

## The Sustainability of Interreligious Dialogue in Indonesia under the Phenomenon of Intolerance by Islamic Populists

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### **Abstract**

*From 2016 to 2019, mass rallies were organized by the “Islamic Defense Action 212” in Jakarta which was carried out by Islamic populists. During the rallies, the widespread use of identity politics have sparked an escalating wave of intolerance that has led to fractures in inter-religious relations in Indonesia. The phenomenon of intolerance described above is one of the main cases that researchers were interested to trace its impact on the continuity of inter-religious dialogue in Indonesia. This research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative analysis approach. This research found that there is a threat to inter-religious dialogue, namely the impact of increased intolerance. This has contributed to even growing exclusive attitude from several Muslim groups in Indonesia toward non-Muslim religious communities. If the Islamic populist actions that occurred in 2019 were repeated in the next few years, especially before the political year, it would undermine the order of peace among religious communities in Indonesia. As a result, dialogues between religions would be difficult to implement.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic populists, identity politics, religious intolerance, harmony, interreligious dialogue*

### **Introduction**

The fall of the Suharto regime in 1998 sparked Indonesia’s return to democratic principles and human rights. Religious organizations appeared amid the joy of the New Order’s demise (Diprose & Azca, 2020). Several religious organizations also find room for aspirations and try to help the Indonesian government run more smoothly. These large groups frequently incite violence in public places and among minority religious groups (Menchik, 2019).

Most violent religious organizations are from conservative movements and are dominated by Islamic movements such as *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI). Throughout the Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) presidency and before, conservative Islamic organizations gained freedom. As opposed to the administration of President Joko Widodo, which used harsh penalties to limit the space for these

hardline Islamic organizations. The decision to revoke the FPI’s legal entity in early 2021 is one of the many policies issued by Joko Widodo (Jokowi) during his second term in office. President Jokowi believes that the arrogant actions taken by the FPI in Indonesia have damaged the order of unity and peace between religious communities in Indonesia (Kurniawan, 2018).

The emergence of Islamic populist hubris was the cause of Jokowi’s resolute move. Several Islamic clergy and populists committed violent attacks against civil society between 2016 and 2019 in several countries. The “*Aksi Bela Islam 212*” movement’s members’ Islamic populist political acts have begun to cause harmony among Indonesians to fray. The rate of hatred between religious communities has increased because of initiatives launched by FPI and numerous other Islamic organizations (Mahpudin, 2021).

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At the Indonesian Student Discussion Forum (ISDF) meeting in Australia, Professor Vedi Hadiz stated that changes in Indonesia that have been in place for more than twenty years have resulted in a democracy with flaws. Hadiz noted that several issues, such as the escalating socioeconomic inequality in society, the rise of money politics, and the growing intolerance of some community groups, characterize Indonesia's democracy now. Hadiz's viewpoint has clarified internal circumstances in Indonesia, particularly at this time when populists have advanced political agendas in public areas (Ashartoto, 2021).

The practice of inter-religious dialogue in Indonesia has been ongoing since 1969. At first, the inter-religious dialogue was a program of the Ministry of Religion to maintain harmonious relations between religious communities in Indonesia. (Bagir, 2010). The results of interfaith dialogue practice are then applied to Indonesian society, produced by academics from a variety of angles, and connected to rapidly evolving social issues in Indonesia. The tranquility of religious relations in Indonesia is now threatened by the presence of Islamic populist groups that emerged following the New Order. These groups have wreaked havoc in several Indonesian locations. There are several prerequisites for interreligious dialogue, including the requirement that each dialogue participant not be exclusive or monopolize the dialogue and maintain a reasonable tone. If the key needs are not addressed, the discourse will be ineffective and eventually increase the risk of rifts (Lattu, 2019).

