

Political Islam and Constitutional Change in Contemporary Indonesia

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Abstract: This article examines how Islam and Indonesia's constitution interact. It shows Islam's complicated relationship with politics. It intends to analyse and investigate how religious beliefs and values influence political discourse and decision-making in various circumstances. It is hoped to shed new light on this critical and often controversial topic and help us comprehend the forces that influence our world by exploring Islam in modern political debates and conversations. Therefore, this article discusses the challenges between religious freedom and democracy in Indonesia. It also presents a detailed and analytical examination of the complicated and multi-faceted question of the future of Islam and constitutionalism in Indonesia, a country with a rich history and diverse culture. The finding of this study shows that political Islam and constitutional ideas affect Indonesia's political and social situation. Then this article seeks to illuminate Indonesia's future difficulties, possibilities, and outcomes through critical study.

Keyword: *Democratization; Constitution; Political Islam; Sharia*

Islam Politik dan Perubahan Konstitusi di Indonesia Kontemporer

Abstrak: Artikel ini mengkaji bagaimana Islam dan konstitusi Indonesia berinteraksi. Artikel ini menunjukkan hubungan Islam yang rumit dengan politik. Artikel ini bermaksud untuk menganalisis dan menginvestigasi bagaimana keyakinan dan nilai-nilai agama mempengaruhi wacana politik dan pengambilan keputusan dalam berbagai situasi. Diharapkan dapat memberikan pencerahan baru pada topik yang kritis dan sering kali kontroversial ini dan membantu kita memahami kekuatan-kekuatan yang mempengaruhi dunia kita dengan mengeksplorasi Islam dalam perdebatan dan percakapan politik modern. Oleh karena itu, artikel ini membahas tantangan-tantangan antara kebebasan beragama dan demokrasi di Indonesia. Artikel ini juga menyajikan sebuah kajian yang rinci dan analitis mengenai pertanyaan yang rumit dan memiliki banyak sisi mengenai masa depan Islam dan konstitusionalisme di Indonesia, sebuah negara yang memiliki sejarah yang kaya dan budaya yang beragam. Temuan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Islam politik dan ide-ide konstitusional mempengaruhi situasi politik dan sosial di Indonesia. Kemudian, artikel ini berusaha untuk menerangi kesulitan, kemungkinan, dan hasil masa depan Indonesia melalui studi kritis.

Kata Kunci: *Demokrasi; Konstitusi; Politik Islam; Syariah*

A. Introduction

With over 200 million Muslims, Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim-majority country. The country has a political system that is unique across the globe. The system in question is complicated and intricate, precisely built to integrate and balance essential democratic norms held dear by many with firmly held beliefs and practices of Islam.¹ As it strives to create a just, equal, and inclusive society, this system necessitates sensitivity, consideration, and respect for both sets of principles. It is a complex undertaking, but it is necessary to create a world where everyone is appreciated and respected, regardless of their origins or views. It is a complex and detailed process that necessitates careful analysis and frequent re-evaluation because the delicate balance between these seemingly opposing ideas is only partially accomplished. Nonetheless, because of the ongoing work of many dedicated individuals, this one-of-a-kind system has emerged as a beacon of hope and inspiration for millions of others worldwide.

The development of political Islam in Indonesia² in recent years has challenged the country's secular nature³ and its constitution.⁴ It has caused a fierce debate among the populace, with some saying religious views⁵ have no place in the government⁶ and others seeing it as fundamental to their identity.⁷ Despite these obstacles, the government persists in negotiating this tricky terrain, attempting to

¹Badan Pusat Statistik, *Indikator Indeks Demokrasi Indonesia (IDI) Tingkat Pusat* (Jakarta: BPS, 2023a.), <https://www.bps.go.id/indikator/34/2164/1/-metode-baru-indikator-indeks-dem> [accessed 27 March 2023]

²Knut S. Vikør, 'Islamic Law in the Modern World: States, Laws, and Constitutions', in *Islamic Studies in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by Léon Buskens and Annemarie van Sandwijk (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016.), pp. 205–22, <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/66404>

³Nadirsyah Hosen, 'Religion and the Indonesian Constitution: A Recent Debate', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no. 3 (2005): 419–40, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463405000238>

⁴Mukrimin, 'Islamic Parties and the Politics of Constitutionalism in Indonesia', *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 6, no. 2 (2012): 367–90, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2012.6.2.367-390>

⁵Mun'im Sirry, "'Contending Modernities" in Indonesia: An Introduction', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 31, no. 2 (Routledge): 129–30 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2020.1773090>

⁶Nimrod Hurvitz, and Eli Alshech, 'Changing Islam, Changing the World: Contrasting Visions within Political Islam', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 12 (Taylor & Francis): 2077–95 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1277029>

⁷Chiara Formichi, '(Re) Writing the History of Political Islam in Indonesia', *Sojourn* 30, no. 1 (2015): 105–40, <https://doi.org/10.1355/sj30-1d>

satisfy the needs and uphold the values of its people while meeting the expectations of a dynamic⁸ and unpredictable global.

