

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL ISLAM IN  
INDONESIA DURING REFORMATION PERIOD  
(1998-2019)**

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the development of political Islam in Indonesia during reformation period. After gaining space for freedom in the era of democratization in a post-Suharto authoritarian regime, various Islamic movements with enthusiasm made efforts to Islamize Indonesia. However, more than 20 years after the reformation, the Islamic movements, and parties in Indonesia failed to provide color in the formal political and legal aspects, proofing by the winning of secular nationalist parties in the Indonesian election and limited numbers of policies supporting the existence of political Islam during the reformation. Therefore, the researcher analyzes the dynamics of developing political Islam and the various determinant factors that affect the rise and decline of political Islam in Indonesia during reformation period. Even realizing the various challenges faced by political Islam has shifted its form to adapt the Indonesian political system and culture. To understand this problem, the researcher used the evolution theory of political development as a framework for analysis and conducted qualitative research. Data were collected by conducting literature reviews, observations, and interviews with representations of Islamic political movements in Indonesia and social and political scientists. After the data is collected, the authors conducted reduction, display, verification, and data analysis to arrive at findings and conclusions. In data analysis, the author used the Nvivo 12 plus software. Based on this process, there are several findings in this study; *first*, Islam is an essential political modality in Indonesian politics, so it is often used to build political identity. However, the Islamic movement has experienced various failures because it still focuses more on implementing Islamic law, which is not yet popular in Indonesian society, especially in rural communities. Moreover, so far, the political Islam movement has not had a blueprint and road map capable of building unity among different Islamic movements to collaborate to achieve a common orientation. *Second*, facing the various dynamics that have developed, the Islamic movement in Indonesia has begun to re-orientate the concept of Islamization that they built. Political Islam focuses not only on practical political movement but also on social movement and community empowerment, whether through social, economic, educational, preaching, and media channels. This social movement is an essential modality for the Islamic movements to build a practical political movement if it can create an Islamic society. The researcher calls this pattern Islamizing Indonesia beyond politics as the author's contribution to this work. However, the study on the road map and blueprint of Islamizing Indonesia beyond politics still needs to be continued in subsequent studies.

## خلاصة البحث

يحلل هذا البحث تطور السياسة الإسلامية في إندونيسيا خلال فترة الإصلاح. بعد الحصول على مساحة للحرية في عصر التحول الديمقراطي بعد سقوط نظام سوهارتو الاستبدادي، بذلت حركات إسلامية مختلفة بحماسة جهودًا لأسلمة إندونيسيا. ومع ذلك، حتى أكثر من 20 عامًا خلال فترة الإصلاح، فشلت الحركة الإسلامية والأحزاب الإسلامية في إندونيسيا في إضفاء الصبغة الرسمية على الجوانب السياسية والقانونية الإثبات بفوز الأحزاب القومية العلمانية في الانتخابات الإندونيسية ومحدودية عدد السياسات الداعمة لوجود الإسلام السياسي أثناء الإصلاح. لذلك، يحلل الباحث ديناميكيات تطور الإسلام السياسي، والعوامل المحددة المختلفة التي تؤثر على صعود وهبوط الإسلام السياسي في مرحلة خلال فترة الإصلاح في إندونيسيا. حتى إدراك التحديات المختلفة التي تواجهها السياسة الإسلامية قد أدى إلى تحول في شكلها للتكيف مع النظام السياسي والثقافة الإندونيسية. لفهم هذه المشكلة، يستخدم الباحث نظرية التطور في التطور السياسي كإطار للتحليل وإجراء البحوث النوعية. مُجمعت البيانات عن طريق مراجعة الإنتاج الفكري والملاحظات والمقابلات مع تمثيل الحركات السياسية الإسلامية في إندونيسيا والعلماء لذا هي الاتحاد العالمي للتعليم والسياسة. بعد أن يتم جمع البيانات، يقوم الباحث باختزال البيانات وعرضها والتحقق منها وتحليلها للوصول إلى النتائج والاستنتاجات. في تحليل البيانات، يستخدم الباحث برنامج ن-فيلفو 12 بلاص. بناءً على هذه العملية المذكورة، هناك العديد من النتائج في هذا البحث؛ أولاً، يعتبر الإسلام طريقة سياسية مهمة في السياسة الإندونيسية، لذلك غالبًا ما يستخدم كأداة لبناء سياسات الهوية. بل العكس، في الواقع، لقد عانت الحركة الإسلامية من إخفاقات مختلفة لأنها لا تزال تركز أكثر على الجهود المبذولة لتطبيق الشريعة الإسلامية، والتي لم تحظ بشعبية بعد بين المجتمع الإندونيسي، وخاصة المجتمعات الريفية. علاوة على ذلك، حتى الآن، لا تمتلك الحركة السياسية الإسلامية حتى الآن صور المخطط وخارطة الطريق قادرة على بناء التآزر بين مختلف الحركات الإسلامية بالتعاون مع بعضها البعض لتحقيق توجه مشترك. ثانيًا، في مواجهة الديناميكيات المختلفة التي تطورت، بدأت الحركة الإسلامية في إندونيسيا في إعادة توجيه مفهوم أسلمة الذي بنوه. لا يركز الإسلام السياسي فقط على الحركات السياسية العملية، بل على أنه حركة اجتماعية وتمكين مجتمعي، سواء من خلال القنوات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والتعليمية والدعوية والإعلامية. هذه الحركة الاجتماعية هي صيغة مهمة للحركة الإسلامية لبناء حركة سياسية عملية إذا كانت قادرة على خلق مجتمع إسلامي. يسمي الباحث هذا النمط أسلمة إندونيسيا خارج السياسة كمساهمة الباحث في هذا العمل. كل ما في الأمر أن دراسة خارطة الطريق وصور المخطط لأسلمة إندونيسيا خارج السياسة لا تزال بحاجة إلى الاستمرار في الدراسات اللاحقة.

