Volume 4, Number II, January 2024 E-ISSN 2722-8975

islam nusantara

Journal for the Study of Islamic History and Culture

Fakultas Islam Nusantara
Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Indonesia

Volume 4, Number II, January 2024

E-ISSN 2722-8975

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EDITORIAL JOURNAL
Gedung Kampus UNUSIA Lantai 2
Jl. Taman Amir Hamzah No. 5 Jakarta Pusat 10430
E-mail : Islamnusantarajournal@unusia.ac.id or Journalofislamnusantara@gmail.com
Website : http://journal.unusia.ac.id/index.php/ISLAMNUSANTARA/about

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Religious Civil Society Organizations Responses toward Democratic Decline: A Comparison between Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah

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What factors lead religious civil society organizations to either consistently cooperate or challenge (semi) authoritarian administrations? How do increased religious competition help to shape their decisions? This article aims to answer these questions by examining the political responses of Indonesia's two largest Islamic organizations - Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. Utilizing comparative case studies to closely analyze the two organizations, the article argues that the organization's differing responses toward the democratic decline under Joko Widodo presidency are determined by how different their ideologies from the newer Islamist groups are and how many of their followers are switching to the Islamists. Given its distinct ideology from the Islamists and large loyal followers' base, Nahdlatul Ulama aligns itself with the administration in its effort to repress the Islamists. However, facing more pressure from competitors amid a similar ideology and a shrinking followers base, Muhammadiyah resists the administration's democratic decline and defends other Islamist groups which face state repression.

Keywords: Democratic decline, civil society organization, Islam, Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah

Faktor-faktor apa yang membuat organisasi masyarakat sipil keagamaan secara konsisten bekerja sama atau menentang pemerintahan (semi) otoriter? Bagaimana persaingan agama yang semakin meningkat membantu membentuk keputusan mereka? Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan tersebut dengan mengkaji respons politik dari dua organisasi Islam terbesar di Indonesia - Nahdlatul Ulama dan Muhammadiyah. Dengan menggunakan studi kasus komparatif untuk menganalisis kedua organisasi tersebut, artikel ini berargumen bahwa perbedaan respon kedua organisasi tersebut terhadap kemunduran demokrasi di bawah kepresidenan Joko Widodo ditentukan oleh perbedaan ideologi mereka dengan kelompok-kelompok Islamis yang lebih baru dan seberapa banyak pengikut mereka yang beralih ke kelompok-kelompok Islamis tersebut. Mengingat ideologinya yang berbeda dari kelompok Islamis dan basis pengikut setia yang besar, Nahdlatul Ulama bersekutu dengan pemerintah dalam upayanya untuk menekan kelompok Islamis. Namun, menghadapi lebih banyak tekanan dari para pesaing di tengah-tengah ideologi yang sama dan basis pengikut yang menyusut, Muhammadiyah menentang kemunduran demokrasi pemerintah dan membela kelompok-kelompok Islamis lainnya yang menghadapi penindasan negara.

Kata kunci: Kemunduran demokrasi, organisasi masyarakat sipil, Islam, Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah

ما العوامل المؤدية بجمعيات المجتمع المدني الدينية إلى التعاون المستمر أو التحدي للإدارات (شبه) الاستبدادية؟ وكيف يساعد التنافس الديني المتزايد في تشكيل قراراتهم؟ يهدف هذا المقال إلى الإجابة على هذه الأسئلة من خلال دراسة استجابات سياسية لجمعيتين إسلاميتين كبيرتين في إندونيسيا - نهضة العلماء والمحمدية. باستخدام دراسات الحالات المقارنة لتحليل عن كثب للجمعيتين. يُقدم المقال حججًا تُظهر أن استجابات الجمعيتين المختلفة تجاه التراجع الديمقراطي أثناء فترة رئاسة جوكو ويدودو تحددها مدى اختلاف أيديولوجيتهم عن الجماعات الإسلامية الجديدة وعدد متابعيهم الذين ينضمون إلى الإسلاميين.

بناءً على أيديولوجيتها المميزة عن الإسلاميين وكثرة متابعيها المخلصين, تماشى جمعية نهضة العلماء مع الإدارة أو الحكومة في جهودها لقمع الإسلاميين. ومع ذلك، وجهت بالمزيد من الضغط من المنافسين وسط أيديولوجية مماثلة وانحسار متابعيها، أما جمعية المحمدية فتقاوم في التراجع الديمقراطي من جانب الإدارة أو الحكومة وتدافع عن الجماعات الإسلامية الأخرى التي تواجه قمعًا من الدولة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التراجع الديمقراطي، جمعية المجتمع المدني، الإسلام، إندونيسيا، نهضة العلماء، المحمدية

Introduction

What are the choices faced by religious civil society organizations (CSO) as the ruling administration attempts to roll-back democratic political rules and institutions? Which factors lead these organizations to either consistently cooperate or challenge (semi) authoritarian administrations? How do increasing religious competition help to determine whether these organizations support or oppose the administration's attempt at democratic decline?

Democratic regression, which eventually could result in autocratization, has affected many countries that underwent the 'third wave' of democratization over the past decade or so. This includes various Muslim-majority countries such as Turkey, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Over the past decade, ruling administrations from these societies have enacted legislations and regulations that increase and consolidate their executive powers, centralize more power at the national instead of local governments, and weakens checks and balances from legislative, judicial, and independent watchdog institutions. Scholars have large focused on how factors ranging from executive aggrandizement, rising populism and nationalism, increased polarization between ruling administrations and the opposition, and leaders' psychological features are responsible for democratic decline and autocratization within the past decade.[1] However, fewer work has been done on the role of political parties and CSO, particularly those which are aligned with the ruling administration, have contributed to the democratic decline in these societies.

Religious civil society organizations are playing influential roles in the religious and political affairs in many of these societies. Democratization had brought in pluralism and greater political inclusion and participation in many of these societies. It also brought in increasing religious competition in many Muslim-majority societies which is responsible to cause further fragmentation of religious authority in these societies. As I further argue and elaborate in this article, increased religious competition, correspondence with the decline in religious authority of mainstream clerics, is responsible for religious CSOs to make a set of decisions which either is supportive or resisting the ruling administration's democratic decline efforts in Muslim-majority societies, particularly in Indonesia.

This article aims to answer a gap in the literature on religion, politics, and democratization, which is: when faced with a competitive religious market, under which conditions a religious CSO cooperates in a administration's effort to weaken democratic rules and institutions - resulting in democratic decline and under which conditions the group decides to resist such efforts?