This article investigates the intricate and multi-faceted relationship between Islam and Indonesia's constitution. More specifically, it investigates how Islamic ideas and practices interact with the nation's legal structure. It sheds light on the intricate dynamic between Islam and contemporary politics. Through critical analysis and thorough research, I aim to investigate how religious beliefs and values influence political discourse and decision-making in various diverse circumstances. By analyzing how Islam is portrayed in today's political debates and conversations, I intend to not only throw new light on this crucial and frequently contentious topic but also contribute to a more in-depth comprehension of the factors shaping our modern-day world. This study discusses the difficulties in maintaining a healthy equilibrium between religious freedom and democratic principles in Indonesia, considering the conflicts that emerge while seeking to sustain both beliefs simultaneously. I hope that by the end of this article, I will have provided a thorough and penetrating examination of the complex and multi-faceted topic of the future of Islam and constitutionalism in Indonesia, a nation with a long and illustrious past and a cultural heritage that is hugely diverse. This conversation will necessitate an in-depth investigation into how Islamic beliefs and the principles outlined in the country's constitution intersect and interact within the context of the country's political and social landscape. I intend to shed light on the problems, opportunities, and potential outcomes that lie ahead for the future of Indonesia through rigorous study.

B. The Rise of Political Islam in Indonesia

There has been a significant increase in political Islam in Indonesia during the past few years. The growing power of Islamic political parties and orthodox

⁸Afshan Jafar, 'Asking the Right Questions: Teaching about Islam and Globalization', *Teaching Sociology* 45, no. 4: 379–87 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0092055X17704687>

Islamic movements have bolstered this pattern.⁹ A change in tone has developed in recent years within the nation's political discourse. With certain elements calling for the implementation of Sharia law¹⁰, the discourse focuses on Islamic ideals and beliefs.¹¹ The motivation behind this change is a desire to encourage a more conventional and conservative way of life that is consistent with the religious convictions of the majority of the population. Despite the uproar this has caused, it is evident that Islam will become an even more potent political force¹² in the country in the years to come. It has provoked heated discussion among Indonesia's varied population, with some worried about the effect on the country's secular.¹³ For example, Indonesia has seen a rise in mosques, religious schools, and other religious organizations.¹⁴ Indonesia's Islamic heritage and expanding Muslim population are responsible for its proliferation.¹⁵ These places of worship and learning shape the nation's culture and identity. These institutions reflect the nation's religious and cultural legacy with their unique architecture and active communities.

There is growing tension between those who firmly support the idea of keeping religion out of government affairs and those who believe that religious values should play a more prominent role in the nation's politics and policies due

⁹Azyumardi Azra, 'Indonesian Islam, Election Politics and Beyond', *NIAS Nytt*: 12 (2004), <http://search.proquest.com/openview/ebaa50f5dbd4e080da10939bc5c2a35d/1?pq-origsite=gscholar%5Cn>; <http://www.niaslinc.dk/sites/default/files/files/NIASnytt-screen.pdf#page=12>

¹⁰Léon Buskens, and Baudouin Dupret, 'The Invention of Islamic Law: A History of Western Studies of Islamic Normativity and Their Spread in the Orient', in *After Orientalism* (BRILL) (2015), pp. 31–47, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004282537_004

¹¹Howard Federspiel, 'Islamic Values, Law and Expectations in Contemporary Indonesia', in *Shari'a and Politics in Modern Indonesia*, ed. by Arskal Salim and Azyumardi Azra (Singapore: ISEAS, 2003), pp. 193–212

¹²Muhazir Muhazir, 'Islamic Law Politics in the Contemporary Era (Revealing the Struggle for the Positivization of Islamic Law in Indonesia)', *Al Hurriyah : Jurnal Hukum Islam* 6, no. 1 (2021): 12, <https://doi.org/10.30983/alhurriyah.v6i1.3956>

¹³Lina Kushidayati, 'The Development of Islamic Law in Indonesia', *QIJS: Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, no. 2 (2014)