Interreligious dialogue is a strategy the Indonesian government uses to promote peaceful coexistence between religious groups. However, escalating acts of intolerance and discrimination by Islamic populists constitute a threat to Indonesian social interaction. Islamic populists routinely display intolerance toward communities of non-Muslim religions and even engage in verbal and non-verbal violence. The author of this study states the issue in the following way: How has conservative Islamic populism affected Indonesia's ability to maintain interreligious dialogue? This study

aims to demonstrate that the populist activities of conservative Islamic groups in Indonesia threaten not only democracy and Pancasila but also the interreligious dialogue that is one of Indonesia's main pillars of unity and peace building. In this article, the researcher will describe how the populist movement in Indonesia may pose risks to the ongoing interreligious dialogue.

Feridus Welak's article, "Populism in Indonesia: A Threat to Community Integrity and the Reactualization of Pancasila," asserts that the phenomenon of the popular movement in Indonesia has ties to identity politics and poses a threat to the Indonesian state. Welak contends that re-actualizing Pancasila's principles can help sustain unity among Indonesians, who represent a variety of identities. The principles outlined in Pancasila show how committed the Indonesian state is to countering the threats posed by identity politics. According to this conclusion, populism is not driven by the realization of Pancasila values or the spirit of Indonesianness. To stop populism and preserve the unity and integrity of Indonesia, Pancasila values must once again be put into practice (Welak, 2022).

The article written by Welak is also not sufficient to provide a complete picture of how the populism movement in Indonesia hurts community integration, especially in the dynamic aspect of inter-religious relations in Indonesia. It is important to underline that community integration is also supported through harmonious relations between religious communities. One of the strategies to support harmonious relations between religious communities is through interfaith dialogue. In comparison to Welak's writings, this one has the advantage of providing a thorough explanation from researchers regarding the significance of interreligious dialogue. This is a pillar of Indonesian unity and integrity based on Pancasila. If the values or conditions possessed by the actors in peace dialogue are threatened by the wave of intolerance brought by populists mixed with the values of identity politics, then the inter-religious dialogue cannot run effectively.

A journal study, "The Split Truth: Islamic Populism and Electoral Political Disinformation," written by Wahyudi Akmaliah, examines Islamic populism as the subject of research and analyzes the future of Indonesian national unity under pressure from the Islamic populist movement. Akmaliah raises three main questions in this essay. First, how has there been an increase in disinformation on social media, which is used as a means and tactic to defeat political opponents? Second, what discourse is used in disinformation to strengthen and attack political opponents? Third, how will Indonesian democracy fare in the face of widespread misinformation and Islamic populism? The research findings presented in this article show how Islamic populists are "predators" in Indonesian politics who seek to exploit social media. Akmaliah also believes that Islamic populism exists to win votes and undermine the country's democratic process (Akmaliah, 2019).

Most of the articles above discuss political dynamics that occur in the mass media and look at their impact on the social life of Indonesian society. However, some important notes should be considered by the author. The three main questions in Akmaliah's article and those mentioned in the explanation above would be more informative if the writer included the dynamics of identity politics as one of the political strategies that are often used to win an electoral competition. Moreover, this study must analyze how fellow Moslem groups respond to the phenomenon of disinformation by Islamic populists during general elections. As for the relevance of the author's research, which discusses the impact of populist Islam on the future of interfaith dialogue, the author is interested in the results of research conducted by Akmaliah in analyzing traces of electoral maneuvers carried out by populist Islam in Indonesia. It is also interesting for the author to examine the impact caused by the populist movement on the future of democracy in Indonesia as a reference for this research.

Contrary to the previous research journals, which were from conservative Christian groups, the two papers before this one explored populist

groups within conservative Islamic groups. In a research journal entitled "Populism and Right-Wing Religion in Europe and the United States," Jeffrey Haynes said that Christian populists in Europe and the US are trying to violate the human rights of Moslem communities living in these countries. Haynes found Christian populist patterns in Europe and the United States that indoctrinate the citizenry. This was done so that they would have an unfavorable attitude toward Moslem groups based in the western region. Haynes was successful in exposing the exclusivity of Moslem groups, which keeps them from assimilating into western culture in the United States and Europe.