Utilizing case studies of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah - Indonesia's two largest Islamic organizations - this article seeks to answer why do the two organizations - both played a pivotal role during Indonesia's democratic transition in 1998, are now taking a divergent path in response to the Joko Widodo administration's effort to weaken

1 Literature on democratic regression, democratic backsliding, and autocratization is very extensive. Notable works include Nancy Bermeo, "On Democratic Backsliding," *Journal of Democracy*, 27, number 1 (2016): 5-19; Aurel Croissant and Jeffrey Haynes. "Democratic Regression in Asia: Introduction," *Democratization*, 28, number 1 (2021): 1-21; and Anna Luhrmann and Stefan Lindberg. "A Third Wave of Autocratization is Here: What is New About It?" *Democratization*, 26, number 7 (2019): 1095-1113;

democratic rules and institutions in Indonesia over the past few years.

The study concludes that Muhammadiyah has actively opposed the administration's effort to weaken democratic rules and institutions, as indicated in its official statements opposing new legislation proposed by the administration to reduce civil liberties and restrict individual rights (particularly against minority groups), and also its support toward other Islamic groups which are facing legal persecution from the state. However, Nahdlatul Ulama has closely aligned itself with the Widodo administration and supported many of the latter's initiative, including those to launch a crackdown on its Islamist opponents.

This argument shall be elaborated in the following sections. The first section reviews the theoretical framework for research in religion and politics, centering on major theories such as the inclusion- moderation thesis and the political economy of religion. It shows how a focus on understanding the dynamics of religious competition may help us to better understand how different religious organizations respond differently to the ruling administration's democratic decline initiatives. The second section discusses Nahdlatul Ulama's response to the increased religious competition from the Islamists and details the path of 'strong resistance' it undertakes to deal with this competition, which leads it to be closely aligned with the Jokowi administration. The third section details the Muhammadiyah's response to the same conditions then explains how the organization takes path of 'soft resistance' which strikes a careful balance between defending the Islamists when they are being targeted for repression by the Widodo administration and also oppose many of the administration's legislative initiatives that lead to the weakening of democratic norms in Indonesia. The fourth section concludes the article by summarizing the lessons from NU and Muhammadiyah differing responses towards the Widodo administration's policies to weaken Indonesia's democracy on the broader literature of democratic decline and autocratization, particularly in Muslim-majority societies.

Argument and Theoretical Framework

Major theories on religion, politics and political Islam have largely focused on the socio-political conditions by which religious-inspired parties are likely to embark in political moderation in order to be included (or allowed) to participate in the political process of their societies, particularly in electoral politics. The 'inclusion-moderation' thesis predominated the field of comparative politics, particularly Islamic politics during the late 1990s and 2000s where much scholarship was focusing on the democratic transition process in 'new democracies,' including in many Muslim-majority societies.

Moderation is a socially constructed and deeply contested[2] concept. In authoritarian context it is often utilized to define any group who is willing to cooperate with the ruling administration, while those who refuses are labeled to be 'radical.' Many conservative Islamist groups also claimed themselves as 'moderate' while their clerics and activists are condemning Muslim minorities, non-Muslims, and anyone who disagrees with them as 'blasphemers' who should be removed from an Islamic society. Nonetheless, one commonly

2 Jillian Schwedler. "Can Islamists Become Moderates? Rethinking the Inclusion – Moderation Hypothesis," *World Politics*, 63, no. 2 (2011), p. 350.

accepted definition of *moderation* is how "institutions and political opportunities provide incentives for previously excluded groups to enter the system, abandon more radical tactics, and 'play by the rules.'"[3] While a more nuanced definition of moderation is "the abandonment of rigid ideologies to accept democratic principles - including the peaceful alternation of power, ideological and political pluralism, and citizenship rights."[4]

However, the inclusion-moderation thesis contains numerous limitations and under-examined variables that are often overlooked. For instance, it is unable to explain how ideological contestation, factionalism, and other internal dynamics within the organization affects the level of commitments by the organization's leaders to retain their commitment to moderate political norms over time. External dynamics such as leadership changes at the national level and the leader's policies that either further open/liberalize the nation's public space or further restrict the public space and impose limits on democratic rules and institutions have also not been adequately explored by the theory.

Indeed, the inclusion-moderation thesis as originally conceived largely articulates moderation as a unilineal and one-time process from an ideologically dogmatic perspective into a more moderate - broadly defined - direction. Such an assumption implicitly assumes that once it has occurred, it cannot be reversed, whether fully or partially, either by internal actions (by a party or movement) or by external ones (by the state). Later scholars who utilized the theory has modified its unilineal and fixed assumption to recognize that parties and groups being studied can move their 'moderation goalpost' and shift back-and-forth from moderate to immoderate position over time, depending on external factors like changing political opportunity structure,[5] religious competition from internal factions[6] or from rival groups.[7]

Of all those under-examined factors, religious competition is one that is worthy of attention, given that religious authority within the Sunni Islamic community has become more fragmented and highly decentralized over the past four decades. First generation scholars subscribing on the political economy of religion approach have made the argument that the competitive level of the religious market (monopolistic, oligopolistic, or competitive) helps to determine whether religious groups will be supportive of democracy[8] and religious moderation/tolerance.[9] A more competitive religious market is thought by first generation political economy of religion scholars to create a better likelihood of these

3 Schwedler, *Can Islamists Become Moderates*?, p. 352.

4 Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, "The Path to Moderation: Strategy and Learning in the Formation of Egypt's Wasat Party," *Comparative Politics*, 36, no. 2 (2004), p. 206.

5 Christophe Jaffrelot, "Refining the Moderation Thesis. Two Religious Parties and Indian Democracy: The Jana Singh and the BJP between Hindutva Radicalism and Coalition Politics," *Democratization*, 20, number 5 (2013), pp. 876-894.

6 Sumita Pahwa, "Pathways of Islamist Adaptation: The Egyptian Muslim Brothers' Lessons for Inclusion Moderation Theory," *Democratization*, 24, number 6 (2017), pp. 1066-1084.

7 Alexandre Pelletier, "Competition for Religious Authority and Islamist Mobilization in Indonesia." *Comparative Politics*, 53, number 3 (2021), pp. 1-23.

8 Anthony J. Gill, *Rendering unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America* (University of Chicago Press, 1997); and Anthony J. Gill, *The Political Economy of Religious Liberty* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

9 Laurence R. Iannaconne, "Why Strict Churches are Strong," *American Journal of Sociology*, 99, number 5 (1994), pp. 1180-1211; and Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (University of California Press, 2000).

groups to support democracy, moderation, and pluralism.