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵Mukrimin, *Power Sharing: Local Autonomy and Ethnic Politics in Sulawesi Indonesia* (Malang: Pustaka Learning Center, 2021).

to the rise of political Islam.¹⁶ As a result of this tension, many passionate arguments have broken out, with both sides remaining steadfast in their positions. Some people think religion should not be involved in politics, while others insist that religious principles must underpin all national decisions.¹⁷ Each party in the ongoing discussion insists on keeping its point of view. Therefore the topic remains divisive. There has been a growth in Islamic political parties due to the greater freedoms in various nations.¹⁸ The political scene is complex and often heated since these parties use their platform to advance their agenda.¹⁹ Now more than ever, many factions with different goals and methods are competing for control.

Since religion is central to Indonesian culture and identity, it should have a decisive say in political affairs.²⁰ Many people and organizations think the government can better meet people's needs if it takes religious principles into account when making decisions. It is because religious ideas and ethics can serve as a rock-solid moral compass for decision-makers and leaders. Others think a clear demarcation between the two is essential to maintaining national stability and safeguarding minority rights. In contrast, others argue that religious beliefs should be more central in determining public policy. The advocates of the separation of religion and state, a pillar of contemporary democracy, often cite religious persecution and prejudice to make their case. They fear that societal and political inequalities based on religious affiliations will result if religion is allowed to

¹⁶Dilshod Achilov, and Sedat Sen, 'Got Political Islam? Are Politically Moderate Muslims Really Different from Radicals?', *International Political Science Review* 38, no. 5 (2017): 608–24, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512116641940>

¹⁷R. Michael Feener, and Mark E. Cammack (eds), *Islamic Law in Contemporary Indonesia: Ideas and Institutions* (Cambridge: Harvard Law School, 2007)

¹⁸Diego Fossati, 'The Resurgence of Ideology in Indonesia: Political Islam, Aliran and Political Behaviour', *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 38, no. 2 (2019): 119–48, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1868103419868400>

¹⁹Mukrimin, 'Islamic Parties and the Politics of Constitutionalism in Indonesia', *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 6, no. 2 (2012): 367–90, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2012.6.2.367-390>

²⁰Haris Maiza Putra, and Hisam Ahyani, 'Internalization in Islamic Law Progressive in Criminal Law Changes in Indonesia', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Syir'ah* 20, no. 1 (2022): 68–90, <https://doi.org/10.30984/jis.v20i1.1861>

influence government decisions.²¹ Separation of religion and state proponents argue that religious beliefs should remain private and should not influence the policies of a democratic government.²²

Nevertheless, proponents of religion's expanded participation in public affairs counter that religious morality has the potential to steer policy toward more fairness and equality for all Indonesians.²³ By infusing religious ideas into our decision-making processes, we may build a society based on love and respect for all people, a society that is more compassionate and empathic.²⁴ These proponents of religion also say that it can foster a sense of community and belonging, thereby facilitating the development of meaningful relationships and the mitigation of loneliness and isolation. The debate over religion's place in public life is subtle and complicated, and it is essential to weigh the pros and downsides of including religious principles in public policy. As a result, the complex issue requires open discussion among all parties involved. They think the government should treat all individuals equally regardless of religious affiliation. Hence they advocate keeping religion out of politics. This controversy shows how nuanced the relationship between religion and politics can be. The growing impact of Islamic ideas and beliefs on government policy and decision-making makes this shift in political power noteworthy.²⁵ It also shows how people are increasingly looking for religiously aligned leaders in government.

²¹Suci Ramadhan, 'Islamic Law, Politics and Legislation: Development of Islamic Law Reform in Political Legislation of Indonesia', *ADHKI: Journal of Islamic Family Law* 2, no. 1 (2020): 63–76, <https://doi.org/10.37876/adhki.v2i1.35>

²²Mukrimin, Lahaji Lahaji, and Andi Akifah, 'Democratisation, Decentralisation and Islam: A Reflection of Two Decades of Indonesia's Local Autonomy', *Al-Ulum* 18, no. 1: 41–63 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v18i1.283>

²³Luthfi Assyaukanie, 'Religion as a Political Tool Secular and Islamist Roles in Indonesian Elections', *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 13, no. 2 (2019): 454–79, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2019.13.2.454-479>

²⁴Saïd Amir Arjomand, 'Islam, Political Change and Globalization', *Thesis Eleven* 76, no. 1 (2004): 9–28, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0725513604040108>

²⁵Michael Dusche, 'Modernity, Nation-State and Islamic Identity Politics', *International Journal on Humanistic Ideology* 2, no. 2 (2009): 63–80.

