, coordinated by *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) and

Muhammadiyah, issued a fatwa on December 13, 1941, stating that joining Dutch military militias was not considered jihad or martyrdom (Khamdan 2022).

MIAI's stance was rooted in its interpretation of nationalism, which combined love for religion, homeland, and anti-colonialism. The organization emphasized nationalism as the identification of the sovereign people (Heiskanen 2021). In another view, nationalism was defined as an exclusionary and uncritical attachment to the nation (Bitschnau & Mußotter 2024). This contrast highlights the varied interpretations of nationalism that emerged during this era of political upheaval in Indonesia.

The political decisions and religious views of the MIAI clerics and Islamic leaders were often in conflict with secular nationalist groups. These nationalist factions, which included the Association of Indonesian Political Parties (GAPI), supported the Dutch during the Asia Pacific War against Japan. GAPI was established on May 21, 1939 as a coalition of parties comprising Parindra, Gerindo, and PSII. Parindra was originally founded by Dr. Sutomo and, after his death in 1938, was led by Mohammad Husni Thamrin, a Betawi figure. Gerindo (Indonesian People's Movement), founded in 1937 by Sartono, Sanusi Pane, Muhammad Yamin, and Amir Syarifuddin, promoted a socialist and anti-fascist agenda. PSII evolved from Sarekat Islam, which split in 1929 due to communist influence, leading to two factions: White SI, which adhered to political Islam, and Red SI, which followed a socialist-communist ideology.

Japan facilitated the formation of a federation of Islamic organizations in November 1943, known as *Majlis Shura Muslimin Indonesia (Masyumi)*. The federation was initially led by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari. Masyumi's creation marked a political triumph for Islamic groups, allowing them to influence Japanese policy. This federation also served as a platform for peaceful cooperation between *Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)* and *Muhammadiyah*, potentially weakening the bargaining power of nationalist groups.

Japan's engagement with both Islamic and nationalist groups, through the formation of Masyumi and the Pioneer Front, respectively, led to extended political contestation. The rapid expansion of the Pioneer Front in urban areas disrupted the interests of Islamic groups. This prompted several Islamic leaders within MIAI to call for the formation of a special army for Islamic students and clerics to resist Japan. As a result, on October 14, 1944, Hezbollah was established, alongside Defenders of the Homeland (PETA). Hezbollah initially comprised 500 Islamic students and clerics from Java and Madura, who underwent training in Cibarusa, Bogor (Khamdan 2022, 127).

Japan's promise of independence, without a definitive timeline, could not mask the oppression endured by the Indonesian people. As a result, several PETA (Defenders of the Homeland) units began planning resistance movements to demand the fulfillment of the independence promise. There were at least three major PETA-led uprisings against Japan: Daidan Blitar, led by Supriyadi on February 15, 1945; Daidan Cilacap, led by Kusaeri on April 21, 1945; and Daidan Pengalengan Bandung, led by Amar Sutisna on May 4, 1945 (Shofwan & Farantika 2022, 8). Despite the lack of coordination between these units, their targets were similar: the *shidokan* or military officers' houses, the *kempeitai* or Japanese military police, and the residences of Japanese army leaders.

Japan recognized the ongoing contestation between secular and religious political groups within Indonesia as they both sought the promise of independence. In response, Japan established the Investigation Agency for Preparatory Work for Independence (BPUPK) on May 18, 1945. This political maneuver was reflected in the appointment of Radjiman Wedyodiningrat as chairman of BPUPK, which consisted of 15 representatives from Islamic groups and 47 from secular political factions. Secular leaders dominated the BPUPK sessions, with many rejecting the concept of an Islamic state. This led to conflict between proponents of a secular state and those advocating for an Islamic state. The ideological contestation or the basis for state formation within BPUPK mirrored the broader ideological struggles that had persisted among Indonesian movement organizations since the Dutch colonial period.

Despite the differing political ideologies and social constructs of the BPUPK members, a consensus was ultimately reached to establish the foundation of the Indonesian state based on *Pancasila*. The term *Pancasila* is often attributed to Sukarno, particularly in the context of his speech on June 1, 1945, during the BPUPK session. At the conclusion of BPUPK's first session, an agreement was reached to form a small team tasked with consolidating proposals and defining the foundational principles for the future of a new nation called Indonesia. The team consisted of eight members, including KH. Abdul Wahid Hasyim and Ki Bagus Hadikusumo as representatives of religious groups, and Sukarno, Moh Hatta, Otto Iskandardinata, Sutarjo Tjokroadisuryo, and AA. Maramis as representatives of nationalist groups (Prasetya et al. 2023, 1822).

