

ISLAM AS A POLITICAL FORCE READING THE DIRECTION OF ISLAMIC POLITICAL MOVEMENT IN INDONESIA TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

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***Abstract:** This study explores the role of Islam in Indonesia's politics and democracy, focusing on three key aspects: Islam's potential to influence social, economic, and political dynamics; the role of Islamic community organizations like Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama in supporting inclusive democracy; and the interpretation and orientation of these organizations post-reform towards democracy. Islamic community organizations serve as pillars of civil society and strategic forces in shaping a more just political order. The research uses a literature review method to identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant literature to provide insights into the relationship between Islam and democracy in Indonesia. The findings show that Islamic politics address the failures of established ideologies like nationalism, socialism, and capitalism by leveraging values of social justice, brotherhood, and welfare. Post-reform, Islamic organizations like Muhammadiyah and NU have shown substantial contributions to strengthening inclusive democracy through tolerance, diversity, and political stability. However, the study also highlights the challenges posed by extremist groups that reject democracy and use violence as a means of struggle.*

***Keywords:** Islam, Politics, Democracy*

INTRODUCTION

Islam as a political force has become an interesting phenomenon in the context of Indonesian politics, especially since the reform era. Reform has provided wider space for Islamic-based political parties and Islamic mass organizations to contribute to political dynamics. This phenomenon shows that Islam not only functions as a spiritual and social aspect, but also has a significant influence in shaping the nation's political direction. As a religion with the majority of adherents in Indonesia, Islam plays a complex role, from shaping societal values to becoming an instrument of political power that influences public policy. Within the framework of democracy, the fundamental question that arises is how Islam functions as a political force and how it affects the development of democracy in Indonesia.¹

Politics at the time of the Prophet Muhammad is a good example of a wise, just and democratic leader, even though it happened in a historical context that is much different from

¹ Nasuhaidi, N., & Subekti, D. (2024). POLA KEKUATAN PARTAI POLITIK ISLAM INDONESIA DALAM PEMILU DI ERA REFORMASI. *JISIP UNJA (Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Ilmu Politik Universitas Jambi)*, 82-94.

modern times. One of the most significant political policies of the Prophet Muhammad was the creation of a memorandum of agreement or peace treaty, known as the “Dustur Madinah” or “Constitution of Madinah”. This document was created after he migrated to Medina and became the head of state there. This constitution bound all the citizens of Medina, including the Muslim community, Jews, and others, in unity and common governance. It affirms the principles of justice, equality and religious freedom, and establishes a constitutional and public law that applies across the board to all residents of Medina.²

Indonesian political history records that Islam has been an integral part since the beginning of independence. Islamic-based political parties, such as Masyumi and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in the early days of independence, demonstrated Islam's contribution to the political process. However, the role of Islamic politics has not always been consistent; it has often experienced ups and downs due to changes in the national political constellation. During the New Order era, for example, Islamic political power tended to be limited, but during the reformation period, Islam again became a significant force. This revival gave birth to various dynamics, including how Islam adapts to the principles of modern democracy. Research into the role of Islam in Indonesian politics is important to understand the complex relationship between religion, politics and democracy.³

Islamic mass organizations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, also have significant contributions to Indonesian politics. These two organizations not only perform religious functions, but also act as political actors that influence policy direction. They have extensive networks that are able to mobilize the public to support certain policies or oppose policies that are considered contrary to Islamic values. In the context of democracy, these mass organizations often serve as a link between the community and the government, thus having the potential to direct political dynamics.⁴ Therefore, this research will explore how Islamic mass organizations interact with the democratic system and influence political policies in Indonesia.

Post-reform, the interpretation of Islamic politics has undergone a significant transformation. Reformasi opened up greater opportunities for Islamic political parties and Islamic organizations to be active in the democratic system. However, this opportunity also

² Akbar, F. M. A., Amelia, E., & Rodoni, A. (2023). ANALISIS KEBIJAKAN EKONOMI SYARIAH ZAMAN RASULULLAH SAW BERDASARKAN PERSPEKTIF HUKUM EKONOMI ISLAM. *Ar Rasyiid Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1(1), 1-12.