Therefore, many people have welcomed the growth of Islamic political parties, viewing them as a way to increase political diversity and inclusivity.²⁶ For instance, a rising tide of public support, especially in rural areas where conservative values and religious views are more widespread, has propelled the recent ascent in political power. Many political candidates from these areas have been successful thanks to this backing.²⁷ Changes in population and public opinion on contentious issues like immigration and healthcare are just two examples of the myriad influences shaping today's political scene.²⁸ Indonesia's future will largely be shaped by the political movements that can overcome these obstacles and unite a diverse base of supporters behind them.

C. The Role of Islam in Contemporary Indonesian Politics

In contemporary Indonesian politics, Islam is vital in moulding the country's political landscape. Islam has undoubtedly become an integral component of the nation's identity. The influence and popularity of political parties with an Islamic agenda have grown significantly in recent years. Islam's influence on contemporary Indonesian politics can be observed in various societal aspects, including education, law-making, and social welfare.²⁹ Islamic organizations have founded institutions and universities that promote Islamic teachings and values. Given this, it is not surprising that Islam has a significant and pervasive impact on the country's political landscape. From the national government to local village councils, the voice of the Islamic community is often heard and heeded, with many legislators and decision-makers taking great care to consider Muslim opinions and beliefs.

²⁶Aulia Nastiti, and Sari Ratri, 'Emotive Politics: Islamic Organizations and Religious Mobilization in Indonesia', *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews* 4, no. 2 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1355/cs40-2b>

²⁷Azra, 'Indonesian Islam, Election Politics and Beyond.'

²⁸Syamsul Arifin, Hasnan Bachtiar, Ahmad Nur Fuad, Tongat, and Wahyudi, 'Minority Muslims and Freedom of Religion: Learning from Australian Muslims' Experiences', *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 9, no. 2 (2019): 295–326, <https://doi.org/10.18326/IJIMS.V9I2.295-326>

²⁹Federspiel, 'Islamic Values, Law and Expectations in Contemporary Indonesia', pp. 193–212

In fact, Islam permeates the country's culture and daily life. Islamic ideals have shaped Indonesian society, from education to public services. For instance, pesantren—Islamic schools—have been constructed to teach young people about Islam and its customs. Islamic societies embrace public services that reflect their compassion and social fairness. These public services include healthcare and social welfare programs tailored to community needs and Islamic values. Many hospitals and clinics offer gender segregation and halal food. Social welfare programs promote orphans, the elderly, and people experiencing poverty to create an equal society.³⁰ The adhan, the call to prayer, rings across the streets, reminding people of the importance of faith in daily life. Because of Islam's importance in politics, this is a complex issue affected by many different things, such as past events, cultural norms, and individual interpretations of religious texts. Many Muslims believe that Islam should be the driving force behind all governmental choices. A just and equitable society, they maintain, may be built by following the example of the Prophet Muhammad and the teachings of the Quran. Some people think it is better to separate religion and state, while others think a secular government is the most effective approach to safeguarding civil liberties and human rights. Islam and its complicated, varied relationship with politics have influenced many countries' current political structures.

Others, though, advocate for a complete wall between religion and state. They say politics and religion should not mix and should remain separate. They believe that combining religious beliefs with political power can only lead to bigotry, intolerance, and bloodshed. They hold that the government should neither favor nor oppose any particular religion and that people should be free to follow or reject any religion they choose.

This continuous debate has gone global, encompassing various nations and cultures. There are many points of view on the issue, with some people vehemently

³⁰Peter Mandaville, 'Globalization and the Politics of Religious Knowledge: Pluralizing Authority in the Muslim World', *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, no. 2 (2007): 101–15, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276407074998>

pushing for one side and others supporting the other. There is no simple causal link between religious belief and political action; the relationship between the two is complicated and diverse, shaped by various historical, cultural, and societal circumstances. Attempting to untangle this knot requires an in-depth familiarity with the intersection and mutual effect of religion and politics.³¹ Therefore, this question may have a complex answer, and we must approach it with sensitivity and an open mind.

Although there are many divergent viewpoints on the topic, it is undeniable that Islam's place in politics is a critical one that requires serious discussion. Coming to a firm agreement might be challenging when so many people have opinions and ideas to share on the subject. However, let us take the time to listen carefully to one another and have civil conversations. We can learn more about this complicated topic and, with any luck, find common ground.