Second generation scholars argue that the structure of religious marketplace in a given society helps to provide space for religious groups (in this case, Islamists). In competitive markets, the more hardline groups tend to predominate the public sphere vis-à-vis the moderates, since the former are able to recruit followers, organize protests, and develop alliances with established political and religious actors more efficiently than moderate groups.[10] Under this framework, a competitive religious marketplace would create disincentives for moderate clerics and groups to resist the hardliners due to the fear of losing their religious legitimacy and of being targeted by the latter as heretics, apostates, even traitors to the Islamic community (*umma*). Hence, they are less likely to mobilize against the hardliners if they do not see themselves to have a market-dominant position and more legitimacy vis-à-vis the latter.[11]

The main shortcoming of the political economy of religion framework is its lack of attention on ideas and norms as a main factor that drives religious groups' strategic calculation (in addition to utilitarian-based factors). Scholars often simplify ideas as a 'focal point' which might function as 'resolvers of conflict.'[12] as 'resolvers of uncertainty' to help clarify an individual or a group's preferences,[13] or as 'an identity or a rich repertoire of actions and concepts' for actors to utilize as justifications for their actions.[14] In essence, ideas and norms act as "constraints on human behavior" which might be observable when viewed over a long period of time yet disentangling them from interest-based preferences is very difficult to do, given most humans hide their self-interested preferences through "an appeal to high ideals."[15]

Nonetheless, critics of the political economy approach argue that just because ideas are difficult to be disentangled from interests do not mean that scholars should ignore or treat them as residual variables that are left untheorized. Instead, they argue that ideas – particularly religious ideas – should be taken seriously as part of social scientist's theoretical framework and that scholars must take a religious organization's ideology, history, internal structure, rituals and practices, and relationship with the state seriously as part of their framework.[16]

In essence, a religious group's ideology and its context-dependent variables may explain its support (or opposition) to democracy, religious tolerance/pluralism, and willingness to align itself with the state – for both ideational and interest-based reasons. In addition, religious group with a more distinctive set of ideologies are able to construct its own 'ideological frames' which distinguishes itself from other groups. Such frames can prevent its followers from engaging in defection and outbidding behaviors. When it aligns itself

10 Pelletier, *Competition for Religious Authority*, p. 526.

11 Pelletier, *Competition for Religious Authority*, p. 527.

12 Geoffrey Garrett and Barry R. Weingast, "Ideas, Interests, and Institutions: Constructing the European Union's Internal Market," in *Ideas and Foreign Policy, Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, eds. Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (Cornell University Press, 1993).

13 Garrett and Weingast, *Ideas, Interests, and Institutions.*

14 Pelletier (2021), *Competition for Religious Authority,* pp. 527-528.

15 Gill, *The Political Economy of Religious Liberty*, p. 59.

16 Daniel Philpott, "Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?" *Annual Review of Political Science,* 12 (2009), p. 196.

with a powerful ally (i.e., the state), both can effectively work together to prevent the more hardline groups from gaining traction in the public sphere by coercing the latter into silence and effectively repress them. Given its unique sets of ritualistic practices and history that sets it apart from other Islamic groups, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is able to make itself to distinguish itself apart from other Indonesian Islamic groups and develop its own ideology which frames itself as an indigenous representative of Islam in Indonesia vis-à-vis other groups which aligns with a Middle Eastern-influenced Islam that is considered by NU activists to be 'alien' to Indonesia's cultural and sociological sensibilities.

The increased religious competition followed by growing religious conservatism and increasing intolerant actions against religious minorities has occurred throughout the Muslim world and Indonesia is no exception to this rule. Increasing transnational contact and connection between Indonesian clerics and activists and those from the Middle East and other regions have made it easier than ever for lay Muslims - often with few formal knowledge of Islamic texts obtained from traditional Islamic educational institutions yet have strong rhetorical skills and charismatic attributes to be appointed as Islamic preachers (*ustadz*) with immense religious authority.

The impact of religious competition leading to the rising influence of new conservative Islamist organizations and the slow yet steady decline in religious authority of moderate Indonesian Islamic groups, including NU and Muhammadiyah, have attracted much attention in recent scholarship on Indonesian Islamic organizations.[17] The findings from these works, while insightful to understand the current situation, also raise the following *research questions*: How do moderate groups respond to increasing ideological and political challenges from their Islamist competitors? Do the Islamist pressures undermine moderate and democratic norms that the moderate organizations have promoted in Indonesian political discourses over the past few decades? These are important questions for scholars studying political Islam at a time in which adherence to democratic rules and values are widely thought to be declining throughout much of the world, including in Indonesia.

In this article, I define *Islamists* as those who subscribe to a political theology which articulates "the idea of the necessity of establishing an Islamic government… which implements the *shari'a* (Islamic law)."[18] I further extend this definition further into two separate categories: conservative and hardline Islamists. *Conservative Islamists* are individuals or groups of Muslims who believe in the orthodox —often literal— interpretation of Islamic texts, according to the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet (*sunnah*). This includes a belief in the application of Islamic law (*sharia*) as a societal, legal, and political foundation of a Muslim-majority state. However, conservative Islamists usually advocate for the implementation of these beliefs through peaceful and democratic means such as participating in elections, parliamentary debates, and peaceful protests. They included

17 These works include Jeremy Menchik, *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance without Liberalism* (Cambridge University Press; 2016); Marcus Mietzner and Burhanuddin Muhtadi, "Explaining the 2016 Islamist Mobilization in Indonesia: Religious Intolerance, Militant Groups, and the Politics of Accommodation," *Asian Studies Review*, 42, number 3 (2018), pp. 479-497; Alexander R. Arifianto, "The State of Political Islam in Indonesia: Historical Antecedent and Future Prospect," *Asia Policy*, 15, number 4 (2020), pp. 111-132; and Pelletier, *Competition for Religious Authority.*

18 Salwa Ismail, "Being Muslim: Islam, Islamism, and Identity Politics," *Government and Opposition*, 39, number 4 (2004), p. 616.

groups such as the *Tarbiyah* ('religious nurturing') movement and its affiliated party the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and various Salafi movements. This contrasts with hardline Islamists, who often pursue their agenda to implement orthodox interpretation of Islamic teachings through physically threatening verbal rhetoric and/or physical violence against religious minorities and ideological opponents.

Meanwhile, *moderate Islamic organizations* — in this case, NU and Muhammadiyah — are those which lend support to the following norms: 1) promote contextualized interpretations of Islamic texts rather than those based on literalist ones, 2) support democratic political rules and institutions —including willingness to participate in a free and fair election— while rejecting efforts to enact and implement Islamic principles in state and society, and 3) promote tolerance toward religious minorities, both Muslim as well as non-Muslim. Admittedly, *moderate* is a value-laden term,[19] and the application of moderate policies within each Islamic organization is often problematic – as many members of the organization reject the aforementioned norms either in whole or in part. Hence, one can measure whether an organization is committed to moderation by analyzing whether it has consistently followed a set of 'moderate' premises it has committed to follow within a certain time period (say a decade or more).