³ Utomo, D. B., & Hasan, A. (2023). Politik Hukum Islam Di Indonesia Era Pra Kemerdekaan Dan Era Orde Lama. *Jentera Hukum Borneo*, 6(2), 13-24.

⁴ Fachruddin, F. (2006). *Agama dan pendidikan demokrasi: pengalaman Muhammadiyah dan Nahdlatul Ulama*. Pustaka Alvabet.

presents new challenges, such as how Islamic organizations balance Islamic values with inclusive democratic principles. For example, some CSOs face a dilemma between maintaining traditional Islamic values and accommodating modern democratic demands.⁵ This research will explore how Islamic organizations navigate their political strategies within a democratic framework and how they respond to evolving political dynamics.

Moreover, Islam in Indonesia has unique characteristics that reflect the diversity and plurality of Muslim societies. Unlike in some other countries that tend to be monolithic, Islam in Indonesia reflects diverse interpretations and practices. This diversity not only affects the dynamics of Islamic politics, but also provides its own color in the democratization process in Indonesia.⁶ This study aims to analyze how different interpretations and practices of Islam affect the position of Islam as a political force. Thus, this study will provide a comprehensive picture of how Islam, in all its diversity, plays a role in Indonesian politics.

In a global context, the influence of globalization has also shaped the dynamics of Islamic politics in Indonesia. Globalization provides space for the exchange of political ideas and practices between Muslim countries. However, globalization also presents challenges, such as the clash of values between traditional Islam and global modernity. Some local Islamic values often have to deal with global standards that may not be fully in line.⁷ This research will discuss how external factors such as globalization affect the role of Islam in Indonesian politics, especially in trying to balance between local and global values.

Democracy in Indonesia also presents challenges for Islamic political forces. One of the main challenges is how Islam can reconcile its values with democratic principles. Democracy demands inclusiveness, openness and respect for individual rights, which sometimes conflict with interpretations of Islam that emphasize collective values. This challenge raises the need to understand how Islamic political parties and Islamic organizations formulate their political strategies. This study will provide insights into how they address these challenges in the context of democracy.

This research not only seeks to understand Islam as a political force theoretically, but also explores how the role of Islam is affected by internal and external dynamics. By

⁵ Auliasari, V. R., & Achmad, M. (2025). Islam dan Demokrasi: Kajian Pemikiran Teologis dan Praktik Politik di Indonesia. *IHSANIKA: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 3(1), 352-366.

⁶ Tanuri, T. (2024). Epistemologi hukum islam dalam hukum positif di indonesia. *Al-Mashlahah Jurnal Hukum Islam Dan Pranata Sosial*, 12(01).

⁷ Ridho, M. (2018). Ujaran Kebencian dalam Dakwah: Analisis tentang Pengejawantahan Ide Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Mungkar di Kalangan Para Da'i di Kalimantan Timur. *Lentera: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah dan Komunikasi*.

highlighting the role of Islamic political parties, Islamic mass organizations, as well as the influence of globalization and democratization, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the literature on the relationship between Islam, politics and democracy in Indonesia. This analysis is not only important for the academic world, but also relevant for policy makers and the general public to understand the complex dynamics of Islamic politics in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One crucial aspect of understanding the role of Islam as a political force within Indonesia's democracy is the dynamic between *ijtihad* and *taqlid* in contemporary Islamic thought. *Ijtihad*, as an intellectual process of interpreting Islamic law, often serves as a legitimizing tool for various Islamic political groups in constructing their arguments regarding democracy. Some Islamic movements tend towards *ijtihad* to align Sharia principles with modern democratic values, while others adhere to *taqlid*, relying on the opinions of past scholars who consider democracy incompatible with Islam. In Indonesia's political reality, Islam's involvement in democracy cannot be separated from how Muslim thinkers interpret the concepts of *ijtihad* and *taqlid*. Modern, pro-democracy Islamic movements tend to use *ijtihad* to adapt Islamic teachings to an inclusive political system, whereas conservative groups prefer a *taqlid* approach by referring to more rigid classical Islamic law. Therefore, mapping the direction of Islamic political movements in Indonesian democracy can be seen through their use of *ijtihad* and *taqlid* as ideological and strategic foundations in determining their political stances.⁸