However, the article written by Haynes did not include the efforts of the governments of Europe and the United States in dealing with social problems that occur in their countries, even though several countries in Europe are known for their peace building programs and prioritize harmonious relations between religious communities. In the records of the interfaith dialogue program conducted by Indonesia through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and religious organizations, it is explained that there is interest from western countries to learn how Indonesia maintains harmonious relations between religious communities. Furthermore, several international meetings on the theme of interreligious dialogue have been held, most of them in European countries. If Haynes can present the data as presented above, this article will not only be more informative but also have a more critical nature in analyzing populist phenomena (Haynes, 2020).

### **Research Method**

There are two main focuses of this research. This paper discusses the Islamic populist movement in Indonesia and its impact on the implementation of interfaith dialogue in Indonesia. This has been going on for quite some time. This study uses a qualitative method in which the primary data comes from interviews with two informants who are practitioners of inter-religious dialogue and academics who have so far focused on cases of intolerance and

populist Islam in Indonesia. The two sources are Dr. Zainal Abidin Bagir and Dr. Suhadi Cholil. This interview was conducted online via Zoom in August 2022. In addition to knowing the history of populist and Islamic populist phenomena that have occurred in Indonesia, researchers used data sources from a Reading in Social Sciences (RISOS) Programs by PUSAD (Center for the Study of Religion and Democracy) Paramadina University. The researchers used a descriptive-qualitative approach to analyze the webinar and interviews. This allowed them to analyze the threats posed by Islamic populists to the continuity of interreligious dialogue in Indonesia. Researchers also use scientific research journals and theses from academics who discuss the phenomena of political and religious life both in Indonesia and in other countries.

This research begins by explaining the concept of populist and Islamic populists, which is one of the new phenomena in political and religious studies, and the populist phenomenon of Islam in Indonesia, which is one of the focuses of this research, namely "*Aksi Bela Islam 212*." After explaining the populist phenomenon of Islam in Indonesia, the researcher provides an explanation of the concept of inter-religious dialogue and the urgency and dynamics of inter-religious dialogue in Indonesia. Then, the researcher discusses the results of this study, namely the impact of populist Islam on interfaith dialogue in Indonesia.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **How to define Populism?**

Many social scientists and scholars have tried to define populism. The debate among scientists is about what analytical glasses are used for. To interpret populism, some people referred to political ideology, while others said populism had a close relationship to electoral strategy. Scientists and professionals have not yet agreed on a definition of populism. A social scientist, Paul D. Kenny, defines populism as a movement with nuanced elements of identity, such as religious groups seeking justice through political action (Kenny, 2018). Canovan defines

populism, or what she calls "New Populists," as a right-wing movement on the political spectrum that is now emerging in many liberal democracies. Canovan added that the presence of populist groups was challenging the political currents of the defense parties (Bachtiger et al., 2018; Yilmaz, 2018)

Populists, in their political maneuvers, always bring up issues of democracy and justice. Those who join this populist group are dominated by members of society who are ignored by politicians in the current government (Anselmi, 2017). A method used by populist leaders to attract sympathy and increase their "troop," populists label social movements as a platform for bringing to the surface the unheard voices of society (Hadiz, 2015; Kenny, 2018). To increase the power of political maneuvering, populists usually invite opposition parties. Oftentimes these populists are used by opposition parties to pursue their agendas, as happened in Indonesia during 2016–2019. Despite this, populism tends to have weak foundations due to the many shared political goals that its leaders, parties, or volunteers hold.

In the West, populism is recognized as a classic political tactic that is used against groups that gain support from the people. This tactic brings many people together to participate in social movements. The West considers populist politics to be often colored by personal motives. Furthermore, the West views populism as a political movement that aims to eliminate the influence of parties and expects the state to be neutral to serve the people. Southeast Asian countries understand populism due to the inhibition of economic benefits flowing from urban to rural areas. Populists are also born from the existence of divisions within government groups due to the existence of social groups that are considered beneficial to them (Hadiz, 2015; Kenny, 2018; Swamy, 2013). The meaning of populist in Southeast Asian countries is a group intentionally formed by political elites who are in government with the aim of exploitation. It is for this purpose of exploitation that populists are vulnerable to division (Mietzner, 2020).