Indonesia's democratic experience cannot be understood apart from the role played by two of its Islamic civil society organizations - Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. Both have deep roots within Indonesian civil society, having existed for more than a century.[20] During the rule of Suharto (1966-1998), both organizations were among the few civil society organizations that remained relatively independent from the administration's iron grip. Hence, both NU and Muhammadiyah became autonomous CSO and independent centers of intellectual and political discourses, both during the twilight of the Suharto era and after his downfall in 1998. Since the 1998 *Reformasi,* leaders and activists from both organizations have also played a more overt political role through parties linked with them, namely the National Awakening Party (PKB) for NU and the National Mandate Party (PAN) for Muhammadiyah. Through these political parties, NU and Muhammadiyah have lobbied for favorable legislation, gained cabinet minister positions, and secured state patronage for their respective constituencies.

Nonetheless, over the past two decades, both NU and Muhammadiyah have experienced a decline on their religious authority. The causes of these decline are twofold. First, dozens of new theologically conservative Islamist groups have been formally recognized ever

19 Jillian Schwedler warned that if adapted narrowly, "moderate" can be interpreted as any group that is considered to be non-threatening to the state ruler and political elites, while "radical" is applied to any external group that "strongly oppose the power configurations to the status quo" (Schwedler, *Can Islamists Become Moderates?*, p. 350). A more nuanced definition of moderation is one which allows Islamic groups to express their dissent and grievances toward the ruling regime, while following peaceful, democratic, and legitimate means of expressing them. The definition I have deployed above is one that is of the latter.

20 Muhammadiyah was founded in 1912 to counter the prevalence of 'non-orthodox' Islamic teachings promoted by traditionalist-leaning Islamist clerics and to 'purify' Indonesian Islam from such teachings (Howard Federspiel, "The Muhammadijah: A Study of an Orthodox Islamic Movement," *Indonesia*, number 10 (1970), pp. 57-59. Meanwhile, NU was founded in 1926 as an association which organized traditionalist-oriented ulama to band together against criticisms and attacks on their rituals and practices from modernist Islamic groups like Muhammadiyah (Robin Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009).

since Indonesia's democratic transition in 1998, They range from quietist and non-political Salafi groups to more openly political Islamist groups, such as the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS),[21] Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI),[22] and others. These groups - which had to do their activities underground during the long reign of Indonesia's dictator Suharto (1966 to 1998), received legal recognition after Indonesia underwent democratic transition in 1998 and were able to propagate their respective interpretation of Islam freely without facing many restrictions. In addition, various new Islamist preachers managed to win broad popular appeal among Indonesian Muslims, particularly those from the millennial generation – due to their charismatic, populist, yet theologically conservative sermons that managed to attract millions of social media followers.[23] In turn, the combined influence of these new Islamic groups and preachers have contributed to a gradual yet steady decline in the authority of NU and Muhammadiyah.

Nahdlatul Ulama: Strong Islamist Resistance and Close Alignment with Jokowi

By 2010s, NU was facing strong competition from dozens of new Islamic organizations with transnational linkages to Middle Eastern Islamist movements.[24] In addition, its leadership was also facing internal challenges, which came from a group of young emerging NU clerics (*kyai*) who formed 'Straight Path NU' (*NU Garis Lurus* or NUGL) – a new faction which seeks NU's return to its original founding principles and the removal of 'liberal and pluralist ideologies' promoted by the late Abdurrahman Wahid and previous NU reformers - on the ground they are not compatible with the original Sunni Islamic (*Aswaja*) teachings.[25] In addition, NUGL was also supported by Abdul Somad – a Riau-born popular Islamic preacher whom has become one of the prominent online preachers in Indonesia today. At the peak of his popularity Somad commanded 9.7 million Instagram followers – the highest among all conservative Islamist preachers.[26]

The ideological challenges from both conservative Islamist and NUGL mean that the

21 Previous studies on PKS include Michael Buehler, "Revisiting the Inclusion-Moderation Thesis in the Context of Decentralized Institutions: The Behavior of Indonesia's Prosperous Justice Party in National and Local Politics," *Party Politics* 19, number 2 (2012): 210-229; Kikue Hamayotsu, "The Political Rise of the Prosperous Justice Party In Post-Authoritarian Indonesia," *Asian Survey* 51, number 5 (2011): 971-992; and Sunny Tanuwidjaja, "PKS in Post-Reformasi Indonesia: Catching the Catch-All and Moderation Wave," *South East Asia Research* 20, number 4 (2012): 533-549.

22 Previous studies on HTI include Mohamed Nawab bin Mohamed Osman, "Reviving the Caliphate in the Nusantara: Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia's Mobilization Strategy and Its Impact in Indonesia," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22, number 4 (2010): 601-622; and Alexander R. Arifianto, "Islamic Campus Preaching Organizations in Indonesia: Promoters of Moderation or Radicalism? *Asian Security* 15, number 3 (2019): 323-342.

23 These popular preachers include Hanan Attaki, founder of the Hijrah Youth (*Pemuda Hijrah*) movement (8.3 million Instagram followers), Abdullah Gymnastiar, founder of the Daurat Tauhid Pesantren (5.9 million followers), and Felix Siauw, Chinese Indonesian Muslim convert who is thought to have affiliated himself with HTI (4.7 million) (Arifianto, *The State of Political Islam in Indonesia*, p. 120).

24 Martin van Bruinessen, "Ghazwul Fikri or Arabization? Indonesian Muslim Responses to Globalization" in *Southeast Asian Muslims in the Era of Globalization*, eds. Ken Miichi and Omar Farouk (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

25 Asep M. Iqbal, "Challenging Moderate Islam in Indonesia: NU Garis Lurus and Its Construction of the "Authentic" NU Online, in *Rising Islamic Conservatism in Indonesia: Islamic Groups and Identity Politics*, eds. Leonard C. Sebastian, Syafiq Hasyim, and Alexander R. Arifianto (Routledge, 2021).

