The Trichotomy of Islam, Democracy, and Secularism in Indonesia After the Conservative Turn

Moch. Muwaffiqillah
Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Kediri
wafiqmuhammad@iainkediri.ac.id

Abstract

This article examines the arguments for accepting democracy from an Islamic perspective after the conservative turn in Indonesia. The idea of democracy in the Islamic context revolves around several mainstream arguments as theological and sociological justifications. On the other hand, the Muslim community tends to be opposed and allergic to the concept of secularization, which in some ways, is a mandatory requirement for the establishment of a strong democracy. Though some Islamic scholars argue that Islam and democracy are compatible, the role of secularism is important to be emphasized. This research is a descriptive qualitative method included in the library research category. The qualitative description method is used because of its suitability to the topic and focus of the study. This research shows that recent developments in Muslim acceptance of democracy that does not require secularism in Indonesia after the conservative turn provide proof that the tracheotomy can be united. Furthermore, several political events in Indonesia have revealed how both Islamic political parties and Islamic intellectuals have contributed to the development of liberal democracy. So this study implies that whereas Islam, democracy and secularism were originally considered a trichotomy that cannot be harmonized, the political results in Indonesia have disproved it. In particular, the dynamics of Islamic political development in Indonesia decades after the conservative turn shows that liberal democracy will reach peak development in the coming years.

Keywords: *Islam, Democracy, Secularism, Conservative Turn*

Correspondence authors:
Moch. Muwaffiqillah, wafiqmuhammad@iainkediri.ac.id

How to Cite this Article
Muwaffiqillah, Moch. 2023. "The Trichotomy of Islam, Democracy, and Secularism Post-Conservative Turn in Indonesia". *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman,* 34 (1), 79-94. https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v34i1.3190.

Introduction

In the conservative turn era, issues related to the conflict between religious and secular democratic values are getting stronger and have even become a long debate among certain Muslims. It is well known that democracy has not been entirely accepted by the Muslim community, let alone the secularization that is included in it.[1] However, arguments about the importance of democracy and the inclusion of secularization need to be presented for proper consideration. In Al-Jabiri's perspective, democracy and secularism, which gave birth to the European concept of democracy, are mainly different from the concept of shura in Islam. However, Al-Jabiri views that although democracy is conceptually different from shura, both can meet each other on the same path, namely realizing a just government.[2] From a religious perspective, the issue of democracy is unthinkable in the Islamic tradition.[3] The rule of politics and state thought in the Islamic reference tradition is the concept of shura. Muslims are therefore allowed to regard democracy as a method and a tool for political action.[4]

However, Islam's trichotomy, Democracy, and Secularism deserve to be discussed again. It is evidenced by the fall of the Afghan government - which aspires to a democratic state -into the hands of the Taliban group- which promotes conservative Islam. Some time ago, proving that Democracy was still considered a value brought by the secular West and is still contested as an opponent of the teachings of Islam. In addition, some time ago, before the Taliban recaptured Afghanistan after more than 20 years of opposition, ISIS (Islamic Syria and Iraq State) was once considered a symbol of the revival of Islamic power in the past. Therefore, for some militant Islamic groups, ISIS was considered a challenger to secular and infidel Western rule, thus attracting sympathizers and support from certain Islamic groups.[5]

Therefore, Esposito state that Islamization and democratization are high on the agenda throughout the Muslim world today. The problems of compatibility between Islam and democracy and the relationship between democratization and Islamic revival, and these two processes represent efforts at popular empowerment and communal strengthening.[6] There are, however, many scholars who say that Islam is likely to reject the term and application of democracy. Among them is Samuel P. Huntington, who says that if Muslims attempt to introduce democracy into their societies, it is likely to fail because Islam, which is so influential in their lives, does not support democracy. He further argues that the failure of

---

[1] Samir Samir and M. Hamdan Basyar, "Kegagalan Demokratisasi Di Mesir Pasca-Arab Spring," *Jurnal Penelitian Politik* 18, no. 2 (May 16, 2022): 159–72, https://doi.org/10.14203/jpp.v18i2.1051.

[2] Abbas Arfan, "Fiqh Al-Siyasah al-Jabiri: Analisis Kitab al-'Aql al-Siyasi al-'Arabi (Nalar Politik Arab)," *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syari'ah* 2, no. 1 (2010): 95–108.

[3] Muhammad Azhar, "The Epistemology of Islamic Political Thought in Indonesia," *International Journal of Applied Sociology* 6, no. 3 (2016): 38–46.

[4] Muhammad Azhar, A. Sahide, and M. Hidayati, "A New Perspective on Relations between Islam and Democracy in Indonesia," *International Journal of Innovation* 13, no. 5 (2020): 20.

[5] James Piazza, "'Nondemocratic Islamists' and Support for ISIS in the Arab World," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 13, no. 2 (2021): 95–114.

[6] John L. Esposito, Tamara Sonn, and John O. Voll, *Islam and Democracy after the Arab Spring* (Oxford University Press, 2015). 18

democracy in Muslim countries is partly due to the inhospitable nature of Islamic culture and society to the concepts of Western liberalism.[7]

The strong demand for democratization and the rise of democratic discourse is due to the assumption that democracy is a system that can guarantee political order and at the same time encourage the transformation of society towards a new more ideal social structures, political, economic and cultural structures. Ideal in the sense of humane, egalitarian and just. Democracy has been believed to be the most realistic and rational system to prevent a dominative, repressive and authoritarian structure of society.[8]

This intense interest in democracy has prompted almost all developing country regimes to undertake political reforms and adjustments to meet increasing demands. Although some regimes prioritize stability over democracy, they use democracy as political rhetoric to seek legitimacy.[9] Hence, some authoritarian regimes in developing countries still claim to be democratic or at least in the process of becoming so. However, many countries have faltered on the path to democracy.[10]

Related to the discussion of the trichotomy of Islam, democracy and secularism have been discussed by several researchers, including Ahmet T. Kuru's "A Research Note on Islam, Democracy, and Secularism,"[11] states that 20 out of 46 Muslim-majority countries are secular. Kuru's research shows that rather than analyzing Islam's pro-democratic or anti-democratic essence, he considers it more effective to explore the socio-political and economic conditions that have led to democracy or authoritarianism in Muslim-majority countries. This research, therefore, comes as a complement to the research conducted by Amet T. Kuru. It is an attempt to explore the social and theological conditions that make democracy and secularism relevant to the teachings of Islam.