Not only Indonesia has had a negative impact from the presence of Islamic populists,

but several other countries have also experienced the same impact, especially Moslem countries (Hadiz, 2018). The development of Islamic populism in the world today is largely due to the economic imbalances experienced by most of the Moslem population. The presence of populist Islam today is part of the rise of global populist politics, which cannot be separated from social and historical factors. Various political agendas conveyed by Islamic populists are currently attempting to gain control of the nation and its materials, particularly those that are essential to Moslems (Hadiz, 2013).

The “Aksi Bela Islam 212” movement which took place from 2016-2019 by a group calling themselves the 212 Alumni Presidium consists of several Islamic organizations including the FPI, Wahdah Islamiyah, the Islamic Community Forum (FUI), and The Dzikir Group. Those gathered at the 212 Alumni Presidium came from various regions of Indonesia. There are various motives and agendas behind these demonstrations, which have been going on for approximately four years before the 2019 general election. FPI is one of the Islamic religious-based community organizations in Indonesia, that was initially formed and focused on controlling entertainment centers and community activities that were considered immoral and assisting the police in maintaining security. Over the past few years, the group has assumed a more political role and has demanded government patronage and exclusivity from several other Islamic groups, notably Ahmadiyah (IPAC, 2018).

Even though it is anti-moderate, FPI does not try to eliminate Pancasila, but instead hopes for the return of the first principle before the change, namely “the obligation to carry out Islamic law for its adherents” (Mietzner, 2018). The FPI, Wahdah Islamiyah, FUI, and Dzikir Group do not take a moderate stance. However, in the end, this group experienced a split. FPI had an agenda to synergize with Pancasila and did not want fundamental Islamic values in Indonesia. In contrast, Wahdah Islamiyah, FUI, and The Dzikir Group hoped that Indonesia would become a completely Islamic country by

implementing Islamic laws.

### **Islamic Populist Movement**

Huntington in his book “The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth century” explains that the relationship between Islam and democracy will bring big problems to the political system. Based on an analysis of problems in the Middle East by Huntington, the quest for democracy in the Middle East, the birthplace of Islam, is attributed to the rejection by Islamic values of Western products, where democracy is part of the product (Gyene, 2019; Huntington, 1991). The very dynamic nature of world politics has created a brand-new political phenomenon. This is a shift in Middle East politics to Southeast Asia, especially to countries where Islam is the majority religion there, one of which is Indonesia.

Vedi Hadiz responds to the current condition of politics in Indonesia by presenting Islamic populism. This term is a form of representation of the failure of Islamic politics in Indonesia. To compare Hafiz to the democratic model in Indonesia and Turkey, Hadiz sees that Indonesia has several Islamic parties, such as the PKS, which experienced a slump in the Indonesian elections (Hadiz, 2016). Hadiz sees that today many elements departing from Islamic groups are mobilizing the masses to fight the government. This is the basis for Vedi Hadiz to use the term Islamic populism. The Moslems who gathered were those who were initially victims of oppression from the ruling group. They were collected by several Islamic groups to put pressure on the current government.

The emergence of the term Islamic populism in Indonesia originates from a demonstration that took place in 2016 in which the ummah, led by an alliance called the GNPf-MUI (National Movement for Guarding Fatwa— Indonesian Ulema Council), pressed the government to immediately punish the DKI Jakarta Governor, Basuki Tjahja Purnama (Ahok) due to the blasphemous act against Islam that he did. The demands of the ummah reaped success when Ahok was finally sentenced to two years in prison on charges brought by the

ummah. “*Aksi Bela Islam 212*” movement is an alliance between the ummah and the leaders of the GNPF-MUI movement. This alliance includes different religious groups but has the same goal of “overthrowing Ahok” in the struggle to liberate Hizbuth Tahrir in Indonesia. In this alliance, several Islamic groups are incorporated that are in the Moslem middle class, namely Wahdah Islamiyah, Forum Umat Islam (FUI), and the Dzikir Group (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019)

The “*Aksi Bela Islam 212*” alliance’s goals have changed to focus on their animosity at Indonesian President Joko Widodo. This animosity is the result of the Islamic Defenders Front being accused by the police of committing crimes, the Islamic Defenders Front having its legal authorization to operate in Indonesia revoked, Ulama being detained by the police, and HTI (Hizbuth Tahrir Indonesia) being arrested (Insitute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, 2019).