After Indonesia's independence on August 17, 1945, several prominent figures from Islamic organizations were not included in the initial structure of the newly formed regional government. The first set of eight governors appointed by the President highlighted the dominance of secular

nationalist or religiously neutral groups. On August 22, 1945, through the third session of the PPKI (Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence), the establishment of the Indonesian National Party (PNI) reflected a desire from the country's leadership, under Sukarno, to make it the sole political party. This decision, backed by the PPKI, can be attributed to the majority of its members being secular nationalists.

The marginalization of Islamic organization representatives in the early stages of political power became more evident in the composition of the presidential cabinet. Despite appointing 17 cabinet members, the President and Vice President only selected two representatives from Islamic organizations: KH. Wahid Hasyim from *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) was appointed as a Minister of State without a specific portfolio, and Abikoeso Tjokrosujoso from PSII (Indonesian Islamic Union Party) was appointed as Minister of Transportation and Public Works. This cabinet, which functioned from August 31 to November 14, 1945, added to the growing discontent, as the political aspirations of Muslims appeared to be marginalized (Khamdan 2022, 140).

National Islam and Pseudo Democracy

Indonesia's independence, achieved through both political and military struggle, was challenged by ethnic and religious issues in its early years. The demand for equal recognition led to threats of separation or non-recognition of Indonesia's independence from several minority communities in Eastern Indonesia. The inclusion of the seven words "*Ketuhanan, dengan kewajiban menjalankan syariat Islam bagi pemeluk-pemeluknya*" (Belief in God, with the obligation to carry out Islamic law for its adherents) in the Jakarta Charter, agreed upon by the Committee of Nine on June 22, 1945, had the potential to fuel separatist sentiments among Protestant and other religious minorities in Eastern Indonesia.

The removal of these seven words from the preamble and body of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia caused displeasure among some Islamic groups. This discontent was influenced by the legacy of identity politics rooted in the oppression experienced by Muslims during colonial rule. Given the looming threat posed by Japan and Allied forces, several Islamic figures who had helped formulate the nation's founding principles ultimately conceded, agreeing to the more inclusive phrase, "Belief in One Almighty God." The promise of a general election to elect parliamentary representatives within six months of independence provided hope to Muslim leaders that they could gain enough support to draft a new constitution more aligned with Islamic political ideals.

The diminishing influence of Islamic political figures became evident in the appointments of the first eight governors in Indonesia and in the composition of the presidential cabinet. Of the 17 ministers appointed by the President and Vice President, only two represented Islamic organizations: KH. Wahid Hasyim of *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), who was appointed Minister of State without a specific portfolio, and Abikoesno Tjokrosujoso of the Indonesian Islamic Union Party (PSII), who was appointed Minister of Transportation and Public Works (Khamdan 2022, 140). The short tenure of this cabinet, which lasted from August 31 to November 14, 1945, further deepened the disappointment felt by Islamic leaders, who believed that their political aspirations were being marginalized.

During the liberal democratic phase between 1951 and 1965, when power was concentrated in the office of the prime minister, political contestation intensified between Islamic and nationalist factions. The rivalry among the PNI (Indonesian National Party), Masyumi, and the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party), along with the formation of the NU Party, highlighted that the process of distributing political positions was largely a reflection of cabinet formation efforts. Identity politics, deeply embedded in every individual, is influenced by a set of values that shape collective identities. These values ultimately manifest in political articulation through symbols.

Efforts to maintain power during this period were often characterized by the mobilization of military forces. In response to the demands of the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI) in West Sumatra for greater regional autonomy on February 15, 1958, President Sukarno deployed military forces and arrested prominent Masyumi Party politicians. The PRRI had sought a central government cabinet led by Mohammad Hatta, with the Sultan of Yogyakarta as his deputy. However, their demands were rejected by the president (Zidni & Ayuni 2022). Instead, Sukarno ordered military action against the PRRI-Permesta movement, led by Colonel Ahmad Yani from Purworejo, Central Java. This military intervention left a lasting political rift between segments of the West Sumatran population and the Javanese leadership.