## **APPROVAL PAGE**

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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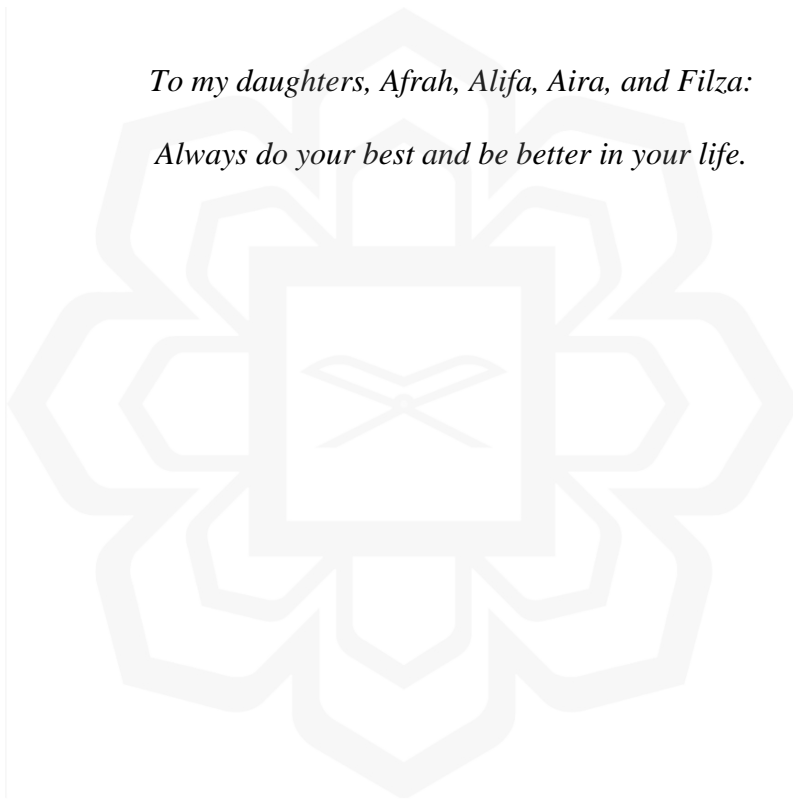
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*To my daughters, Afrah, Alifa, Aira, and Filza:*