Islamic history shows that the relationship between Islam and power has always experienced complex dynamics, as occurred during the Abbasid Dynasty. In this period, Islam functioned not only as a spiritual teaching but also as a tool of political legitimacy, where state ideology was influenced by official theology such as *Mu'tazilah* during the time of *Al-Ma'mun*. In the Indonesian context, a similar phenomenon can be found in Islamic political movements that often adapt to modern democratic systems. *Tan Malaka*, for example, viewed Islam not as an entity that contradicts other ideologies like Marxism, but as a moral and social force that can fight for justice. This thinking is in line with Islamic history, which shows that Islamic politics always has room for negotiation with various systems of government, whether in the form of

⁸ Ningsih, W. (2023). Implementasi *Ijtihad* Dan *Taqlid* Di Era Kontemporer. *Jurnal Asy-Syukriyyah*, 24(2), 152-171.

caliphates, monarchies, or democracies. Thus, the study of Islamic politics in Indonesia must consider historical, ideological, and adaptation strategy aspects used by Islamic political actors in response to social and political changes.⁹

Tan Malaka viewed Islam as a revolutionary religion with the potential to liberate society from oppression, aligning with the values of social justice also championed by Marxism. He emphasized that Islam is not a static religion but rather a dynamic one, relevant to the times, including in the context of the struggle against colonialism and capitalism. Tan Malaka's perspective demonstrates that Islam can be a significant political force in shaping social and political movements in Indonesia, particularly in efforts to create a more just and democratic society. Thus, the synthesis between Islamic values and democratic principles can serve as the foundation for Islamic political movements in Indonesia towards a more inclusive and equitable social order.¹⁰

METHOD

This research uses the literature review method to analyze the role of Islam as a political force in the context of politics and democracy in Indonesia. Literature review is a research method that aims to identify, evaluate and synthesize relevant literature to build a theoretical basis and answer research questions.¹¹ This method was chosen because it can provide deep insights through analyzing existing studies, especially in understanding complex issues such as the relationship between Islam and politics in Indonesia.

The research process began with the collection of relevant literature sources. These sources include scholarly journals, academic books, research reports and policy documents related to Islam and politics in Indonesia. To ensure the quality of the analysis, only highly credible and academically rigorous literature was used. The sources were obtained through searches in databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and university digital libraries.

A synthesis approach was used to combine information from multiple sources to build understanding. In this process, researchers integrated findings from previous studies to answer research questions, such as how Islam functions as a political force and how Islamic mass

⁹ Dardiri, M. A., Waluyo, W., & Aquil, A. (2023). Kondisi Sosial-Politik Dinasti Bani Abbasiyah Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Asy-Syukriyyah*, 24(1), 69-82.

¹⁰ Elfi, E., & Siregar, G. (2024). ISLAM AND MARXISM FROM TAN MALAKA'S PERSPECTIVE. *Jurnal Asy-Syukriyyah*, 25(2), 323-341.

¹¹ Akbar, F. M. A., Lazuardi, A., & Haniatunnisa, S. (2024). EVOLUSI PEMIKIRAN MANAJEMEN SYARIAH TINJAUAN LITERATUR DARI PERSPEKTIF HISTORIS. *An Nawawi*, 4(2), 187-204.

organizations influence the direction of democratic policies in Indonesia. A critical analysis was conducted to evaluate the relevance, validity and contribution of each piece of literature to the research topic.

To enhance the validity of the research, this literature review also draws on the systematic literature review (SLR) method, which involves screening the literature based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. For example, the literature used should be relevant to the Indonesian political context, published within the post-reform timeframe, and address specific aspects of political Islam. Literature that only discussed Islam from a spiritual perspective with no political relevance was excluded from the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Islam as a Political Force

John L. Esposito in his 2000 work described political Islam as a significant response to the failure of established ideologies such as nationalism, socialism, and liberalism/capitalism to address the various social and economic problems faced by Muslim societies. According to Esposito, when these ideologies fail to meet the expectations and needs of society, Islam emerges as an alternative that offers comprehensive solutions to these problems.¹²

Political Islam emerged as an answer to the ideological vacuum felt by Muslim societies. Islamic values, which include the principles of social justice, brotherhood and the welfare of the people, are adopted and practiced through social and political movements.¹³

These movements aim to change the political and social order that is considered to have failed to accommodate the interests of Muslims. In this case, Islam functions not only as a personal religion, but also as a force that inspires and mobilizes society to achieve more just and moral social and political change.