These Muslim-based parties have persevered in the face of opposition from more established political parties and government crackdowns. Their members' perseverance and drive are responsible for their growing status in the public eye. These groups have connected with their communities and won the support of many despite enduring discrimination and prejudice. They have become a formidable political force thanks to the widespread support for their message of diversity and social justice. For example, these parties have also used social media and grassroots campaigning to organize their supporters. These technologies have helped them reach more people and establish a dedicated following. Technology helped them position themselves as respectable political forces online and offline, despite growing despite criticism from mainstream parties and other groups. Their influence on world politics will undoubtedly expand for years. This trend in many countries and areas reflects Muslim communities' desire for more political power.

Therefore, the nexus of faith and politics is potent, and these parties have capitalized on it by presenting a compelling picture of a pious and just society.

³¹Ramadhan, 'Islamic Law, Politics and Legislation,'

They have won over many voters who feel disenfranchised by more secular political movements by highlighting the relevance of Islamic beliefs in affecting public policy. This approach, however, is not without its critics, who claim that incorporating religion into politics may be divisive and dangerous. The rise of this tendency has resulted in a profound upheaval in the political landscape, with these parties gaining power and affecting policy in previously secular countries. The rise of these groups has caused citizens to become more concerned about the future of their communities and the impact that these groups may have on their way of life. These parties are gaining traction, and many analysts believe they will play an increasingly crucial role in determining these countries' political and social futures. These parties' ascent has also caused discussions and conflicts, with some claiming their ideas are incompatible with democracy and human rights.

D. The Challenges of Balancing Religion and Democracy

Since it attained its independence, Indonesia, a nation that is well-known for the variety of its population and the wealth of its cultural history, has been attempting to strike a delicate balance between the principles of religious faith and the values of democratic government. The problem has presented a challenge for the leaders of the country, who must fight to maintain the essential democratic principles of equality, justice, and freedom while also ensuring that the voices of everyone are heard and that their ideas are respected. Despite the difficulty of this obstacle, Indonesia has made significant headway in overcoming it during the past few years, and the country's dedication to democracy and pluralism is as strong as ever.

Furthermore, Indonesia's government has a strong commitment to democracy, with a focus on promoting free and fair elections to ensure that every citizen's voice is heard. They also prioritize protecting individual human rights, such as freedom of speech and religious expression, and ensuring that power is distributed among various branches of government to prevent any group from

acquiring too much control. The dedication to democracy has helped make Indonesia a local leader and a model for other developing nations to follow.

The pursuit of balancing two seemingly opposing ideals is a challenging task that has been debated and discussed by politicians, scholars, and citizens for centuries. Freedom advocates and regulators have been at odds for quite some time. Whether or whether total freedom is essential for personal development and achievement is a contentious topic of discussion. People are at their most fulfilled when they are free to follow their goals and dreams without interference from others. Many believe that freedom is essential to realize their full potential and succeed.

On the other hand, many believe that anarchy and disorder will ensue without regulation and control. Hence, some form of government is required to preserve social order and safeguard the common good. Law and order proponents argue that without rules and regulations, chaos would reign. They claim that without rules, people will prioritize their interests over those of society. Anarchy and disorder are possible outcomes without an orderly framework to regulate conduct and settle disagreements. Laws and regulations provide a framework for society to function fairly and justly for the benefit of all. They believe that government involvement is essential to maintaining a healthy society.

Others argue that unrestricted freedom might cause mayhem and damage to society. It means that some form of regulation is required to keep everyone safe while they pursue their dreams. Laws and regulations are one example of how society is regulated to ensure everyone gets along. At the heart of this debate lies the fundamental question of how much government intervention is necessary to strike a fair balance between individual liberties and the common good. Others say that society would become chaotic without intervention, with the most vulnerable populations suffering the most. Proponents of both positions make valid points. It is a complex topic that calls for serious discussion and analysis.

Therefore, finding the right balance between two opposing positions has been an ongoing challenge. This delicate balance is often the subject of intense

debate and disagreement, and it will likely continue to be so. Whether it is balancing individual rights with the needs of society, economic growth with environmental protection, or any other thorny issues, achieving a harmonious equilibrium is challenging.

Crucially, balancing two life objectives is a constant struggle. Work-life balance, relationships, and mental and physical health always conflict. Despite this, the country's constitution protects religious freedom and separates state and religious entities. The country's religious variety fosters tolerance and understanding. It means citizens can practice and worship any religion without fear of persecution or prejudice. Indonesia's diversified society has allowed Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism to coexist, demonstrating religious tolerance and appreciation for diversity. Separation has been difficult.