In addition, research conducted by Shah Mohammad Omer Faruqe Jubaer et al., "The Islam, Democracy, and Secularism: A Critical Comparative Observation," states that liberal democracy requires a form of political secularism, but in the Muslim world today, in mental, political, and social aspects, it is still concerned with the compatibility of democracy with the teachings of Islam. This issue implies that the relationship between political culture and democracy is always measured by political culture as the primary indicator in explaining the absence of democracy in the Muslim world.[12] Therefore, the research conducted by the researcher tries to correct this. Political culture is not always a measuring tool for the existence of democratic values in the Islamic world.

---

[7] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," in *Conflict After the Cold War* (Routledge, 2015), 45–63.

[8] Umaruddin Masdar, *Membaca Pikiran Gus Dur Dan Amin Rais Tentang Demokrasi* (Pustaka Pelajar, 1999). 2.

[9] Genevieve Fuji Johnson, *Democratic Illusion: Deliberative Democracy in Canadian Public Policy*, vol. 49 (University of Toronto Press, 2015). 11.

[10] Samuel P. Huntington, "Democracy's Third Wave," *Journal of Democracy* 2, no. 2 (1991): 12–34.

[11] Ahmet T. Kuru, "A Research Note on Islam, Democracy, and Secularism," *Insight Turkey* 11, no. 4 (2009): 29–40.

[12] Shah Mohammad Omer Faruqe Jubaer et al., "The Islam, Democracy, and Secularism: A Critical Comparative Observation," *European Journal of Humanities and Educational Advancements* 2, no. 5 (2021): 82–93, https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/M3Z4X.

Methods

The method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative method which is included in the category of library research. The qualitative description method is used because of its suitability to the topic and focus of the research.[13] Conceptual research collects information and data using various materials, such as documents, books, magazines, and historical stories. In addition, the data is analyzed through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and validation. Data reduction is selecting and focusing research attention by selecting strictly. It related to the trichotomy of Islam, democracy, and secularism from the perspective of Abid Al-Jabiri in review books.[14] After the data is obtained, they are classified and analyzed through an interpretative process to find meaning in the research objectives. The data is tested against various relevant literature or theories in its presentation. Finally, the researcher will conclude the validation of the data. The conclusion is the answer to the formulation of the question posed.

Results and Discussion

Democracy and Islam: Theoretical Issues

Fundamentally, democracy is limited to the area of (political) power. Etymologically, democracy means government (demos) and people (kratos).[15] From this statement, democracy is built on two principles: self-government and direct legislation by the people.[16] Some Muslim intellectuals used several concepts of theological and sociological justification in accepting the idea of democracy. First, democracy is accepted as a historical necessity. Based on social laws, changes in society or a state will always change from a simple and closed-form to a more open and complex one.[17]

Secondly, some Muslim intellectuals formulate the meeting point between Islam and democracy through the search for coherence in the principles or basis of life arrangements. Islam is then considered compatible with democracy because of the coherence of values found in Islam with the principles of democracy.[18] Third, the contextualization approach of classical Islamic thought. Muslim traditionalists use this approach to respond to some actual modern problems. Classical Islamic thought has prepared a comprehensive set of thought paradigms on various human problems from different time and place backgrounds by following the flow of religious thought that is considered legitimate.[19]

---

[13] Salim Syahrum, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Konsep Dan Aplikasi Dalam Ilmu Sosial Keagamaan Dan Pendidikan* (Bandung: Citapustaka Media, 2012).

[14] Arfan, "Fiqh Al-Siyasah al-Jabiri."

[15] A. Robert, *Democracy and Its Critics* (Yale University Press New Haven/London, 1989). 12.

[16] Anthony Arblaster, *Democracy* (McGraw-Hill Education (UK), 2002). 20.

[17] Jeremy Menchik, *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance without Liberalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2016). 41.

[18] Masykuri Abdillah, *Islam dan Demokrasi Respons Intelektual Muslim Indonesia Terhadap Konsep Demokrasi 1966-1993* (Prenada Media, 2015). 1-3.

[19] Muhammad Zulifan, "Politik Islam Di Indonesia: Ideologi, Transformasi Dan Prospek Dalam Proses Politik Terkini," *Politik Indonesia: Indonesian Political Science Review* 1, no. 2 (2016): 171–95.

According to Komaruddin Hidayat,[20] There are three models of the relationship between religion and democracy. The first is that religion is opposed to democracy. There are several reasons for this, including sociological, metaphysical, and theological arguments. Sociologically, religion is considered an expression of social suffering. Religion is only a comfort when its people complain about their oppression in a sociological structure that marginalizes them. Finally, the promise of heaven becomes the dominant thing in religion. That way, religion has no power at all to foster civil society. Theologically and metaphysically, Islamic societies indicate among some 'Ulama that democracy is contrary to Islam. The literal sense in which democracy means that power is in the hands of the people is contrary to the Islamic doctrine that only God has power. Following this logic, when religion is removed, people can practice democracy.

Second is the model where the relationship between religion and democracy is neutral. In this case, religion and politics have their paths and logic. This theory of separation of religion and politics is popularly known as the secularization of religion. Third is the theo-democratic model, which holds that religion, both theologically and sociologically, strongly supports the process of political, economic, and cultural democratization. In this view, although religion does not systematically teach the practice of democracy, religion provides the ethos, spirit, and doctrinal content that encourages the realization of democratic life.