Political Islam movements use Islamic symbols, rhetoric that draws on Islamic values, and Islamic organizations as tools of legitimization and mobilization in their efforts to achieve political and social goals. This reinforces Islamic identity as the foundation for the movement and broadens their support base among the Muslim community. Thus, political Islam movements are able to mobilize the masses and gain widespread support from

¹² Esposito, John L. (2000). *Political Islam and The West*. Center For Counterproliferation Research National Defense University Washington, DC 20319-5066.

¹³ Syafii, H. (2024). *KAMMI: Reconstructing the Epicenter of Current Movement*. Gaza Library Publishing.

certain segments of society, thus strengthening their position in challenging government policies that are deemed incompatible with Islamic values or the interests of Muslims.¹⁴

The emergence of political Islam movements creates complex and often challenging political dynamics for the ruling government, both politically and intellectually. Moderate political Islam movements are often able to adapt to the modern political system. They use conventional political channels such as elections to gain power or influence policy. On the other hand, they can also be significant challengers to established governments in terms of political power. For example, in Indonesia, moderate political Islam movements such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah have actively participated in the democratic process and played an important role in shaping more equitable and inclusive public policies.

However, extreme political Islam movements often use violence and terror as tools to challenge established governments. They consider this the only way to champion their political vision, which is often radical and not widely acceptable to society. This poses a major challenge to the stability and security of the country, as well as affecting people's perception of Islam as a whole.

In political theory, the political Islam movement can be interpreted as a counterweight entity to the state in the form of voluntary groupings in society or civil society. As de'Tocqueville understands, civil society is an organized area of life characterized by people voluntarily, independently, and without full support from the state, engaging in various activities that serve as a counterbalancing force to state power. In this case, the political Islam movement has political power that can influence the process of making and formulating political decisions through its sources of power or access.¹⁵

The ability of the political Islam movement as a counterweight and challenge to the government explains that this movement has significant political power. As Hanafie & Azmy explain, political power is the ability of a socio-cultural group to influence the process of making and formulating political decisions through its sources of power or access. In this context, the political Islam movement in Indonesia, manifested in Islamic mass organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah, has demonstrated their ability to influence public policy and fight for the interests of Muslims.¹⁶

¹⁴ Fealy, G. (2012). *Ijtihad Politik Ulama; Sejarah NU 1952-1967* (Vol. 1). LKiS Pelangi Aksara.

¹⁵ Hikam, M. AS. (2015). *Demokrasi dan Civil Society*. Jakarta: Pustaka LP3ES Indonesia.

¹⁶ Hanafie, H., & Azmy, A. S. (2018). *Kekuatan-Kekuatan Politik*. Depok: Rajawali Press.

In its development, the political Islam movement in Indonesia utilizes the structure of political opportunities available after the reformation. The emergence of various Islamic social movements in Indonesia after 1998, for example, capitalized on the political opportunities opened by Western capitalism and political reform. These movements, as explained by Syarifuddin Jurdi, aim to reform social, political and cultural systems to conform to Islamic ethical values. They use resource mobilization, media, and effective networks to enhance their capacity and ability to mobilize.¹⁷

Universally, Islamic social movements (ISMs) are a series of social protests against Muslims' sense of denial of their existence. The GSI is considered a revival of groups that adapt exclusive Islamic concepts with modern thinking that is rational and functional. Thus, the emergence of the GSI can be seen as a form of middle-way approach between the social reality of Muslims and idealized expectations about the desired form of society.

Overall, Esposito's research and other analyses show that political Islam emerges in the public and private spheres by bringing universal Islamic values in the form of civil society through the political Islam movement. This movement aims to change the political and social order as well as the interests of Muslims themselves. With their ability to mobilize the masses, strengthen Islamic identity, and influence public policy, political Islam movements have become a significant force in modern political dynamics, especially in Muslim-majority countries like Indonesia.