Indonesia's political Islam rising is a significant challenge. Many Indonesian Muslims follow a moderate type of Islam, but some support a more strict interpretation and want to apply it politically. It has caused conflict between secularists and Islamic nationalists. Protecting religious minorities' rights requires ensuring the constitution protects them. In nations where the majority religion dominates politics and society and minority rights are regularly violated, this might be difficult.³² All citizens' religious views and practices must be protected to foster tolerance and equality. It is mainly because Indonesia officially acknowledges no less than six different faiths,³³ including but not limited to Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.³⁴ However, there are still areas of the country where members of minority groups endure discrimination and persecution, despite the government's efforts to be more open and accepting. It is especially true for

³²Ahmad Khoirul Umam, and Akhmad Arif Junaidi, 'The Shadow of Islamic Orthodoxy and Syncretism in Contemporary Indonesian Politics', *Al-Ulum* 11, no. 2 (2011): 343–56, <http://journal.iaingorontalo.ac.id/index.php/au/article/view/79>

³³Badan Pusat Statistik, *Indeks Demokrasi Indonesia (IDI) Menurut Indikator* (Jakarta: BPS, 2021b) [accessed 27 December 2022]

³⁴Badan Pusat Statistik, *Indikator Indeks Demokrasi Indonesia (IDI) Tingkat Pusat* (Jakarta: BPS, 2023a), <https://www.bps.go.id/indicator/34/2164/1/-metode-baru-indikator-indeks-dem> [accessed 27 March 2023]

religious minorities,³⁵ which may face institutionalized discrimination and a lack of opportunities.

Nonetheless, there are encouraging developments. For instance, the government made the historic decision not so long ago to officially recognize a tiny but essential group of minorities in the country.³⁶ It is a ground-breaking change that paves the way for other minority groups³⁷ to receive legal recognition eventually and promotes religious tolerance. It is a big step toward a more open society that welcomes differences and protects the civil liberties of all people. With a large and expanding population, Indonesia is continuously developing and changing. Moving forward, it is crucial that all people, young and old, male and female, native and foreign, are treated with the respect and decency to which they are entitled. Over 300 distinct ethnic groups live in Indonesia³⁸, making the country a veritable cultural melting pot.³⁹ Indonesia's future prosperity and social harmony depend on its people accepting and celebrating its variety. It is essential to consider and value the linguistic, religious, and cultural distinctions among people. By doing so, we may all learn from one another's differences and develop solutions to problems that will benefit everyone in the long run.

In this article, I argue that religion and democracy can coexist peacefully, but only if diverse segments of society have open, honest conversations. To achieve this, people must respect one another's cultural backgrounds and religious tenets and be open to new ideas and perspectives. Promoting open communication and

³⁵Patrick English, 'High Rejection, Low Selection: How "Punitive Parties" Shape Ethnic Minority Representation', *Party Politics* 28, no. 2 (SAGE Publications Ltd, 2022): 294–305 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068820973851>

³⁶Federica Sona, 'Reformulating Transnational Muslim Families: The Case of Sharī'ah-Compliant Child Marriages', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 40, no. 1 (2020): 84–103, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2020.1744840>

³⁷A'an Suryana, 'Discrepancy in State Practices: The Cases of Violence against Ahmadiyah and Shi'a Minority Communities during the Presidency of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono', *Al-Jami'ah* 55, no. 1 (2017): 71–104, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2017.551.71-104>

³⁸Mukrimin, 'Decentralisation and Ethnic Politics: A Reflection of Two Decades of Indonesia's Decentralisation', *Komunitas: International Journal of Indonesian Society and Culture* 10, no. 2 (2018): 233–45, <https://doi.org/10.15294/komunitas.v10i2.12752>

³⁹Badan Pusat Statistik, *Indeks Demokrasi Indonesia (IDI) Menurut Aspek Dan Provinsi* (BPS: Jakarta, 2021a.), <https://www.bps.go.id/indikator/34/599/1/indeks-demokrasi-indonesia-idi-menurut-aspek-dan-provinsi.html> [accessed 27 March 2023]

collaboration is crucial to building a society that respects both personal autonomy and collective accountability.⁴⁰ By fostering a culture of open communication and collaboration; we can remove obstacles to cooperation and mutual understanding by encouraging an atmosphere of open dialogue. It has the potential to create a more just and fair society in which everyone's ideas are valued and everyone contributes to making the world a better place. Balancing democratic norms with respect for religious views and customs is essential in a multicultural society. Equal treatment for all, the defense of personal freedoms, and an open forum for debate are all essential components of a functioning democracy.