Esposito and Piscatori identify three ideas about the relationship between Islam and democracy. First, Islam is the nature of democracy, as the concepts of shura, ijtihad, and ijma' are the same as democracy. Second, it rejects that Islam has anything to do with democracy. According to this view, popular sovereignty cannot stand above the sovereignty of God, nor can it be equalized between Muslims and non-Muslims and between men and women. It is contrary to the equality of democracy. Third, like the first view, Islam is the basis of democracy. Although the sovereignty of the people cannot meet with God's sovereignty, it is recognized that the sovereignty of the people is subordinate to God's law. This term is known as theo-democracy, introduced by al-Maududi.[21]

Resonance of Theologically-Based Democracy

The verses related to the substance of democracy include QS. Ali Imran (3):159, al-Shura (42): 38 about deliberation. Al-Maidah (5): 8, al-Shura (42): 15 on justice, al-Hujurat (49): 13 on equality. Al-Nisa' (4): 58 on freedom of criticism, al-Nisa' (4): 59, 83, and al-Shura (42): 38 on freedom of speech as long as it is morally and legally justified. (5): 2 and (58):22 on freedom of association and (2):256 and (10): 99 on freedom of religion.[22] Within the Islamic conceptual framework, much attention has been paid to some specific aspects of the social and political spheres, notably, Islamic democracy is regarded as a system that affirms

---

[20] Komaruddin Hidayat, "Tiga Model Hubungan Agama Dan Demokrasi," in *Demokratisasi Politik, Budaya Dan Ekonomi Pengalaman Indonesia Masa Orde Baru* (Jakrta: Paramadina, 1994), 197–98.
[21] John L. Esposito and James P. Piscatori, "Democratization and Islam," *Middle East Journal* 45, no. 3 (1991): 427–40.
[22] Lutfiyatun Nikmah, "Penafsiran Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āsyūr Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Tentang Demokrasi: Kajian Atas Tafsir al-Taḥrīr Wa al-Tanwīr," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 2, no. 1 (2017): 79–103.

the long-entrenched Islamic concepts of deliberation (shura), consensus (ijma') and independent interpretive judgment (ijtihad).[23]

In the Islamic tradition, the concept of shura is then aligned with democracy. In fact, for many, shura is the ideal form of an Islamic state because shura has a textual basis that reads wa amruhum shura baynahum. With this textual basis, many Islamic thinkers think it is better to use the concept of shura than un-Islamic democracy. Some even think that shura is the only democracy in the world for many, shura has more religious meaning because the shura mentioned in the Qur'an is a crucial feature integrally linked to obedience to God.[24] It is because Islam's most prominent feature is its omnipresence. It is a view that recognizes that "everywhere," the presence of Islam always provides the proper moral guidance for human actions.[25]

According to al-Jabiri, an Islamic thinker from Morocco, the concept of shura that applies to the history of the Muslim Ummah has never bound the head of state to implement the results of the shura decision. Besides that, shura also does not determine who should be consulted.[26] An example from the historical experience of Muslims is 'Umar b. Khaththab who is considered the ruler of the most ideal government is the absolute government of justice (*mustabid 'adil*). Thus, the scholars of ushul and the fuqaha' did not establish the verse on shura as making shari'ah law. It is only a verse that teaches ethics. The concept of fiqh says that the caliph is accountable to God and not those who pledge allegiance to him. There is also no revealed revelation that the government must follow the will of the public, whether elite or lay.[27]

Thus, although the Qur'an implicitly describes a practice that has similar values to democracy, namely shura, historically, there has never been a practice of shura that has implications for limiting the power of the head of state. Still, shura, in its historicity, is an ethical concept and not a political concept in the tradition of statehood in Islam. For al-Jabiri, the view that shura is a political concept with fiqhiyyah legal status is ahistorical.[28]

The idea is that shura is a political concept. That has an 'obligatory' implication for the government to implement it. An example is the view of Fazlur Rahman, who said that the verse was *amruhum shura bainahum* means that "their matters are decided by mutual consultation" thus shura, Rahman continued, does not mean that someone asks for consideration from others. But more than that, it is mutual advice through discussions on an

[23] Anisatul Malihah, "Ad-Dakhîl DalamTafsir Al-Wa'ie Karya Rokhmat S. Labib (Kritik Terhadap Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Demokrasi)," 2019.

[24] Toguan Rambe and Seva Mayasari, "Komparasi Antara Konsep Syura Dan Demokrasi Dalam Politik Islam," *MUKADIMAH: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sejarah, Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 5, no. 1 (2021): 138–48.

[25] Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies* (University of Chicago Press, 1988).

[26] Tomi Agustian, "Demokrasi Islam Dalam Pandangan Muhammad Natsir Dan Muhammad Abid Al-Jabiri," *El-Ghiroh: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 18, no. 01 (2020): 7–24.

[27] Muhammad Rizky HK, "Teologi Politik Islam; Membaca Konstruksi Teologi Politik Hassan Hanafi Dan Abed Al-Jabiri," *Al-Adyan: Jurnal Studi Lintas Agama* 16, no. 1 (2021): 143–69.