The commodification of identity politics emerged during the early years of Indonesian independence, driven by secular nationalist and Islamic groups. This commodification refers to the transformation of identity into political capital used in the struggle for hegemony, identity resistance, and the creation of a common enemy (Khamdan 2022, 182). The hegemony of secular nationalist groups, particularly within the PPKI (Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence) since the Japanese era, succeeded

in altering the Jakarta Charter of June 22, 1945, which was originally intended to serve as the preamble to the 1945 Constitution. The removal of seven words, representing the ideals of the Islamic group, had profound effects, altering the constitution and reducing the influence of Islam in Indonesia's foundational legal framework.

During the early leadership of Sukarno and Hatta as President and Vice President, Islamic movement leaders were notably absent from cabinet positions and the Central Indonesian National Committee (KNIP). Additionally, the appointment of eight governors, all from secular nationalist circles, gave the impression that the government did not fully recognize the historical significance of Islamic sultanates or the demographic realities of Indonesia's Muslim-majority population.

The stigmatization of political opponents or groups outside the government as radical or treasonous, a practice that began during Sukarno's era, underscores the pseudo-democratic nature of Indonesian politics (Fata 2020). Oligarchic political culture, characterized by the consolidation of wealth and political power, has the potential to foster authoritarian tendencies. This phenomenon resurfaced during Joko Widodo's second term, where verbal attacks against opponents using the label of "radicalism" became more frequent. Notably, during the announcement of the new cabinet, the president reaffirmed a commitment to combat radicalism. He also introduced the term "religious manipulator," seemingly directed at groups outside the government.

Despite political contestation between secular nationalist and Islamic groups, both factions shared common ground in their opposition to colonialism. The looming threat from the Allies and the Dutch following Indonesia's proclamation of independence spurred several political figures to engage in international diplomacy, leveraging identity politics to gain external support. Indonesian socialist figures in the diaspora successfully influenced the delegation from the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic, leading to a proposal for a special discussion on Indonesian independence at sessions of the UN Security Council (UNSC) and UN General Assembly (Efimova 2001). Thanks to the efforts of the Ukrainian envoy, Indonesia garnered attention in international circles, aiding in the quest for support and recognition of sovereignty from various countries.

On the basis of shared religious identity, Indonesian Islamic leaders successfully convinced Arab League countries to recognize Indonesia's sovereignty. The diplomatic mission to the Middle East gained *de facto* and *de jure* support from eight countries: Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen (Yamaguchi 2024). The

accomplished resolution of the 1948 PKI rebellion in Madiun by the Indonesian people sent a message to the world that Indonesia was a stronghold against communism, garnering sympathy from Western countries. The shared religious identity fostered theological solidarity among several countries, leading to de facto and de jure recognition of Indonesia's sovereignty.

The intersection of religion and state, which became polarized between Islam and nationality, is embodied in the consensus that must be upheld known as *Pancasila*. This consensus, essential for national and state unity, requires community unity (*al-ummah*), awareness of protecting people's rights fairly (*al-adalah*), deliberative consensus (*al-shūrā*), and guarantees of equal treatment (*al-musāwah*). These principles were practiced by Prophet Muhammad in his efforts to create a civil society, emphasizing the unity of community (*al-ummah al-wāhidah*) as outlined in the Medina Charter (Khamdan et al. 2024, 193).

Since its early development, Indonesia Muslims have recognized their agreement as one nation without highlighting a particular religious identity. The Committee of Nine, which drafted the Jakarta Charter which later became the preamble to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, acknowledged that brotherhood extends beyond religion bonds or *ukhuwah Islāmīyah*. It also includes national unity or *ukhuwah waṭaniyah*, and the broader bond of humanity or *ukhuwah basharīyah* (Khamdan et al. 2024, 194). This recognition of the noble value of these fraternal ties was at least agreed upon by the founding fathers of the nation through a consensus called *Pancasila*.

Pancasila serves as the foundational basis for the norms and laws in Indonesia. All legal enactments and applications in Indonesia must adhere to the core values of *Pancasila*. These values include belief in Almighty God, promoting just and civilized humanity, ensuring the unity of Indonesia, encouraging deliberation in decision-making, and fostering socio-economic equality. Any law that contradicts these principles is considered invalid or inappropriate within the Indonesian legal framework. Islamic law, for instance, is considered a source of legal formation when it intersects with other religions or local cultural beliefs.