*Always do your best and be better in your life.*



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABRI	Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia
AKP	Turkish Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nation
BPUPKI	Badan Penyelidik Usaha-usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
DDII	Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia
DI/TII	Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia
FPI	Front Pembela Islam
FKAWJ	Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah
GAM	Gerakan Aceh Merdeka
Golkar	Golongan Karya
HAMMAS	Himpunan Mahasiswa Muslim Antar Kampus
HMI	Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam
HTI	Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia
ICMI	Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia
ITB	Institut Teknologi Bandung
JAT	Jama'ah Ansharut Tauhid
JI	Jamaah Islamiyah
JIL	JIL
JT	Jama'ah Tabligh
KAMMI	Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia
KKN	Korupsi Kolusi dan Nepotisme
KPK	Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi
LDK	Lembaga Dakwah Kampus
LIPIA	Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab
LJ	Laskar Jihad
Masyumi	Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia
MIUMI	Majelis Intelektual Ulama Muda Indonesia
MMI	Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia
MUI	Majelis Ulama Indonesia
NII	Negara Islam Indonesia
NKRI	Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia
NU	Nahdatul Ulama
OPM	Organisasi Papua Merdeka
PAN	Partai Amanat Nasional
PBB	Partai Bulan Bintang
PBR	Partai Bintang Reformasi

PDIP	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan
PERDA	Peraturan Daerah
Permesta	Perjuangan Semesta
PERMUSI	Partai Muslimin Indonesia
PERTI	Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah
PKB	Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia
PKNU	Partai Kebangkitan Nasional Ulama
PKS	Partai Keadilan Sejahtera
PPIM	Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat
PPKI	Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia
PPP	Partai Persatuan Pembangunan
PRRI	Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia
PSII	Partai Serikat Islam Indonesia
PUSA	Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh
SBY	Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia
UIN	Universitas Islam Negeri
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
YPIA	Yayasan Pendidikan Islam Al Atsari

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Indonesia has the largest Muslim population globally, composed of nearly 87% of the 245 million Indonesians (Yodha, 2018). Therefore, it has a very significant influence on the study of Islam, including political Islam. Moreover, it is necessary to understand that Islam's position in Indonesia has a powerful influence on its people's cultural life, and it was very dynamic in terms of politics. Based on Indonesian political history, Islam had a strong position when the government's power declined but had no tremendous influence when the government was powerful. It used to be the tool of politics rather than the goal.

This antagonistic condition with Indonesia's status as the largest Muslim country in the world is different from the situation in Malaysia, which puts Islam as the most prominent element in its politics. To such extent, the character and power of political Islam in Indonesia are much more influenced by some factors such as the Indonesian Islamic political movements, some Islamic organizations, political conditions, and the elite class. Those factors will decide whether Islam influences political life in particular manners, such as supporting Islamic political parties, the minister of religious affairs, or no. Furthermore, the characteristics of Islam in Indonesian politics are influenced by Islam's long history in Indonesian politics.

Islam came to Indonesia long centuries back. Since that time, Islam has influenced various aspects of people's lives in the country. For instance, in terms of

politics, Indonesia consisted of many Islamic kingdoms before its independence from the Dutch, such as Perlak, Samudra Pasai, Demak, Mataram, Banten, Cirebon, Goa Tallo, Ternate Tidore, and Banjar (Gonda Yumitro et al., 2018). During the independent struggle era, Islamic leaders and scholars played essential roles in mobilizing people against colonialism to struggle toward independence. However, under the old and new order, the Islam's roles in Indonesian politics mostly declined, except only during the early periods of power transfer from Sukarno to Suharto. Kikue Hamayotsu (2002) explained that the nature of Indonesian politics in the new order era as "anti-Islamic" political alignment and saw the West as an essential ally (Hamayotsu, 2002).

Only during the era of reformation that political Islam started to rise in influence in Indonesian politics. For instance, it could be seen through the emergence of some Islamic organizations, political or non-political, after Suharto's fall. Comparatively, during the era of Suharto, there was only one Islamic political party, *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* or PPP (the United Development Party) (Ufen, 2008), two Islamic organizations, Nahdatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, and *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* or ICMI (Indonesian Muslim Scholars Association) (Barton, 2015). In reformation Indonesia, some Islamic political parties were established, such as *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* or PKS (the Prosperous Justice Party) and *Partai Bulan Bintang* or PBB (Party of Crescent Stars), Partai Amanat Nasional or PAN (the National Mandate Party), *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* or PKB (National Awakening Party), and PPP (the United Development Party) (Ufen, 2006). Despite those Islamic political parties, some Islamic organizations and groups started to emerge, such as Hidayatullah, Hizb ut Tahrir, Salafi, Laskar Pembela Islam (Islamic Defender Force), Laskar Jihad (Holy War Force), and Laskar Mujahidin

Indonesia (Indonesian Holy Warriors Force) (Abuza, 2007, p. 13). Though all of those parties and organizations have appeared mostly after the reformation, the political Islam ideas had existed for a long time along with Wahabism, Ikhwanul Muslimin (IM), Jamaát Movement, and the Iranian revolution.