[28] Mugiono Mugiono, "Konstruksi Pemikiran Islam Reformatif Muhammad Abid Al-Jabiri," *TAJDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 14, no. 2 (2015): 203–22.

equal footing. It implies that an executive leader cannot reject a discussion through the shura.[29]

Another example is al-Mawdudi's view that shura is an element of Islamic governance. In this regard al-Mawdudi also quotes the same verse indicating that the affairs of society should be handled by mutual consultation, shura, among all Muslims. Islam does not indicate the specific form of this consultation. But shura emphasizes the principle that concerned with a decision should be involved. It is in the consultation directly or through their representatives. Thus according to al-Mawdudi, the shura has made the Islamic state a democratic state. According to him, the appropriate name for the Islamic State was a theocracy, but because of the connotations of rule by priests in the name of God, al-Mawdudi coined the new name theo-democracy.[30]

Conservative Turn in Indonesia

The revival of Islamic conservative religious understanding (conservative turn) in Indonesia, after the fall of President Soeharto's power,[31] not only does it have implications for changing the map of Islamic religious groups in Indonesia, but it also changes the map of political identity in Indonesia.[32] Conservative Islamic groups later played this political identity in 2014 and 2019 to create a stigma that the current government, the era of President Joko Widodo, was anti-Islam or Islamophobic.[33] After 15 years of reformation, these conservative Islamic groups have infiltrated the government and enjoyed benefits in various sectors of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's power.[34]

Van Bruinessen offers several explanations for the rise of conservatism in Indonesia. The first is the link between democratization and the diminishing influence of liberal and progressive views of Islam. This argument asserts that most Indonesian Muslims are inherently conservative or lean towards fundamentalism. Van Bruinessen rejects this explanation because liberal Islamic ideas can only flourish under authoritarian regimes. This argument also illustrates that proponents of liberal and progressive Islamic ideas who were previously active in various civil society organizations are now active in practical politics, which has led to the weakening of the cultural foundations of liberal Islam.[35]

The second is the growing influence of conservative Islamic movements in the Middle East on Indonesia. Alumni of universities in the Middle East, particularly in Saudi Arabia, are disseminating a textual and rigid style of understanding Islam to the public. This effort

---

[29] Rahman Fazlur, "The Principle of Shura and the Role of the Ummah in Islam," *State, Politics and Islam* (American Trust Publications, Indianopolis, 1986).

[30] Abu Dzarrin al-Hamidy, "Landscape Pemikiran Abu Al-A'la al-Mawdudi (1903-1979) Tentang Konsep Negara Islam," *Landscape* 1, no. 2 (2011).

[31] Marcus Mietzner, "Indonesia in 2014: Jokowi and the Repolarization of Post-Soeharto Politics," *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2015, no. 1 (2015): 117–38.

[32] Robert W. Hefner, "Muslim Democrats and Islamist Violence in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization* 306 (2005).

[33] Azyumardi Azra, "Political Islam in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," *Islamic Perspectives on the New Millennium*, 2004, 133–49.

[34] Hasbi Aswar, "Destructing The Islamist In Indonesia: Joko Widodo Policy and Its Controversy," *International Journal of Malay-Nusantara Studies* 1, no. 1 (May 30, 2018): 62–79.

[35] Martin van Bruinessen, *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the "Conservative Turn," Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam*, 2013, https://doi.org/10.1355/9789814414579.

---

started in the last two decades of the last century by translating religious books and distributing them free of charge to individuals, Islamic social organizations, and Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. With substantial financial support, especially from the Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami Foundation in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Middle Eastern alumni spread the teachings of Islam in various ways: Giving lectures in mosques and offices; Establishing madrassas and Islamic boarding schools; Establishing radio and television da'wah; Publishing books and magazines. These alumni work together with graduates of the Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies (LIPIA), a Jakarta university branch of Imam Ibn Sud University in Riyadh.[36] As research conducted by Noorhaidi Hasan [37] and Din Wahid shows, this Middle Eastern influence is strong.[38]

The transnational movement, according to Van Bruinessen, to some extent diminishes the religious authority of Islamic organizations in Indonesia, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Islamic Unity (Persis), and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). For example, Salafi proselytizers never refer to the fatwas given by the aforementioned Islamic organizations for religious issues in Indonesia. Instead, they seek fatwas directly from their teachers in the Middle East. It shows that Salafi activists do not trust the religious authority of Indonesian Islamic organizations.

The transnational Salafi Islamic movement has had a strong influence in Indonesia. The movement spectrum of this movement is the same as promoting the formalization of sharia and establishing Khilafah in the Islamic world with different movement scopes and methods of struggle.[39] Although it remains fundamentally problematic for strengthening the Indonesian state, the movements to promote several sharia regional regulations in many regions in Indonesia are a much more moderate strategy and even seem democratic is one variant of the strategy of this transnational movement. The transmission of Islamist ideas takes at least three paths.

First, social movements. In this path, the transmission of ideas is carried by students or students studying in the Middle East. They study at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Madinah Islamic University, Umul Qura University in Mecca, al-Imam Muhammad bin Saud University in Riyadh, or King Abdul Aziz University. Meanwhile, the main channel for jihadist groups was the Afghan war in the 1980s, which later gave birth to the Al-Qaeda and Jamaah Islamiyah groups.[40] Second, the path of education and da'wah. Institutions and individuals from Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, and Kuwait have recently been quite active in education and da'wah in Indonesia. Its agents include the Saudi Arabian embassy attaché in Jakarta, Rabithah Alam Islami, the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) and the Word Assembly Muslim Youth (WAMY), or non-

---

[36] M. M. van Bruinessen, "What Happened to the Smiling Face of Indonesian Islam? Muslim Intellectualism and the Conservative Turn in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *RSIS Working Papers, No. 222*, 2011.

[37] Noorhaidi Hasan, "Faith and Politics: The Rise of the Laskar Jihad in the Era of Transition in Indonesia," *Indonesia*, no. 73 (2002): 145–69, https://doi.org/10.2307/3351472.

[38] Din Wahid, "Kembalinya Konservatisme Islam Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 21, no. 2 (August 31, 2014): 375–90, https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v21i2.1043.

[39] Din Wahid, "Challenging Religious Authority: The Emergence of Salafi Ustadhs in Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 6, no. 2 (2012): 245–64.