2. Indonesian Islamic Organizations and Democracy

Indonesia, as a democratic country with a heterogeneous society, provides a complex background to accommodate the diversity of thought and understanding of the social life of the Islamic community. In this context, the political Islam movement in Indonesia is manifested in Islamic institutions or mass organizations, which function as a forum for religious struggle and social institutions. These institutions are based on the diverse interpretations of Islam by the local Muslim community, which in turn influence their views and attitudes towards democracy.¹⁸

The diversity of backgrounds among Muslims in Indonesia influences individual Muslim attitudes and perspectives on democracy. This also leads to differing views and

¹⁷ Jurdi, S. (2013). Gerakan Sosial Islam: Kemunculan, Eskalasi, Pembentukan Blok Politik dan Tipologi Artikulasi Gerakan. *Jurnal Politik Profetik*, 1(1).

¹⁸ Mashuri, S., & Syahid, A. (2024). Strategi pembelajaran pendidikan agama Islam perspektif multikultural.

attitudes toward democracy among Islamic organizations in Indonesia. These differences are evident in how these organizations respond to and channel their aspirations and goals within the political system. Understanding these differences becomes crucial in predicting the future direction and political movements of Islamic organizations.

According to Kamil (2002), there are three main groups in viewing the relationship between Islam and democracy. First, the conservative group perceives democracy as a product of Western political thought and rejects the integration of Islam and democracy. They often view democracy as a threat to Islamic values and prefer a governance system solely based on pure Sharia law.¹⁹

Second, the group that recognizes a connection between Islam and democracy but relies on an epistemology rooted in the doctrine of God's sovereignty. They distinguish between Islamic democracy and liberal democracy, where individual rights in Islamic democracy are constrained by divine law. This group seeks to synthesize democratic principles with Sharia law, creating a more inclusive system while remaining anchored in Islamic values.

Third, the group that fully embraces democracy as universal and sees Islam as inherently democratic. They argue that democratic principles such as participation, justice, and human rights align with Islamic teachings and can be implemented in the modern context.

In addition to these three categorizations, John L. Esposito (2000) divides Islamic political movements into two main groups: modernist and extremist. Modernist groups tend to adapt easily to existing political systems and often work within democratic frameworks to achieve their goals. They use peaceful and participatory methods, such as establishing political parties, engaging in elections, and contributing to policymaking processes.²⁰

On the other hand, extremist groups tend to use violence and terror to achieve their objectives. They often reject democratic systems and advocate for a complete replacement with a governance system purely based on Sharia law. This categorization helps in understanding how Islamic political movements channel their interests within the political system and how they interact with democracy.

¹⁹ Kamil, Syukron. (2002) *Islam & Demokrasi Telaah Konseptual & Historis*, Jakarta: Gaya Media Pratama.

²⁰ Esposito, John L. (2000). *Political Islam and The West*. Center For Counterproliferation Research National Defense University Washington, DC 20319-5066.

In the context of Indonesian democracy, Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) play a significant role. They are considered the "backbone" of democracy in Indonesia due to their authentic commitment to supporting democracy. These two organizations have large followings and extensive networks, enabling them to mobilize communities and influence public policy.²¹

According to the Secretary-General of PP Muhammadiyah, Abdul Mu'ti, these Islamic organizations play a crucial role in promoting democratization in Indonesia, especially during the first decade after the reform era. They helped Indonesia navigate critical political stages and challenges, avoiding imbalances feared by many parties.²²

The Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Culture (Menko PMK), Muhadjir Effendy, also emphasized that Islamic organizations have great potential in developing inclusive democracy in Indonesia. They contribute to fostering inclusive mindsets, upholding diversity, tolerance, and mutual respect. Moreover, Islamic organizations have made significant contributions during crises, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, through substantial donations and participation.²³

Islamic organizations in Indonesia not only function as channels for public aspirations but also as strategic partners of the government. They collaborate with the government in various fields, such as education, health, and economic empowerment. Additionally, they play a role in countering terrorism and radicalism, as well as promoting social integration and harmony within society.