Therefore, we can see that Islam has a significant influence on reformation Indonesia due to the people who demanded new changes in the Indonesian political system after their disappointment with the new order regime (Barton, 2010). Since Islam has existed in Indonesia for centuries and has shown its influence during some periods of nation-building and Indonesian political history, people want Islam to play more roles as it did previously. This expectation refers to when Islamic Kingdoms had changed some traditional beliefs and brought a better life to the people through the application of the Islamic principles which are against feudalism and supported social justice for all, such as the zakat where people enjoyed their experience under the Islamic kingdoms.

During the struggle for independence, Islam inflamed the national spirit among Muslims to fight against colonialism. The leaders of Islamic groups and schools in Indonesia encouraged people to fight the Dutch to liberate the country, using jihad<sup>1</sup> as a justification. Some of those leaders were Teuku Umar, Tuanku Imam Bonjol, Sultan Diponegoro, Pangeran Antasari, Sultan Hasanuddin, and many other Islamic leaders (Makinudin, 2018). The roles of Islam were also very significant in supporting Suharto's fight against communism during the New Order's earlier era. However, after Suharto became an authoritarian leader, Islam was used in forcing him to resign as the Indonesian president in the 1998 reformation, led by Amien Rais and Gusdur, two of the Islamic leaders at that time (Azhar, 2016, p. 43).

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<sup>1</sup> Using the term jihad, led by Islamic ulama and kyai, Indonesian people struggled against colonialism.

Those political events mentioned earlier determined the political discourse in reformation Indonesia. At least people had more freedom to express their identity as Muslims without intimidation, as happened in the era of the new order. Furthermore, in terms of culture, Islamic practices have been more widely accepted among Indonesian people. For instance, during the New Order, practices like wearing hijab for women and saying: “assalamuálaikum”, when meeting people were considered strange. One could be accused of being a fundamentalist; then, in reformation Indonesia, those kinds of practices have become more popular and easy to be seen (Nef-Saluz, 2007, pp. 16–17).

The rise of Islamic influences also happened politically when the Islamic political parties gained a significant increase in votes compared to that during the New Order era. The emergence of some Islamic political parties was followed by considerable support of the people for Islamic parties. This phenomenon could be seen from the 1999 and 2004 elections` result, where Islamic parties had won 33.6 % and 42.4 % seats, respectively. However, evidence showed that in the 2009 election, the support towards Islamic political parties declined. These conditions could be seen clearly from Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 The Performance of Islamic Political Parties in Indonesia Since (1970)

Year	Number of Islamic Political Parties	Percentage of votes won by Islamic parties	Percentage of seats won by Islamic parties
1971	5	27.2	26.1
1977	1	29.3	27.5
1982	1	25.5	25.8
1987	1	16.0	15.3
1992	1	14.9	15.5
1997	1	22.7	20.9
1999	6	39.2	33.6
2004	7	38.4	42.4
2009	9	29.2	29.6
2014	4	29.95	29.95
2019	4	29.26	29.26

Source: Taken from KPU (General Election Commission) Data

The data from Table 1.1 displayed an exciting trend. It can be inferred that the vote acquisition by Islamic political parties declined significantly in 2009, after experiencing a dramatic rise during the 1999 and 2004 elections. However, it showed a slight improvement in 2014. Therefore, this dissertation aims to describe the real condition of political Islam in reformation Indonesia and to figure out the reasons behind its development. Moreover, the shifting of political Islam development will be discussed.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Realizing that the issue of political Islam in Indonesia is dynamic and evolving, this study will discuss the development of political Islam in Indonesia's democratic life. As explained previously, some indications depicted the rise of political Islam during Reformation Indonesia, which was supported by the free spirit of democratization in the post-Suharto regime. Meanwhile, some changes happened to Indonesian political

Islam, reflected in the absence of substantial support to Islamic political movements and the significant decline in voters' support to Islamic political parties in the 2009 election. The abstention numbers have also increased in 2004, 2009, and 2014 elections, which will continue due to the lack of people's trust in political parties and politicians. In his paper, Jeff Lee (2004) argued that not all Islamic political parties could adequately address the people's real problems beyond the religious agendas, such as the issues of economics and physical security (J. Lee, 2004).