[40] Arrazy Hasyim, *Teologi Muslim Puritan: Genealogi Dan Ajaran Salafi* (Jakarta: el-Bukhari Publishing, 2017).

governmental charities such as Al-Haramain. It has accused the Indonesian branch of being a terrorism-supported organization by the US The Islamic and Arabic Institute of Sciences (LIPIA), a branch of al-Imam Muhammad bin Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, is also considered one of the institutions that transmit the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwanul Muslimin) and Salafi ideas.[41] Third, publications and the internet. It is also one of the most effective transmission channels through several print and online media or books in Arabic or translated versions. Some book publishers in Indonesia specialize, publish, or translate Salafi books and thoughts from the Muslim Brotherhood.[42]

The three main currents of Islamist movements in Indonesia are at least as follows. First, the Ikhawanul Muslimin was adopted by the tarbiyah movement and began to develop in universities in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This consolidation found its momentum when the Soeharto regime ended. The Indonesian Muslim Student Action Union, which was established in April 1998, some of its leaders later founded the Prosperous Justice Party (then called the Justice Party/ Partai Keadilan).[43] Second, the Salafi group. This group is mainly based on da'wah and educational institutions—for example, al-Sofwah Foundation, Ihsa at-Turost Foundation, Al-Haramain al-Khoiriyah, and others. A moderately unusual Salafi movement is the Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah Communication Forum (FKAWJ) which gave birth to Laskar Jihad led by Jafar Umar Tholib. FKAWJ was established in 1998 and disbanded in October 2002.[44] Third, the jihadist group. This group is the most extreme of the Islamist movements that authorize violence, such as suicide bombings. In addition, there is also a group founded on January 1, 1993, by Abdullah Sungkar, including the Jihadi group. This network later carried out suicide bombings, such as those by Imam Samudera and his friends.[45]

Democracy, Islam and the Implications of Secularism in Indonesia after the Conservative Turn

Whatever the claims about the incompatibility between Islam and democracy, Muslim thinkers have developed a lot of discourse about democracy. In Indonesia, for example, the relationship between religion and democracy is skillfully mapped by Lutfi Assyaukanie with three main categories, namely; 1. Islamic Democratic State, 2. Religious Democratic State, and 3. Liberal Democratic State.[46]

The first emerged from the supporters of the Islamic state. This group was represented by figures who joined the Indonesian Muslim Shura Council Party (Masyumi). They included M. Natsir, Zainal Abidin Ahmad, Mohamad Roem, Abu Hanifah, Hamka and Muhammad

---

[41] Zuly Qodir, "Gerakan Salafi Radikal Dalam Konteks Islam Indonesia: Tinjauan Sejarah," *Jurnal Islamica* 3, no. 1 (2013).

[42] Asep Muhamad Iqbal, "Internet, Identity and Islamic Movements: The Case of Salafi Movement in Indonesia," *Islamika Indonesiana* 1, no. 1 (2014): 81–105.

[43] Azra, "Political Islam in Post-Soeharto Indonesia."

[44] Noorhaidi Hasan, "Laskar Jihad; Islam, Militansi Dan Pencarian Identitas Di Indonesia Pasca-Orde Baru," 2008.

[45] Din Wahid, "Nurturing Salafi Manhaj; A Study of Salafi Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia," *Wacana* 15, no. 2 (2014): 367–76.

[46] Luthfi Assyaukanie and Samsudin Berlian, *Ideologi Islam Dan Utopia: Tiga Model Negara Demokrasi Di Indonesia* (Freedom Institute, 2011).

Rasjidi. Luthfi Assyaukanie calls this utopia model the Islamic Democratic State (NDI). Although this first group promoted the idea of an Islamic state, the country they envisioned as a model was not Pakistan, Iran, or Saudi Arabia, but the Netherlands, Sweden, or Britain. This group cleverly puts forward several arguments that the idea of an Islamic state is not at all incompatible with democracy. The proponents of this model are those who were also very keen to support democracy when the dictatorship of the Soekarno regime and the threat of communist totalitarianism threatened it.

The second is the State of Religious Democracy (NDA). This group is supported by figures such as Amin Rais, Syafi'i Ma'arif, Kuntowijoyo, Dawam Rahardjo, Sahal Mahfudz, Ali Yafie, Achmad Siddiq, Munawir Syadzali, and Adi Sasono. This group has a more open view than the first group. They do not support establishing an Islamic state, as promoted by the first group. But they fought for equal rights for all religions to inspire the state. Like the first group, they also reject the separation of state and religion. That is why they consider there is no problem with religious laws.

The third is the Liberal Democratic State (NDL). This model is mainly promoted by Muslim figures such as Abdurrahman Wahid, Nurcholish Madjid, Djohan Effendi, and Harun Nasution. This group explicitly supports the idea of secularism. For them, the state is a rational institution that must also be managed using rational calculations. At a minimum, secularism is understood as a straightforward but unspecified separation between religion and government. While secularism has its roots in the European tradition, it is by no means singular. There is more than one history of political secularism, and various models of it have emerged over time, which range between its weak version, which only demands the separation of religion and state, and its robust version, which demands a clear separation between religion and politics. These two different versions of political secularism are "Anglo-American Secularism" and "French Republican Secularism." These two models of secularism are by-products of the unique history of church-state relations and nation-building. The experiences of these countries after a long period of experimentation, often accompanied by violence, conflict, and intense debate.[47] Regarding the union of religion and state, Tocqueville said that Islam is a religion that mixes the two forces thoroughly. That all activities of the society and political life are governed more or less by religious law.[48]

In the history of European societies themselves, they were not born with secular tendencies embedded in their political culture, and church-state separation had to be democratically negotiated and socially constructed around a consensus that emerged over a long period of time. The European lesson thus lies not in religion-state separation but in the continuous political reconstruction of the boundaries between religion and state.[49] This section explores the obstacles and challenges of secularism in Muslim societies. To reject an analysis focusing exclusively on political theology in Islam and Islamic history, the crisis of secularism in Muslim societies today is due to several historical, political, and psychological

---

[47] Nader Hashemi, *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy: Toward a Democratic Theory for Muslim Societies* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2009).

[48] Saiful Mujani, *Muslim demokrat: Islam, budaya demokrasi, dan partisipasi politik di Indonesia pasca Orde Baru* (Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2007).