The Head of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Lampung Province, H. Puji Raharjo, highlighted three main roles of Islamic organizations in the 21st century: as a means of fostering the community, a platform for social relations, and a foundation for strength and progress. They establish educational institutions, strengthen synergy with the government and local culture, and enhance integrity in personality, economy, society, and knowledge.²⁴

Islamic organizations in Indonesia play a crucial role in supporting and advancing democracy. They contribute to various aspects of societal life, from education and health to

²¹ Azca, M. N., Salim, H., Arrobi, M. Z., Asyhari, B., & Usman, A. (2021). *Dua Menyemai Damai: Peran dan Kontribusi Muhammadiyah dan Nahdlatul Ulama dalam Perdamaian dan Demokrasi*. UGM PRESS.

²² <https://muhammadiyah.or.id/2022/01/muhammadiyah-dan-nu-tulang-punggung-demokratisasi-di-indonesia/>

²³ <https://www.kemenkopmk.go.id/sangat-besar-peran-ormas-wujudkan-demokrasi-inklusif-di-indonesia>

²⁴ <https://lampung.kemenag.go.id/berita/detail/inilah-3-peran-ormas-islam-di-abad-21-menurut-kakanwil-kemenag-lampung>

economic empowerment and counter-terrorism. By understanding the differing perspectives and attitudes of Islamic organizations toward democracy, we can better anticipate their future directions and how they will continue to play a role in advancing democracy in Indonesia.

3. Interpretation and Orientation of the Direction of Movement of Post-Reform Indonesian Islamic Organizations towards Democracy

After the fall of the New Order regime in 1998, Indonesia entered the Reformasi era, marked by significant changes in the political and social systems. The collapse of this authoritarian regime opened wider democratic spaces, providing opportunities for various societal groups, including Islamic movements, to actively participate in shaping the new face of Indonesian politics. In this context, Islamic movements underwent dynamic developments, reflecting a broad spectrum of thoughts and orientations toward democracy. These movements not only demonstrated the diversity of Islamic ideologies but also their responses to the more open political system. Reformasi brought a new wave of opportunities for Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, the two largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, which played significant roles in civil society development. On the other hand, radical Islamic movements like Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) and the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) emerged, fundamentally challenging the concept of democracy. This diversity illustrates how Islamic movements in Indonesia adopt unique strategies and perspectives, ranging from moderate to extreme approaches, in navigating the newly formed democratic era. This creates a complex dynamic in which Islam functions not only as a spiritual guide but also as a significant social and political force.²⁵

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah are the two largest Islamic organizations that support democracy with different yet complementary approaches. NU, with its rationalist-scripturalist approach, believes that democracy can coexist harmoniously with Islamic principles as long as it upholds diversity and national unity. NU emphasizes the importance of selectively implementing Sharia values in the law without imposing formalization that could lead to social conflict. This is evident from NU's involvement in advocating for public policies that reflect Islamic values without undermining the diversity of Indonesian society. Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah promotes the vision of "spiritual democracy," a democracy grounded in Islamic moral values such as justice, honesty, and

²⁵ Wahyuni, *Gerakan Sosial Islam*, (Makassar: Alauddin University Press, 2014)

social equality. Muhammadiyah believes that democracy inspired by Islamic values will create a more just and civilized society. Both organizations operate not only in the religious domain but also in education, social, and economic sectors, demonstrating their strong commitment to strengthening democracy through civil society. In practice, they are also involved in politics through affiliations with political parties and policy advocacy strategies. NU and Muhammadiyah exemplify how Islam and democracy can synergize to build an inclusive and equitable society.²⁶

While NU and Muhammadiyah promote democracy with moderate approaches, radical Islamic movements such as Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) and the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) take fundamentally opposing stances. HTI rejects democracy outright, arguing that it is incompatible with Islamic law. They advocate for a caliphate ideology, in which the state must fully implement Islamic law in its entirety. For HTI, democracy is seen as a system of disbelief (kufr) that is illegitimate from an Islamic perspective. This drives them to advocate for a revolutionary change in governance, often clashing with Indonesian laws and the constitution. On the other hand, FPI takes a more ambivalent position. While acknowledging Pancasila as the state ideology, they reject interpretations of democracy that they consider liberal and secular. FPI proposes the concept of "Sharia-based NKRI," where Islamic law becomes the foundation of state policies. The movement often uses street protests to voice its aspirations, although these actions are sometimes marked by violence. This strategy gives FPI high visibility but also creates polarization within society. Both movements face significant pressure from the government and the public, which view their ideologies as contradictory to the principles of democracy and national unity.²⁷