These dynamic conditions of reformation Indonesian political life have been taking place for more than 20 years, which has made it possible for us to analyze and figure out the form, characteristics, and developments of political Islam in reformation Indonesia. During these times, many issues related to political Islam appeared along with its development.

Moreover, the data of this research will be limited until 2019 since the presidential and legislative elections of Indonesia were held on April 17th of this year. During the Jokowi government, many Islamic issues happened, such as 212 actions and some Islamic scholars and elites' persecution. Therefore, there were some efforts made by Jokowi and his supporters to indicate that his regime does not discriminate against Islam. However, some evidence depicts that religious colors, especially Islam, significantly influenced the momentum of the 2019 election. By making 2019 the limit of the research time, the result of the elections can be analyzed to understand the position and development of political Islam in reformation Indonesia, particularly in the era of Jokowi.

### 1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There are some important and exciting reasons for analyzing the development of political Islam in reformation Indonesia. *First*, most of the research in this area explained political Islam in Indonesia based on the emergence of terrorist groups and the democratization process. Moreover, some researchers are concerned about particular Islamic movements or parties<sup>2</sup> that cannot be analyzed the comprehensive issues and their relations to bring the spirit of Islamism<sup>3</sup>. However, this research will provide a picture of the political Islam's development in Indonesia and explain the reasons behind the circumstance. Therefore, this research will add to the existing literature to understand political Islam's existence in the Indonesian politics in a more comprehensive manner.

*Second*, the prominent position of political Islam in Indonesia makes this study worthwhile. The historical data proved that Islam had a significant influence on various issues in Indonesia since the era of independence. Douglas E Ramage (2002) explained that Indonesia is a multicultural nation that has successfully accommodated the relationship between religion and the state through Pancasila as governing the country. In his opinion, Pancasila was the best solution and compromise of lengthy debates between Islamist and secular groups in the early era of Indonesian independence (Ramage, 2005, p. 11). However, some groups would not consent to this. The opposing groups, such as the Darul Islam Movement, which was committed to making Islam the basis of the state, could only be overcome by the early 1960s

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<sup>2</sup> Islamic movements represent the various efforts of religious and political organizations in Islam that seek the implementation of Islamic law and Islamic values in social, economic, and social life. Meanwhile, Islamic parties are a group of movements that decide to join a democratic system. They believe that Islamization can be carried out by changing the constitution or legislation legally and formally through state politics.

<sup>3</sup> Islamism believes that Islam must guide various aspects of life, such as socio-political and personal life. It means that all the behavior of Muslims must be guided by revelation, both the Koran and the hadith.

(Ramage, 2005, p. 17). On top of that, even today, the role of Islam in Indonesian development as a nation cannot be underestimated. With the long history of political Islam in Indonesia, this study's data will comprehensively understand the issues. Furthermore, this research is fundamental to understanding the shifting development of political Islam in Indonesia.

*Third*, the issue of political Islam is not fixed and static. It is associated with the diversity among Muslims regarding their understanding of Islam. In addition to that is the complexity of national issues lingering around Indonesia as one vast country. Some researchers showed that Islam is not united within itself. Clifford Geertz (1964) divided Islam into *abangan*, *priyayi*, and *santri* (Geertz, 1964, p. 6). In terms of politics, Zachary Abuza (2006) classified Islamic movements in Indonesia into some categories, such as regional caliphate, Islamic state, shari'a for Muslims in the pluralist state but no democracy, sharia for Muslims within the pluralist democracy, pluralist democracy with the more significant role for Islam and secular, and pluralist democracy (Abuza, 2006, p. 10).

Political Islam has possibly contributed positively to the religious and cultural life of the Indonesian people. Based on the research from 2001 to 2004 conducted by PPIM (Center for Islamic and Social Welfare Studies), individual religiosity and piety in Indonesia increased dramatically in religious practices such as praying, fasting, and reciting Al-Qurán. This research also showed a similar trend regarding the increasing support of Islamic governance people (Abuza, 2007, pp. 8–9).

*Forth*, this research is significant due to the position of the reformation momentum. The 1998 reformation was a crucial issue in Indonesian politics. The fall of Suharto from power on May 21st, 1998, was a symbol of freedom from authoritarianism and the starting point of Indonesian political change. Vali Nasr