[49] Leonard C. Sebastian, Syafiq Hasyim, and Alexander R. Arifianto, "Conservative Islam and the Dilemma of Indonesian Democracy," *Rising Islamic Conservatism in Indonesia: Islamic Groups and Identity Politics* 210 (2020).

factors. Most are a continuation of the encounter with European (and later US) colonialism, imperialism, and the Muslim world in the previous two centuries.[50] The death of secularism was also caused by the failure of the modernization paradigm imposed on Muslim societies by the elites who controlled the post-colonial state. Unlike in Europe, where the rise of political secularism was associated with pluralism, religious tolerance, and political development, in the Islamic world, secularism was associated with repressive regimes, failed development strategies, and foreign intervention.[51]

New thinking about how the politics of secularism can advance in Muslim societies can occur: 1) by studying the process of modernization in Europe and focusing on the symbiotic relationship between religious reform and secularization; and 2) by drawing lessons from recent political gains for liberal democracy in Indonesia.[52] A factor that contributed to the emergence and acceptance of political secularism, at the mass level, was the reformation of religious thought. This is the reason why secularism in Europe was successful. In other words, the connection between the separation of church and state and the creation of a just society, was gradually accepted for political reasons related to religious wars. In the Islamic world, in contrast, political history has shown a difference.[53] Colonial and post-colonial states imposed secularism from above on their religious societies without the simultaneous emergence of a political culture that could sustain and support the separation of religion and state. Implementing such a sequence (religious reform before the spread of secularization) would help revive the prospects of political secularism in Muslim societies, with potentially positive consequences for the development of liberal democracy.

Recent developments in Indonesia, which stand apart from the rest of the Muslim world in terms of its advantages for liberal democracy, provide evidence that this is possible.[54] This progress in Indonesia can be directly attributed to the underlying theory of Muslim secularism. Islamic intellectuals have played a significant role in advancing democratization and liberalization by reconciling. It is adopting a homegrown version of Islamic secularism.[55] This growth and maintenance process of Islamic secularism provides a potential model for Muslim societies struggling with the difficulties and emotional baggage of the relationship between religion, secularism, and liberal democracy.

The crisis of secularism in Muslim societies is due to several factors, the most prominent of which is the "lived experience" of Muslim communities throughout the 20th century.[56] During the period, secularism was identified with the oppressive policies of the

---

[50] Jubaer et al., "The Islam, Democracy, and Secularism."

[51] Rambe and Mayasari, "Komparasi Antara Konsep Syura Dan Demokrasi Dalam Politik Islam."

[52] Abdil Mughis Mudhoffir, "Islamic Populism and Indonesia's Illiberal Democracy'," *From Stagnation to Regression? Indonesian Democracy after Twenty Years*, 2020, 118–40.

[53] Mohammed Ayoob and Danielle Nicole Lussier, *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in Muslim Societies* (University of Michigan Press, 2020).

[54] Alexander R. Arifianto, "From Ideological to Political Sectarianism: Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and the State in Indonesia," *Religion, State & Society* 49, no. 2 (2021): 126–41.

[55] Nadirsyah Hosen, "Race and Religion in the 2012 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election: The Case of Jokowi-Ahok," in *Religion, Law and Intolerance in Indonesia* (Routledge, 2016), 180–94.

[56] Siwat Sri Phokhangkul, "The Decline Of Democracy In The Joko Widodo Regime : A Case Study Of Issues Ethnicity, Religion, Race Inter – Group Relations Of The Election 2019," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Surin Rajabhat University* 22, no. 1 (July 15, 2020): 221–32.

colonial powers and the interventions of the major Western powers, both of which used secularism to justify their political behavior.[57] The result is a reaction and rejection of secularism from the constituents of the Muslim community. By linking secularism and Muslim identity formation in the era of globalization, the debate on Islam and secularism has been complicated by this identity formation, i.e., rejecting secularism because it is not recognized as inherent in the authenticity of Islam.[58] Finally and very importantly, in line with Abdou Filaly Ansary and Marshall Hodgson, the intellectual weakness of secularism in the Islamic world is critical in explaining the weak societal acceptance of secular principles.[59]

From Hashemi's perspective, the lessons of political events in Indonesia after the conservative turn following the collapse of the old-order regime have offered a solution to the core paradox: liberal democracy requires secularism, but Muslim democrats must work from within and draw on a political tradition rooted in religion.[60] Political events in Indonesia reveal how Islamic political parties and intellectuals can contribute to the development of liberal democracy. In such cases, democratic contributions have been achieved by Islamic political parties and intellectuals who have mobilized doctrinal change and gradually developed a grounded Islamic understanding of secularism that has embraced political pluralism, human rights, and democratic governance.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis in this study, it is found that the recent development of Muslim acceptance of democracy that does not require secularism in Indonesia after the conservative turn provides evidence that the trichotomy can be unified. Islamic intellectuals have a significant role in advancing democratization and liberalization in Indonesia's democratic development. It is through reconciling and using a homegrown version of Islamic secularism. In addition, political events in Indonesia reveal how Islamic political parties and intellectuals can contribute to the development of liberal democracy. In these cases, democratic contributions have been achieved by Islamic political parties and intellectuals. It has driven doctrinal change, so this research implies that initially, Islam, democracy, and secularism were considered a trichotomy contrary to political developments in Indonesia. In fact, the dynamics of Islamic political development in Indonesia in the decades after the conservative turn shows that liberal democracy will reach its peak in Indonesia in the next few years.

---

[57] Hasbi Aswar, "Secular Perspective on The Islamic Political Discourses in Indonesia: A Critical Analysis," *Islamic Research* 4, no. 2 (2021): 35–41.

[58] Bambang Irawan and Ismail Fahmi Arrauf Nasution, "The Political Dynamics of Islamophobia in Jokowi's Era: A Discourse Analysis of Online Media Reporting," *Studia Islamika* 28, no. 3 (2021), https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/60438.