26 Wahyudi Akmaliah, "The Demise of Moderate Islam in Indonesia: New Media, Contestation, and Reclaiming Religious Authorities," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 10, number 1 (2020), pp. 1-24.

organization's moderate-leaning leaders no longer have the ideological hegemony both within and outside of the organization that they once did under Wahid leadership. Through *Islam Nusantara*, NU reemphasizes its unique history and local customs and ritualistic practices. From the time of its founding in 1926, NU has long differentiated itself from other Islamic competitors by labeling itself as a 'traditionalist' instead of 'reformist' (or more recently 'Islamist') which it claims to be more compatible with Indonesian cultural traditions. The institutional differences between NU and reformist Islamic movements can be seen from NU's stricter hierarchical relations between the laypeople or student (*santri*) and its clerics (*kyai*), its acceptance of classical scholarly Islamic texts written by 8th to 12th century Islamic clerics as part of Islamic canonical teachings (apart from the Qur'an and the Hadith), and its acceptance of Javanese ritualistic customs such as *selametan* (ritualistic meals for major life occasions like weddings and the birth of a child) and *tahlilan* (communal prayers commemorating the anniversary of a family member's death) as part of its followers' Islamic sensibilities, instead of condemning them as heresies (*bid'ah*) like reformist and Islamist do.

In 2015, NU's institutional structure along with its localized customs and rituals were reinterpreted by Said Aqil Siradj–NU chairman in 2010-2021—as integral principles of *Islam Nusantara* ('Archipelagic Islam') which combines classical Islamic thought, its interpretation (*tafsir*) by generations of NU clerics, and whole host of rituals and practices originated from pre-Islamic Java – all of which reinforced NU's vision that Islam as practiced by NU is moderate and compatible with Indonesian nationalism enshrined in the nation's official ideology *Pancasila*. It is also compatible with its diverse traditional cultures, many predated Islam's arrival in Indonesia at the end of the 13th century.[27]

During the 2015 NU national congress (*muktamar*) in Jombang, NU leadership announced a new organization's doctrine, *Islam Nusantara*, designed to consolidate the moderates' hold over NU in the face of growing ideological challenges. Derived from the term *pribumisasi Islam* (Islamic indigenization) introduced by Wahid, its proponents explained it as a synthesis combining traditionalist Islamic theology with local customs, rituals, and traditions. As NU former chairman Said Aqil Siradj stated:

Islam Nusantara is an Indonesian-style Islam, which adopts Sunni Islam (*Ahlusunnah wal jamaah*) principles, promotes tolerance, strengthens Islam as a blessing for humanity (*rahmatan lil alamin*), and is based on the principles of balance (*tawazun*), moderation (*tawassut*), tolerance (*tasamu*), and justice (*i'tidal*).[28]

Consequently, Islam Nusantara serves as an alternative to the Islamist vision that argues that a fundamental reform of Indonesian society requires the adoption of Islamic principles at individual, family, society, and state levels.

NU utilizes *Islam Nusantara* as an ideological rationale to differentiate itself from its Islamist competitors. From the very start, *Islam Nusantara* has thus been framed by NU leaders as an antidote to the perceived 'radicalism' of Indonesian Islam that is thought to have come from the influence of Islamist groups influenced by transnational ideologies.

27 Syafiq Hasyim, *Islam Nusantara dalam Konteks: Dari Multikulturalisme Hingga Radikalisme* [Islam Nusantara Contextualized: From Multiculturalism to Radicalism] (Penerbit Gading, 2018).

28 Hasyim, *Islam Nusantara dalam Konteks.*

These groups – FPI, HTI, the *Tarbiyah* movement linked with PKS, and various Salafi groups – are often lumped together as 'Wahhabis' or 'Saudi-inspired Islamists' by *Islam Nusantara* proponents within the NU. The organization particularly singled out FPI and HTI, labeling them as 'radical' and alien to the moderate Islamic values compatible with Indonesian socio-political sensibilities.[29]

The NU's tradition of accommodating localized and unorthdox ancient customs and rituals has enabled its leaders to differentiate and develop its distinct identity from other Islamic groups, particularly those with reformist and revivalist ideological orientation. For instance, senior NU *kyai* Mustofa Bisri declares that:

…genuine Islam, *Islam Nusantara*….has been supplanted by Saudi Islam, a grasping and materialistic Islam, coarse, cruel and savage. The Wahhabi view is just a ghoulish nightmare that keeps the world awake at night, trembling in horror.[30]

Furthermore, ideological differences and political struggle between NU and the Islamists is considered by many NU activists as "being at least as important, if not more so, than violent struggles in the Middle East and South Asia and even efforts to counter domestic violent extremist groups."[31]

To further strengthen its resistance against the above-mentioned Islamist competitors, NU aligns itself with the Joko Widodo administration. From the time he first assumed office in 2014, Widodo has always considered NU as one of his primary supporters, given its large followers base estimated to be between 60 to 90 million followers. His needs for political support from NU increased after the 2016/17 Defending Islam rallies sponsored by a coalition of conservative and hardline Islamist groups in Jakarta, which targeted the city's government Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, for alleged religious blasphemy. Feeling threatened by this Islamist mobilization and its potential socio-political power, Widodo increasingly courted NU leaders to provide religious and political legitimacy for his administration, especially as he prepared for his re-election campaign between 2018 and 2019.

However, NU support did not come cheaply, as the organization's leaders sought political and financial patronage in exchange for their support for the administration.[32] The administration has granted many of these demands, seen from the appointment of NU clerics and politicians into senior positions within the administration – most prominently NU supreme leader Ma'ruf Amin as vice president and Yaqut Cholil Qomas, head of NU's youth wing Ansor, as Minister of Religious Affairs. Numerous other NU politicians and activists have been appointed as ambassadors and executives of state-owned enterprises.[33] Finally, Jokowi has supported the election of Yahya Cholil Staquf, a cleric with familial

29 Arifianto, *The State of Political Islam in Indonesia.*

30 Keith Loveard, "Daesh, Islam Nusantarav, and Shades of Grey," *New Mandala*, 14 January 2016, https://www.newmandala.org/daesh-islam-nusantara-and-shades-of-grey/ (accessed 16 November 2023).

31 Mark Woodward, "Resisting Salafism and the Arabization of Indonesian Islam: A Contemporary Indonesian Didactic Tale by Komaruddin Hidayat," *Contemporary Islam* (2017), 11, number 3 (2017), p. 240.

32 Marcus Mietzner and Burhanuddin Muhtadi, "The Myth of Pluralism: Nahdlatul Ulama and the Politics of Religious Tolerance in Indonesia," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 42, number 1 (2020), 58-84.