On the other end of the spectrum, the Liberal Islam Network (Jaringan Islam Liberal or JIL) offers a vastly different approach to the relationship between Islam and democracy. JIL promotes liberal values within Islam, such as individual freedom, inclusivity, and the separation of religion from politics. They emphasize the importance of ethical values in religious life, replacing rigid legal formalism. JIL interprets Islam as a religion that should align with modern democratic principles, such as pluralism, human rights, and tolerance. They also critique Islamic fundamentalism, which they believe restricts religious freedom

²⁶ Abidin, M. Zainal. (2018). *Perspektif Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Tentang Negara Demokrasi (Studi Hasil Keputusan Muktamar Ke-30 Nu Tahun 1999 Di Kediri, Jawa Timur)*. Skripsi Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten.

²⁷ Choirudin, Tamam (2002). *Muhammadiyah Dan Politik: Pemikiran Elit Muhammadiyah Tentang Demokrasi di Indonesia*. Thesis, Universitas Airlangga.

and contributes to societal polarization. JIL's approach often draws criticism from conservative groups, which view Islamic liberalism as contradictory to traditional Islamic teachings. Nevertheless, JIL remains an important voice in Indonesia's democratic discourse, particularly in advocating for minority rights and fostering a more inclusive society.²⁸

Islamic movements in Indonesia face diverse challenges and influences regarding democracy. Radical movements like HTI and FPI have encountered significant pressure from the government, including the disbandment of HTI in 2020 for allegedly threatening state sovereignty. FPI also faced similar restrictions, with its activities curtailed by the government. In contrast, NU and Muhammadiyah, which support democracy through moderate approaches, are more widely accepted by society and the government. They play crucial roles in building a strong civil society and strengthening democracy in Indonesia. Meanwhile, JIL faces challenges in introducing Islamic liberalism within a predominantly conservative Muslim society. Despite this, these movements collectively demonstrate that Islam has the capacity to adapt to democracy, making significant contributions to Indonesia's democratization process.²⁹

In the post-reformasi era, Islamic movements in Indonesia reflect a diversity of views and approaches toward democracy. NU and Muhammadiyah serve as pillars of moderation that support democracy through Islamic values, while HTI and FPI reject democracy with extreme approaches. JIL, with its liberal approach, offers an alternative perspective that emphasizes inclusivity and freedom. This diversity shows that Islam is not monolithic but possesses varied interpretations in the political context. These movements have had a significant impact on Indonesia's political and democratic dynamics, shaping Islam as a complex social and political force in the reformasi era.³⁰

²⁸ Muntoha & YUSDANI. (2014). Hubungan Agama dan Negara Dalam Negara Pancasila Pasca Reformasi Menurut Organisasi Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) dan Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI). Universitas Islam Indonesia: Direktorat Penelitian Pengabdian Masyarakat.

²⁹ Zulkarnain, Fisher (2019). The Political Thought and Movement of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), *Journal of Critical Review*

³⁰ Ali, Muhamad. (2005). The Rise of the Liberal Islam Network (JIL) in Contemporary Indonesia, *American Journal of Islam and Society*, Vol. 22, No. 1

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study indicates that Islam has played a significant role as a political force in addressing the failures of established ideologies such as nationalism, socialism, and capitalism in solving the social and economic problems faced by Muslim communities. Political Islam leverages the values of social justice, brotherhood, and welfare to mobilize society through movements aimed at transforming social and political systems deemed unjust. These movements have been able to act as a counterbalance and even a challenge to the government through active participation in democratic politics as well as radical actions. In Indonesia, Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) have demonstrated their crucial role in supporting inclusive democracy by utilizing the political opportunities available in the post-reform era. However, challenges arise from extremist groups that reject democracy and choose violence as their means of struggle. In the context of democracy, the presence of Islamic organizations serves as a vital pillar that supports political stability and strengthens inclusivity through the promotion of values such as tolerance and diversity. This research reaffirms that political Islam, both in its moderate and extreme forms, has a significant influence on the dynamics of modern politics, particularly in Muslim-majority countries like Indonesia.

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