[59] Abdou Filali-Ansary, "Islam and Liberal Democracy: The Challenge Of Secularization," *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 2 (1996): 76–80, https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1996.0023.

[60] Nader Hashemi, "Rethinking the Relationship between Religion and Liberal Democracy: Overcoming the Problems of Secularism in Muslim Societies," in *Islam, the State, and Political Authority: Medieval Issues and Modern Concerns*, ed. Asma Afsaruddin, Middle East Today (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2011), 173–87, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137002020_10.

Reference

Abdillah, Masykuri. *Islam dan Demokrasi Respons Intelektual Muslim Indonesia Terhadap Konsep Demokrasi 1966-1993*. Prenada Media, 2015.

Agustian, Tomi. "Demokrasi Islam Dalam Pandangan Muhammad Natsir Dan Muhammad Abid Al-Jabiri." *El-Ghiroh: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 18, no. 01 (2020): 7–24.

Arblaster, Anthony. *Democracy*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK), 2002.

Arfan, Abbas. "Fiqh Al-Siyasah al-Jabiri: Analisis Kitab al-'Aql al-Siyasi al-'Arabi (Nalar Politik Arab)." *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syari'ah* 2, no. 1 (2010): 95–108.

Arifianto, Alexander R. "From Ideological to Political Sectarianism: Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and the State in Indonesia." *Religion, State & Society* 49, no. 2 (2021): 126–41.

Asrori, Saifudin. "Mengikuti Panggilan Jihad; Argumentasi Radikalisme Dan Ekstremisme Di Indonesia." *Aqlam: Journal of Islam and Plurality* 4, no. 1 (2019).

Assyaukanie, Luthfi, and Samsudin Berlian. *Ideologi Islam Dan Utopia: Tiga Model Negara Demokrasi Di Indonesia*. Freedom Institute, 2011.

Aswar, Hasbi. "Destructing The Islamist In Indonesia: Joko Widodo Policy and Its Controversy." *International Journal of Malay-Nusantara Studies* 1, no. 1 (May 30, 2018): 62–79.

———. "Secular Perspective on The Islamic Political Discourses in Indonesia: A Critical Analysis." *Islamic Research* 4, no. 2 (2021): 35–41.

Ayoob, Mohammed, and Danielle Nicole Lussier. *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in Muslim Societies*. University of Michigan Press, 2020.

Azhar, Muhammad. "The Epistemology of Islamic Political Thought in Indonesia." *International Journal of Applied Sociology* 6, no. 3 (2016): 38–46.

Azhar, Muhammad, A. Sahide, and M. Hidayati. "A New Perspective on Relations between Islam and Democracy in Indonesia." *International Journal of Innovation* 13, no. 5 (2020): 20.

Azra, Azyumardi. "Political Islam in Post-Soeharto Indonesia." *Islamic Perspectives on the New Millennium*, 2004, 133–49.

Binder, Leonard. *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies*. University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Bruinessen, Dr Martin van. *NU; Tradisi, Relasi-Relasi Kuasa, Pencarian Wacana Baru*. Lkis Pelangi Aksara, 1994.

Bruinessen, M. M. van. "What Happened to the Smiling Face of Indonesian Islam? Muslim Intellectualism and the Conservative Turn in Post-Suharto Indonesia." *RSIS Working Papers, No. 222*, 2011.

Bruinessen, Martin van. *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the "Conservative Turn." Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam*, 2013. https://doi.org/10.1355/9789814414579.

Budianto, Kun. "Kelembagaan Politik Islam: Konsep Konstitusi, Legislasi, Demokrasi, Ummah Dan Syura'." *Jurnal Studi Sosial Dan Politik* 1, no. 2 (2017): 155–66.

Esposito, John L., and James P. Piscatori. "Democratization and Islam." *Middle East Journal* 45, no. 3 (1991): 427–40.

Esposito, John L., Tamara Sonn, and John O. Voll. *Islam and Democracy after the Arab Spring.* Oxford University Press, 2015.

Fazlur, Rahman. "The Principle of Shura and the Role of the Ummah in Islam." *State, Politics and Islam.* American Trust Publications, Indianopolis, 1986.

Filali-Ansary, Abdou. "Islam and Liberal Democracy: The Challenge Of Secularization." *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 2 (1996): 76–80. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1996.0023.

Hamidy, Abu Dzarrin al-. "Landscape Pemikiran Abu Al-A'la al-Mawdudi (1903-1979) Tentang Konsep Negara Islam." *Landscape* 1, no. 2 (2011).

Hasan, Noorhaidi. "Faith and Politics: The Rise of the Laskar Jihad in the Era of Transition in Indonesia." *Indonesia*, no. 73 (2002): 145–69. https://doi.org/10.2307/3351472.

———. "Laskar Jihad; Islam, Militansi Dan Pencarian Identitas Di Indonesia Pasca-Orde Baru," 2008.

Hashemi, Nader. *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy: Toward a Democratic Theory for Muslim Societies.* Oxford University Press, USA, 2009.

———. "Rethinking the Relationship between Religion and Liberal Democracy: Overcoming the Problems of Secularism in Muslim Societies." In *Islam, the State, and Political Authority: Medieval Issues and Modern Concerns*, edited by Asma Afsaruddin, 173–87. Middle East Today. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2011. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137002020_10.

Hasyim, Arrazy. *Teologi Muslim Puritan: Genealogi Dan Ajaran Salafi.* Jakarta: el-Bukhari Publishing, 2017.

Hefner, Robert W. "Muslim Democrats and Islamist Violence in Post-Soeharto Indonesia." *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization* 306 (2005).

Hidayat, Komaruddin. "Tiga Model Hubungan Agama Dan Demokrasi." In *Demokratisasi Politik, Budaya Dan Ekonomi Pengalaman Indonesia Masa Orde Baru*, 197–98. Jakrta: Paramadina, 1994.