33 Alexander R. Arifianto, "Nahdlatul Ulama's New Chair Faces a Difficult Choice: Political Neutrality or Patronage." *Indonesia at Melbourne*, 18 January 2023. https://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/nahdlatul-ulamas-new-chair-faces-a-difficult-choice-political-neutrality-or-patronage/ (accessed 16 November 2023).

ties to NU's founding family, as the organization's new chairperson in 2021 to replace Said Aqil Siradj. Yahya's election means NU also returns into the control of one its 'blue blood' founding families for the first time in more than two decades.[34]

NU also received significant financial benefits from the Jokowi administration as well. The administration-sponsored new legislation on Islamic boarding schools (*Undang-Undang Pesantren*) passed in 2019 granted significant subsidies for students attending these religious schools, many of which were founded and administered by NU-affiliated clerics.[35] NU also benefited from its selection as an administrator for a new rural *shari'a*-based microfinance scheme for farmers and fishermen from the Ministry of Village Development and Rural Affairs and a new corn production scheme from the Ministry of Agriculture.[36]

NU's close alignment with the Jokowi administration has emboldened its activists to take coercive – sometimes violent– measures to exclude Islamist opponents from the public sphere. For instance, *Banser*, a militia group affiliated with Ansor – the NU youth wing – has frequently disrupted HTI-sponsored gatherings and forcefully disbanded *da'wa* activities conducted by popular Islamist preachers such as Felix Siauw, Abdul Somad and Hanan Attaki,[37] considered to be ideologically close to the Salafis. Ansor's tactic to disrupt peaceful activities has been criticized by human rights activists, who believe it echoes the strategies adopted by the Indonesian Army to disrupt the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) activities during the mid-1960. Nonetheless, such tactics were effective to force these preachers to moderate their preaching rhetoric. Attaki even publicly converted to be a NU follower (*Nahdliyin*) in May 2023, in order to escape from the possible disruption from *Banser* activists when he preached in NU strongholds like in East Java.[38]

In sum, NU has adopted an aggressive strategy to counter the conservative Islamist challenge against its religious and political hegemony over Islam in Indonesia. In line with its history to ideologically differentiate itself from other Indonesian Islamic organizations, the NU promotes a distinction between itself and conservative Islamist organizations whom it accuses of bringing 'foreign' (Arabic) influences to change the pluralistic and culturally diverse *Islam Nusantara* and to establish an Islamic or a caliphate state in Indonesia. This logic undergirds confrontational NU campaigns to disrupt the activities of Islamist organizations perceived as rival contenders to win the hearts and minds of Indonesian Muslims, particularly the millennial generation.[39]

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34 Alexander R. Arifianto, "Towards 'Humanitarian Islam': New Nahdlatul Ulama Chairman and the Global Initiative to Promote Religious Moderation. *IDSS Paper*, 26 January 2024. https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/idss/ip22003-towards-humanitarian-islam-new-nahdlatul-ulama-chairman-and-the-global-initiative-to-promote-religious-moderation/. (accessed 23 July 2023).

35 Alexander R. Arifianto, "From Ideological to Political Sectarianism: Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and the State in Indonesia," *Religion, State, and Society*, 49, number 2 (2021), p. 136.

36 Alexander R. Arifianto, *From Ideological to Political Sectarianism,* p. 136.

37 Najib A. Burhani, "Islam Nusantara as a Promising Response to Religious Intolerance and Pluralism" *ISEAS Trends* No 21/2018 (ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2018). https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/TRS21_18.pdf. (accessed 16 November 2023).

38 Alexander R. Arifianto, "Islam and the 2024 Presidential Election: Moving towards a Consensus Candidate?" *Indonesia at Melbourne*, 30 May 2023. https://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/islam-and-the-2024-presidential-election-moving-towards-a-consensus-candidate/. (accessed 16 November 2023).

39 Alexander R. Arifianto, *From Ideological to Political Sectarianism.*

NU is also likely to support the Widodo administration's legislative and policy initiatives even though they might be widely considered by analysts to further weaken Indonesia's strategy, if fully enacted. For instance, in 2022 NU chairman Yahya Staquf supported an initiative proposed by the president's inner circle to postpone the 2024 presidential election, on the ground that Indonesia is facing a national crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic that did not allow the election to take place as scheduled.[40] In 2019, Staquf's predecessor Said Aqil Siradj supported another proposal to abolish direct election of the president and returned to the Suharto era system where the president is appointed rather than elected, arguing that it is "cheaper than actually holding an election."[41] While neither of these proposals were successfully enacted, they were initiatives proposed by members of Widodo's inner circle to further extend presidential powers beyond what is prescribed in the Indonesian constitution.

Muhammadiyah: Soft Islamist Resistance and Opposition against Democratic Decline

In contrast to NU, Muhammadiyah has suffered for significant erosion in its religious authority over the past decade or so, since its ideology - based on the reformation of Islamic teachings so it returned to the original principles propagated in the Islamic sacred texts (the Qur'an) and the sayings and deeds of the Prophet (the Hadith) - are very identical with many new Islamist movements like the *Tarbiyah* movement, HTI, and various Salafi movements. Muhammadiyah also faced a strong ideological challenge from within their own ranks, by clerics and activists adhering to more conservative viewpoints. This fragmentation erodes the authority of Muhammadiyah's leaders to speak on behalf of the Indonesian Muslim *umm*a. At the same time, Muhammadiyah has lost many of its members to other Islamist organizations like PKS, HTI, and various Salafi groups.[42] A recent public opinion survey indicates only 5 percent of Indonesian Muslim self-identify as Muhammadiyah followers.[43] This is approximately equal 12 million Muslims, a number far below the 30 million figure often claimed by the organization's leaders.

To be sure, the 2015 Muhammadiyah national congress (*muktamar)* issued a decree affirming the organization's loyalty to Indonesia's official national ideology *Pancasila* (five principles) and to Indonesia as a unitary nationalist state (NKRI). It declared that "Pancasila is a national consensus (*dar al-ahdi*) and a national creed (*dar al-syahadah*) to make Indonesia a safe and peaceful nation (*dar-al-salam*)."[44] It further affirmed that: "While

40 CNN Indonesia, "Ketum PBNU Staquf: Usulan Penundaan Pemilu Masuk Akal" [NU Chair Staquf: Proposal to Postpone Next General Election Makes Sense] (28 August 2022). https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20220228090430-617-764844/ketum-pbnu-staquf-usulan-penundaan-pemilu-masuk-akal. (accessed 16 November 2023).

41 *The Jakarta Globe*, "NU Shows Support for Indirect Presidential Election" (28 November 2019), https://jakartaglobe.id/news/nu-shows-support-for-indirect-presidential-election (accessed 16 November 2023).

42 Muhammadiyah activists have even invented acronyms like MuSa (Muhammadiyah Salafi) and MuTi (Muhammadiyah HTI) to describe their colleagues whom while might have formal Muhammadiyah membership are actually followers of 'new' Islamist movements like Salafi and HTI.

43 Marcus Mietzner and Burhanuddin Muhtadi, "The Myth of Pluralism: Nahdlatul Ulama and the Politics of Religious Tolerance in Indonesia." *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 42, No. 1 (2020): 71.