Finding a middle ground between fostering social harmony and protecting people's inherent worth is essential to living in a peaceful and respected community.⁴¹ It can be a tricky balancing act, as some activities or policies that aim to improve social cohesion may violate some people's or groups' rights and dignity. It is feasible to establish solutions that respect both priorities and bring about a more just and equitable world by listening to and learning from all members of society. Finding a solution that serves all Indonesians requires honest dialogue and consideration for one another. We can reach a solution that considers all people's needs, regardless of their religious affiliation, if we are willing to debate our differences openly and honestly.⁴² It is only through cooperation and regard that the future of Indonesia may be improved.

E. The Future of Islam and the Constitution in Indonesia

Indonesia has made tremendous gains in encouraging religious tolerance and plurality⁴³ as it navigates the problematic relationship between Islam and its

⁴⁰Mukrimin, *Power Sharing: Local Autonomy and Ethnic Politics*.

⁴¹Abdul Muta'ali, 'The Repercussion of Grammatical and Cultural Culpability of the Holy Qur'an Translation to Religious Harmony in Indonesia', *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 8, no. 1 (2014): 59–70, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2014.8.1.59-70>

⁴²Mutawali, 'Moderate Islam in Lombok the Dialectic between Islam and Local Culture', *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 10, no. 2 (2016): 309–34, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2016.10.2.309-334>

⁴³M. Zainuddin, 'Plurality of Religion: Future Challenges of Religion and Democracy in Indonesia', *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 9, no. 2 (2015): 151–66, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2015.9.2.151-166>

political constitution. However, challenges must be addressed if the country is to keep this delicate balance. Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population, has always respected the right to practice one's religion freely. The government has taken measures to protect this right, and the country's constitution guarantees the freedom of religion.⁴⁴ It has fostered the growth of many faiths in Indonesia, including Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Religious freedom is now seen as essential to Indonesia's growth as a democratic and multicultural nation. Because of this acceptance, people of different faiths and cultural backgrounds can live together without conflict, enriching everyone's experience.

An atmosphere of tolerance and respect for differences has been established thanks to Indonesia's dedication to religious freedom, which has contributed significantly to the country's economic and social progress by encouraging its people to work together.⁴⁵ The government has taken measures to ensure that people of all faiths have a safe place to worship and practice their traditions without fear of persecution.⁴⁶ People of all faiths and no faiths are free to practice their faiths⁴⁷ without fear of persecution or prejudice, thanks to laws⁴⁸ and policies designed to safeguard vulnerable populations.⁴⁹ This method not only encourages people to get along and value one another, but it also promotes social peace and stability.⁵⁰

⁴⁴Robert W. Hefner, 'Islam and Institutional Religious Freedom in Indonesia', *Religions* 12, no. 6 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12060415>

⁴⁵Ahmad Rizky Mardhatillah Umar, 'A Genealogy of Moderate Islam: Governmentality and Discourses of Islam in Indonesia's Foreign Policy', *Studia Islamika* 23, vol. 3 (2016): 399–433, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v23i3.3157>

⁴⁶Wahyudi Akmaliah, Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, and Sukendar, 'Making Moderate Islam in Indonesia', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, (2022): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2022.2034224>

⁴⁷A'an Suryana, 'Discrepancy in State Practices'.

⁴⁸Léon Buskens, and Baudouin Dupret, 'The Invention of Islamic Law: A History of Western Studies of Islamic Normativity and Their Spread in the Orient', in *After Orientalism* (BRILL) (2015), pp. 31–47, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004282537_004

⁴⁹Zaenuddin Hudi Prasajo, Elmansyah Elmansyah, and Muhammed Sahrin Haji Masri, 'Moderate Islam and the Social Construction of Multi-Ethnic Communities', *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 9, no. 2 (2019): 217–39, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v9i2.217-239>

⁵⁰Abdul Muta'ali, 'The Repercussion of Grammatical and Cultural'.

Some creative approaches aim to encourage religious moderation in addition to more conventional methods of countering extremism. These programs strive to unite individuals of many faiths and beliefs⁵¹, and they do so by emphasizing shared values and promoting dialogue characterized by mutual respect and tolerance.⁵² The fight against extremism is greatly aided by the many initiatives that aim to make the world more peaceful and accepting. They also work to strengthen international stability. These efforts aid in removing the barriers that separate people and communities by fostering diversity, inclusion, and understanding.⁵³ They make the world a better place for everyone by breaking down barriers and encouraging friendships among people of different backgrounds.