HK, Muhammad Rizky. "Teologi Politik Islam; Membaca Konstruksi Teologi Politik Hassan Hanafi Dan Abed Al-Jabiri." *Al-Adyan: Jurnal Studi Lintas Agama* 16, no. 1 (2021): 143–69.

Hosen, Nadirsyah. "Race and Religion in the 2012 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election: The Case of Jokowi-Ahok." In *Religion, Law and Intolerance in Indonesia*, 180–94. Routledge, 2016.

Huntington, Samuel P. "Democracy's Third Wave." *Journal of Democracy* 2, no. 2 (1991): 12–34.

———. "The Clash of Civilizations?" In *Conflict After the Cold War*, 45–63. Routledge, 2015.

Intan, Salmah. "Kekhalifaan Umar Ibn Khattab (13-23 H/634-644 M)." *Rihlah: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan* 5, no. 2 (2017): 137–50.

Iqbal, Asep Muhamad. "Internet, Identity and Islamic Movements: The Case of Salafi Movement in Indonesia." *Islamika Indonesiana* 1, no. 1 (2014): 81–105.

Irawan, Bambang, and Ismail Fahmi Arrauf Nasution. "The Political Dynamics of Islamophobia in Jokowi's Era: A Discourse Analysis of Online Media Reporting." *Studia Islamika* 28, no. 3 (2021). https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/60438.

Johnson, Genevieve Fuji. *Democratic Illusion: Deliberative Democracy in Canadian Public Policy*. Vol. 49. University of Toronto Press, 2015.

Jubaer, Shah Mohammad Omer Faruqe, Sheikh Maulana Shah Saleh Ahmed, Shariful Haque Sadi, and Md Arif Ahmed Shablu. "The Islam, Democracy, and Secularism: A Critical Comparative Observation." *European Journal of Humanities and Educational Advancements* 2, no. 5 (2021): 82–93. https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/M3Z4X.

Kuru, Ahmet T. "A Research Note on Islam, Democracy, and Secularism." *Insight Turkey* 11, no. 4 (2009): 29–40.

Malihah, Anisatul. "Ad-Dakhîl DalamTafsir Al-Wa'ie Karya Rokhmat S. Labib (Kritik Terhadap Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Demokrasi)," 2019.

Masdar, Umaruddin. *Membaca Pikiran Gus Dur Dan Amin Rais Tentang Demokrasi*. Pustaka Pelajar, 1999.

Menchik, Jeremy. *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance without Liberalism*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Mietzner, Marcus. "Indonesia in 2014: Jokowi and the Repolarization of Post-Soeharto Politics." *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2015, no. 1 (2015): 117–38.

Mudhoffir, Abdil Mughis. "Islamic Populism and Indonesia's Illiberal Democracy'." *From Stagnation to Regression? Indonesian Democracy after Twenty Years*, 2020, 118–40.

Mugiono, Mugiono. "Konstruksi Pemikiran Islam Reformatif Muhammad Abid Al-Jabiri." *TAJDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 14, no. 2 (2015): 203–22.

Mujani, Saiful. *Muslim demokrat: Islam, budaya demokrasi, dan partisipasi politik di Indonesia pasca Orde Baru*. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2007.

Nikmah, Lutfiyatun. "Penafsiran Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āsyūr Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Tentang Demokrasi: Kajian Atas Tafsir al-Taḥrīr Wa al-Tanwīr." *Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 2, no. 1 (2017): 79–103.

Piazza, James. "'Nondemocratic Islamists' and Support for ISIS in the Arab World." *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 13, no. 2 (2021): 95–114.

Qodir, Zuly. "Gerakan Salafi Radikal Dalam Konteks Islam Indonesia: Tinjauan Sejarah." *Jurnal Islamica* 3, no. 1 (2013).

Rambe, Toguan, and Seva Mayasari. "Komparasi Antara Konsep Syura Dan Demokrasi Dalam Politik Islam." *MUKADIMAH: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sejarah, Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 5, no. 1 (2021): 138–48.

Robert, A. *Democracy and Its Critics*. Yale University Press New Haven/London, 1989.

Samir, Samir, and M. Hamdan Basyar. "Kegagalan Demokratisasi Di Mesir Pasca-Arab Spring." *Jurnal Penelitian Politik* 18, no. 2 (May 16, 2022): 159–72. https://doi.org/10.14203/jpp.v18i2.1051.

Sebastian, Leonard C., Syafiq Hasyim, and Alexander R. Arifianto. "Conservative Islam and the Dilemma of Indonesian Democracy." *Rising Islamic Conservatism in Indonesia: Islamic Groups and Identity Politics* 210 (2020).

Sri Phokhangkul, Siwat. "The Decline Of Democracy In The Joko Widodo Regime : A Case Study Of Issues Ethnicity, Religion, Race Inter – Group Relations Of The Election 2019." *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Surin Rajabhat University* 22, no. 1 (July 15, 2020): 221–32.

Syahrum, Salim. *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Konsep Dan Aplikasi Dalam Ilmu Sosial Keagamaan Dan Pendidikan*. Bandung: Citapustaka Media, 2012.

Ullah, Zahid. "Contextualising the Taliban Redux (2021): Is the Taliban Takeover of Afghanistan a Pyrrhic Victory for Pakistan?" *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 2022, 1–26.

Wahid, Din. "Challenging Religious Authority: The Emergence of Salafi Ustadhs in Indonesia." *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 6, no. 2 (2012): 245–64.

———. "Kembalinya Konservatisme Islam Indonesia." *Studia Islamika* 21, no. 2 (August 31, 2014): 375–90. https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v21i2.1043.

———. "Nurturing Salafi Manhaj; A Study of Salafi Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia." *Wacana* 15, no. 2 (2014): 367–76.

Zulifan, Muhammad. "Politik Islam Di Indonesia: Ideologi, Transformasi Dan Prospek Dalam Proses Politik Terkini." *Politik Indonesia: Indonesian Political Science Review* 1, no. 2 (2016): 171–95.