44 Muhammadiyah. *Tanfidz Keputusan Muktamar Muhammadiyah Ke-47 Makassar* [Compilation of

Pancasila is not a religion… [it] is Islamic because the substance of all its principles is fully compatible with Islamic teachings and values."[45] The *Dar-al-ahdi-al-Syahadah* decree rejects Indonesian Islamists' call for the establishment of an Islamic state.

Due to these institutional constraints,, Muhammadiyah's effort to combat growing Islamic conservatism within the organization is ambiguous. Unlike NU, Muhammadiyah's theologically diverse leadership structure consists of members from both moderate and conservative factions. Haedar Nashir —the current Muhammadiyah chairman (since 2015) – has a reputation for speaking out against the 'infiltration' of Muhammadiyah by conservative Islamist groups.[46] He is considered to have been instrumental behind the issuance of the *Islam Berkemajuan* theology during the 2015 *muktamar*. However, the current Muhammadiyah national board (2022 to 2027) also comprises theologically conservative members, including current board members Anwar Abbas, Busyro Muqoddas, and Dahlan Rais, who share ideological affinities with conservative Islamists. Given the diverse ideological background of Muhammadiyah national board members, a consensus acceptable to all needs to be reached in its decision-making. Hence, moderate board members like Nashir have to reach a compromise with more conservative ones who share ideological affinities with other Islamist groups.

Indeed, many Muhammadiyah members harbor sympathies for PKS, HTI, and various Salafi groups, with some regional board members and their affiliates (*amal usaha*) even thought to be members of one of the latter organizations. While moderate Muhammadiyah leaders have called for a stronger stance against the Islamists,[47] more conservative members – particularly those from the younger generation – clearly wanted the organization to accommodate the Islamists' political agenda expressed in the 212 rallies and to take a stance against the Indonesian state in general and the Jokowi government in particular. The fragmentation between Muhammadiyah's moderate and conservative-leaning members and the decline in its membership have eroded the authority of Muhammadiyah's leaders to speak on behalf of the Indonesian Muslim *umma*.

Due to these reasons, Muhammadiyah tends to express more criticisms against the government in comparison to the NU, not just in matters related to religion, but in political matters as well. A comparative analysis of official statements issued by both organizations (see table 1 below) reveals that Muhammadiyah is much more likely than NU to express its opposition against major legislation proposed and enacted by the Widodo administration which critics charge are weakening democratic rules and institutions in Indonesia and also more likely to repress those who are expressing dissent or opposition against the administration, particularly conservative and hardline Islamists

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Decrees Enacted on the 47th Muhammadiyah National Congress in Makassar]. August 18, 2015. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, p. 67.

45 Muhammadiyah, *Tanfidz Keputusan Muktamar Muhammadiyah Ke-47 Makassar,* p. 68.

46 Before he was elected Muhammadiyah chairman in 2015, Nashir had written books (for instance, Haedar Nashir, *Manifestasi Gerakan Tarbiyah: Bagaimana Sikap Muhammadiyah?* [The Manifestation of the *Tarbiyah* Movement: What is the Muhammadiyah Position?] (Suara Muhammadiyah, 2007), in which he strongly criticized transnational Islamist ideologies such as Ikhwanism (Muslim Brotherhood) and Salafism. He argued for a renewal of Muhammadiyah ideology in order to promote Islamic core values but also recognized Indonesia as a nation-state for all Muhammadiyah followers.

47 Nashir, *Manifestasi Gerakan Tarbiyah.*

Table 1: Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah's Positions on Major Legislation Enacted by Joko Widodo's Administration (2019 to 2023)

Title of Public Law	Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)	Muhammadiyah (Muh)	Explanation
Law on Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren) (2019)	Supports	Opposes	Muh argues the curriculum sets up by the law favored Islamic boarding school run by NU
Law on the Corruption Eradication Commission (2019)	Supports	Opposes	Muh argued the law weakened the powers of the anti-corruption agency (KPK), but NU believed it would 'strengthen' KPK powers in long haul
Government Decree In Lieu of Law on Covid-19 Pandemic Mitigation (2020)	Supports	Opposes	Muh opposed the mobilization of the Indonesian armed forces to help mitigate the pandemic.
Omnibus Law on Job Creation (2020)	Opposes	Opposes	Muh argues the law violated the workers' rights guaranteed by the Indonesian Constitution.
Law on the Criminal Code (2023)	Supports	Opposes	Muh believes the criminal code law endangers Indonesia returning unto authoritarian rule due to clauses which restricts freedom of expression and assembly. However, NU supports the law.
Omnibus Law on Health (2023)	No Position	Opposes	Muh opposes the 're-centralization' of health policy under the Ministry of Health similar to the Suharto era.

Source: Author based on statements issued by the two organizations and media reports

Table 1, which analyzes the position taken by NU and Muhammadiyah on major legislation enacted by the Widodo administration over the past 4 years. It shows NU leadership supports 4 of the administration's sponsored legislation, opposes 1, and takes no position in 1 legislation, while Muhammadiyah leaders opposes all 6 legislations, on the ground that they "endangers Indonesia from returning unto authoritarian rule."[48]

To conclude, the divergence between the two organizations on their agreement with the Widodo administration's policies is not limited to the administration's crackdown policy on the Islamists. It is also seen in their differing position on various recent legislation enacted

48 Hukum Online, "Jaringan Kampus Hukum Muhammadiyah Nilai RKUHP Rekolonisasi" [Association of Muhammadiyah Law Faculties Assess Criminal Code Draft Law is a Form of Neo-Colonialism], 31 August 2022. https://www.hukumonline.com/berita/a/jaringan-kampus-hukum-muhammadiyah-nilai-rkuhp-rekolonisasi-lt630f0b246a347/ (accessed 16 November 2023).

by the administration to curb individual liberties and civil rights of various minority groups (including LGBTQ). Only one of this legislation, the 2020 Omnibus Law on Job Creation (which curbs many workers' rights enshrined in a previous labor law), was opposed by both organizations. Muhammadiyah issued formal statements opposing major legislation enacted over the past 5 years - including the 2019 Corruption Eradication Commission Law (which contains legislation which significantly weakened the investigative powers of the Indonesian Anti-Corruption Commission), 2022 Criminal Code Law (which contains provisions which criminalizes anyone who committed 'harassment' against the presidency, the parliament, and other state institutions, criminalizes all forms of pre-and non-marital sex, and criminalizes LGBTQs), and 2023 Omnibus Law on Health (which re-centralizes much of the authority to regulate the health sector back to the national government and provides incentives for multinational companies to invest in the health sector).