Positive changes are also occurring in Indonesian society. There are many good things happening right now that are helping the country advance, such as more people having access to quality education and healthcare, more people starting their enterprises, and introducing innovative new technology. These changes are a sign of things to come and a tribute to the strength and resolve of the Indonesian people.

In addition, civil society organizations are trying to foster interfaith discussion and cooperation in a world where religious and cultural differences frequently lead to conflict and stress. These groups believe that by having frank discussions and exchanging ideas, we can strengthen and unify our society and people of all faiths and backgrounds. People of different faiths and cultures work together to eliminate prejudice and foster mutual respect and peaceful coexistence.

⁵¹Ridho Al-Hamdi, 'Coping with Religious Tolerance and Gender Equality: Comparing Islam and Good Governance Perspectives', *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 5, no. 2 (2015): 163, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v5i2.163-193>

⁵²Alexander R. Arifianto, 'Practicing What It Preaches? Understanding the Contradictions between Pluralist Theology and Religious Intolerance within Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama', *Al-Jami'ah* 55 no. 2 (2017): 241–64, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2017.552.241-264>

⁵³Peter Mandaville, 'Globalization and the Politics of Religious Knowledge: Pluralizing Authority in the Muslim World', *Theory, Culture & Society* 24 no. 2 (2007): 101–15, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276407074998>

The future of Islam and the constitution in Indonesia is at a turning point. The path it takes will be determined by how the competing forces interact. A complicated political landscape is continuously changing due to the country's diversified population, including Muslims and non-Muslims. The amount to which Islamic law⁵⁴ is infused into the legal system, the role of religion in public activities, and the balance between secularism and religious freedom all remain vital moving forward.⁵⁵

Eventually, the complex landscape of Indonesia's society is bound up with the intricate interplay between the country's various religious and political factions. In a country where Muslims, Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists coexist and a wide range of political parties and views, people must learn to work alone. Indonesia's political and religious climate will be profoundly affected by how well its leaders manage these connections. It will take more than words to create a peaceful and just society. It will call for the unwavering support of democratic principles, including the freedom of the press and the expression of ideas.

Human rights, especially those of underrepresented groups and minorities, must be highly regarded. It will need an open mind and the commitment to participate in constructive discourse across religious and ideological lines if we are to progress toward progress and harmony in our diverse world. A more peaceful and cohesive society is possible only if people try to find common ground and communicate. To achieve this goal, we must be empathetic listeners, respectful communicators, and aware that we can grow by learning from the experiences and viewpoints of others.

F. Conclusion

To conclude this article, we have seen that the rise of political Islam over the past few years has threatened to upset the global power structure. Some are

⁵⁴Ahmad Yasa, 'The Development of Indonesian Islamic Law: A Historical Overview', *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 9, no. 1 (2015): 101–22, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2015.9.1.101-122>

⁵⁵Arskal Salim, *Contemporary Islamic Law in Indonesia: Sharia and Legal Pluralism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015)

pushing for a more Islamic state in which Islamic laws and ideals take precedence, while others argue for greater secularism in which religion and state are kept separate. Political polarization has separated those with different ideologies and increased the likelihood of confrontation. Therefore, many governments are attempting to achieve a balance between protecting residents' safety and recognizing the religious and cultural differences among their people.

Indonesia's constitutional and Islamic futures are intertwined, demanding severe thought and planning. The final result will depend on how successfully competing interests are resolved. Some people want to see religious law play a more prominent role in the country's legal structure and support a stricter interpretation of Islam. However, some counterarguments favor a more secular approach that places more weight on personal autonomy and independence.

In determining the future trajectory of Indonesia's legal system and society, the issue of balancing competing interests has emerged as a significant factor. With so much at stake, policymakers and legal experts are attempting to design a system that can accommodate its citizens' diverse requirements and desires while preserving order and stability. Economic development, environmental protection, human rights, and cultural preservation play a role, making achieving a balance even more difficult. With careful planning and consideration, developing a legal framework that promotes social harmony and supports Indonesia's future sustainable development may be possible.

Finally, no matter what they think about religion or politics, every Indonesian person is vital in making the country a place that values democracy and religious freedom. We must come together and talk openly to live in a peaceful, fair country where everyone's voice is heard and valued. We can only build a society that truly reflects the values of empathy, compassion, and fairness if we all work together toward the same goals and work together to find answers. The only way to make a world where everyone has an equal chance to grow and be heard is through active listening, mutual respect, and understanding.

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