Political preferences between Muslims and non-Muslims are often influenced by their positions as either a majority or minority. In regions where Muslims hold the majority and control local authority, they may face stigma as intolerant for not supporting non-Muslim political candidates. Conversely, when non-Muslims hold majority control in certain areas, their intolerance tends to be more pronounced compared to when they are in the

minority. Such patterns of intolerance are typically shaped not by religion itself, but by the dynamics of belonging to a larger group. This majority status can foster a sense of entitlement or "majority privilege."

One significant Islamic political movement in Indonesia is *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI). This group opposes the current political system, arguing that it does not adhere to Islamic principles and results in societal injustice, inequality, and oppression. In response, HTI advocates for an alternative system based on Islamic values. Their vision includes establishing an Islamic state or caliphate, which they believe would address these societal issues (Aswar & Faiz 2024). This movement's stance has sparked considerable debate and controversy within Indonesia's political landscape.

The most fundamental construction of identity, according to Manuel Castells' view, involves the maintenance of dominance and hegemony. This form of identity fosters the creation of a majority group that seeks privileges over minorities. Political contestation on the basis of majority and minority influences often triggers resistance actions aimed at reducing the dominance of certain forces. These identity constructions are heavily influenced by authorities figures in both private and public sphere. Castells outlines three types and origins of identity building (Castells 2010, 7-8; Cao & Li 2018, 3): (a) *legitimizing identity* arises from dominant institutions which tend to reinforce their power/domination; (b) *resistance identity* emerges as marginalized groups' survival mechanism to challenge the dominant institutions. Usually, this resistance comes from those who are devalued or oppressed by the dominant parties; and (c) *project identity* happens when the groups decide to establish new identity, redefining their places and/or functions in society, instead of merely resisting. Castells explains, this third type of identity formation is done to create and transform the new social structure. The last type involves a project strategy implemented through political accommodation measures. Various accommodation models exist in the process of horizontal mobilization, including structural accommodation, legislative accommodation, and political infrastructure accommodation (Khamdan 2022, 31).

Structural accommodation was implemented by recruiting religious figures into party structures and campaign teams, including the formation of party-affiliated organizations. *Legislative accommodation* involved supporting and passing regulations that no longer differentiated between the aspirations of religious and secular groups. The accommodation of *political infrastructure*, through party collaboration patterns and political superstructures, has led to various forms of institutionalization, contributing to political integration. However, the presence of volunteers, who provide autonomous support

based on volunteerism, has created divisions rooted in various identities. The strategy of utilizing identity through both offline and online channels has influenced the discourse in mass media and social media. This dynamic continues through the process of identity stigmatization, which helps to establish either common enemies or common allies. As a result, repeated contestations in presidential elections have sparked social movements driven by support for political candidates.

Conclusion

Identity serves as a fundamental factor that differentiates individuals or groups. The construction of differences within communities, coupled with their specific interests, shapes political identity, while the mechanisms used to organize identity as a tool for mobilization define identity politics. The use of identity in politics revolves around differentiation, determining which groups are included or excluded in the pursuit of identity-related goals. The contestation of various identity interests—such as religion, ethnicity, and gender—often results in the formation of minority and majority groups, both striving for equal rights and recognition. In Indonesia, ideological and political contestation has frequently led to a power struggle between nationalist Islam and secular nationalists. Islamic political parties can be categorized into three forms: those integrating Islamic ideology with *Pancasila*, those fundamentally based on *Pancasila*, and others that incorporate religious values. While religion continues to be a central strategy for voter mobilization, mainstream politics has become increasingly diffuse.

The concept of *wasatīyah* Islam, emphasizing moderation and tolerance, has helped to dissolve barriers between secularism and Islam, reducing potential political conflicts. The Muslim majority in Indonesia's sociological context underscores the need for political avenues that resonate with Islamic parties. The convergence of nationalist and Islamist factions has significantly influenced the formation of *Pancasila*. The nation's diversity is respected through continuous collaboration among all segments of Indonesian society, fostering a social resilience that reflects Indonesia's national identity. The integration of religion, tradition, local wisdom, legal principles, and national objectives has collectively shaped the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). As a consensus-driven nation, Indonesia harmonizes its diverse identities into a cohesive national identity, emphasizing moderation (*tawasut*) rather than eliminating opposition. As a country founded on principles of peace (*dârussalâm*), Indonesia exemplifies a religious ethos that has greatly contributed to the establishment of *Pancasila* and the Republic of Indonesia.

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