However, NU either did not issue statements indicating its support or opposition towards these bills or supports them outright. These show that Muhammadiyah has consistently opposed many key legislations enacted by the Widodo administration to weaken various provisions guaranteeing freedom of expression, freedom of association, and other provisions weakening the quality of democracy in Indonesia. However, NU is largely silent and often publicly supported these legislations, indicating its endorsement towards the administration's policies.

Concluding Thoughts

In this article, I have analyzed how Indonesia's religious CSO – namely Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah– have sought two different strategies to counter their newer Islamist competitors – which in turn also determines their strategies to either aligning with or resisting the Jokowi administration's initiatives to weaken Indonesia's democratic principles and institutions that leads to the country's democratic decline within the past few years.

Through its strategy of 'strong resistance,' Nahdlatul Ulama has developed strong ideological and political counter-measures against other Islamist groups and has aligned itself closely with the Widodo administration to repress the Islamists, so they cease to be a serious threat both for the state and for NU. Given its long history of differentiating its ideology and ritualistic customs apart from reformist and Islamist-leaning organizations, it is easier for NU to frame its strategy against the Islamist among its followers, NU also has a moderate leadership hierarchy that by and large is able to retain the ideological cohesiveness of the organization – notwithstanding the existence of rival factions like NUGL, with more conservative theological views. These enable NU - working together with the administration - to develop strong measures against conservative Islamists and deploy harsh and sometimes violent tactics through its youth wing *Ansor* to marginalize FPI, HTI, and other Islamist rivals.

On the other hand, Muhammadiyah is pursuing an 'ambivalent resistance' policy which rhetorically differentiates itself from the Islamists, but at the same time defends them when they were targeted by the Widodo administration. It also opposes many legislations enacted by the administration that weakened democratic rules and institutions. Muhammadiyah pursues all these since many of its members (particularly the younger ones) are sharing

theological and political affinity with conservative Islamists, and it is losing many members in large numbers to other Islamist groups. Thanks to these, Muhammadiyah has given mixed and ambivalent responses to growing Islamic conservatism within its own ranks, while is more assertive to oppose administration proposals to weaken democratic rules and institutions.

By examining Muhammadiyah and NU case studies, we can conclude that religious CSO are more likely to oppose state policies that lead to democratic decline when it has more ideological similarities with competing co-religionists that are also targeted in the state's weakening of democratic rules and institutions directed to suppress these groups. Such ideological similarities make the particular group more vulnerable from the possibility of losing its members to the other co-religionists and also makes group leaders to have affinity with its rivals when they are being targeted by state repression. On the other hand, it is less likely to oppose (and more likely to support) democratic regressive measures if such measures are being utilized to suppress its rival co-religionists that do not have much ideological affinities with it and also has long-term historical and socio-cultural differences with its rivals. Since the group shares a similar political interest with the state, it supports the state's campaign to suppress its rivals from the public sphere, despite the negative consequences of the state's measure in terms of democratic decline and further autocratization.

The lessons from these Indonesian case studies should be noted by political scientists and Islamic politics scholars to examine the relationship between democratic decline and religious competition in other Muslim-majority societies, with the usual caveat regarding the different historical state-civil society relations within each of these societies.

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Author Guideline

Islam Nusantara Journal for the Study of Islamic History and Culture facilitates publication of article and book review on study of Islam, Muslim culture, social and politics in Southeast Asia (Nusantara) and beyond. It is published twice a year and written in Indonesia, English and Arabic. It aims to present academic insight of social and cultural complexity of Muslim world in Southeast Asia under the frame of dialectic between Islam and local culture or cultural realities.

The journal invites scholars and experts working in various disciplines in the Islamic studies, humanities and social sciences. Articles should be original, research-based, unpublished and not under review for possible publication in other journals. All submitted papers are subject to review of the editors, editorial board, and blind reviewers.

Papers submitted for publication must conform to the following guidelines:

1. Papers must be typed in one-half spaced on A4-paper size;
2. Papers' length is about 8,000-10,000 words;
3. All submission must include a 200-300 word abstract;
4. Full name(s) of the author(s) must be stated, along with his/her/their institution and complete e-mail address;
5. All submission should be in Microsoft Word, RTF, or WordPerfect document file format;
6. Arabic words should be transliterated according to the style of 'Islam Nusantara Studies';
7. Bibliographical reference must be noted in footnote and bibliography according to 'Islam Nusantara Studies' style.ain.

Examples of footnote style:

[1]Ryan Sugiarto, *Psikologi Raos: Saintifikasi Kawruh Jiwa Ki Ageng Suryomentaram,* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Ifada, 2015), p. 139.

[2]Nur Syam, *Tarekat Petani: Fenomena Tarekat Syattariyah Lokal,* (Yogyakarta: LkiS, 2013), p. 164.

[3]Syam, *Tarekat Petani*, p. 173.

[4]Ubaidillah Achmad dan Yuliyatun Tajuddin, *Suluk Kiai Cebolek Dalam Konflik Keberagamaan dan Kearifan Lokal,* (Jakarta: Prenada, 2014), p. 140.

[5]Nur Syam, *Tarekat Petani,* p. 99.

[6]M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, vol. 14 (Bandung: Lentera Hati, 2013), p. 167.

[7]Deny Hamdani, "Cultural System of Cirebonese People: Tradition of Maulidan in the Kanoman Kraton," *Indonesian Journal of Social Sciences 4,* no. 1 (January-June 2012): p.12.

[8]Hamdani, "Cultural System of Cirebonese People," p. 14.

[9]Deny Hamdani, "Raison de'etre of Islam Nusantara," *The Jakarta Post,* 06 Agustus 2015, p. 5.

[10]Azyumardi Azra, "Islam di "Negeri Bawah Angin" dalam Masa Perdagangan," *Studia Islamika 3,* no. 2 (1996): h. 191-221, review buku Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

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Guidelines for Book Reviews

Please include, at the beginning of the review:

1. Author, Title, Place, Publisher, Date, number of pages, ISBN E.g., Turabian, Kate L. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. Sixth edition. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996. 308 + ix pp. ISBN: 0-226-81627-3.
2. The review should begin with a brief overall description of the book.
3. Matters that may be considered in the body of the review include:
4. The average review should be about 1500 words long. The name, affiliation and email address of the reviewer should appear at the end of the review.

   The strengths and weaknesses of the book.

   Comments on the author's style and presentation.

   Whether or not the author's aims have been met.

   Errors (typographical or other) and usefulness of indices.

   Who would the book be useful to?

   Would you recommend it for purchase?
5. The preferred format for submissions is MS-Word.

Volume 4 | E-ISSN 2722-8975

Fakultas Islam Nusantara
Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Indonesia
Jakarta