### **The Impact of The Populist Movement on Interreligious Dialogue**

Before further revealing the impact of the Islamic populist movement that occurred in Indonesia from the reform era and caused horizontal conflicts throughout 2016 to 2019 on the continuity of inter-religious dialogue, it is helpful to first explain the definition of dialogue itself (Cholil, 2021). Cholil notes that dialogue is a form of two-way communication between two or more people. The article not only discusses dialogue, but also inter-religious dialogue, and considering the previous definition of dialogue, inter-religious dialogue, in a simple sense, is communication between people of diverse religions or beliefs. This interaction between two or more representatives of different beliefs or philosophical views takes place in the context of an effort not to dominate the other or monopolize the views of the discussion partners. Cholil added that dialogue requires an open attitude to be able to learn from those (dialogue partners) who have different beliefs (Cholil, 2021).

The King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and

Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) explains that dialogue will bring about a paradigm shift, especially in relations between groups or individuals (*What Is Dialogue?* | KAICIID, n.d.). This paradigm will ultimately lead to being able to take collective and inclusive decisions for the common good in a sustainable manner. This inter-religious dialogue activity can be a form of peacebuilding. Cholil’s book, entitled “explains that the process of interfaith dialogue can be part of peacebuilding such as conflict prevention, peacemaking, and post-conflict rebuilding (Cholil, 2021).

Marcus Mietzner and Burhanuddin Muhtadi’s research included three sub-studies: the level of Moslem intolerance towards other faiths and ethnic groups because of the “*Aksi Bela Islam 212*,” movement the level of intolerance that occurred over time, and lastly the protest against Ahok. The findings of this survey revealed a shift in the subject of intolerance, which began with anti-non-Moslem leaders but has now evolved into anti-religious activities of non-Moslem individuals, such as the construction of houses of worship and other religious activities (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019; Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2019). Politics is the driving force behind the rising level of intolerance, which now includes prejudice toward religion. The researcher used six indicators of research topics to guide the study methodologies used by the two researchers in the article, namely (Burhanuddin, 2019):

- a) Carrying out religious events of non-Moslems citizens in Moslems resident.
- b) Build of houses of worship for non-Moslems in Moslems resident.
- c) Consent of Moslems if non-Moslem citizens become Mayor or Regent.
- d) Consent of Moslems if non-Moslem citizens become Governor.
- e) Consent of Moslems if non-Moslems become Vice Presidents.
- f) Consent of Moslems if non-Moslem citizens become President.

From these studies the two researchers used a range of scores between 0-100 out of 1520 Moslem respondents and produced the following data (Burhanuddin, 2019):

- a) Moslem citizens who recorded “very intolerant” in the score 75-100.
- b) Moslem citizens who are recorded as “intolerant” in the score 50 - 75.
- c) Moslem citizens who are recorded as “tolerant” in the score 25 - 50.
- d) Moslem citizens who are recorded as “very tolerant” in the score 0 - 25.

Based on this research, 30.7% of Indonesian Moslems are very intolerant, 17.1% are intolerant, 20% are tolerant, and 32.2% are very tolerant. Research conducted by Muhtadi shows that the total percentage of Moslems who have an exclusive view in the sense of being very intolerant in 2018 is 47.8%. According to Muhtadi’s research, there are also other percentages considering within the scope of intolerance toward religion and culture, such as houses of worship, celebrations of other religious holidays, as well as the political-based intolerance index that is focused on state or regional leaders. There are 38.7% of Moslems who are intolerant towards religion and culture, while 54.2% of Moslems are intolerant on a political basis. The increase in intolerance that occurred among Moslems was allegedly due to the large amount of support they had for the agenda delivered by FPI. In Indonesia, 55% of Moslem respondents heard the agenda delivered by FPI in the “*Aksi Bela Islam 212*” movement, and 41% of them supported it. When calculated by both researchers, this shows that 22.6% of Moslem respondents support and agree with the agenda delivered by members of the “Movement 212” alliance.

The impact of the Islamic populist movement, particularly on the state of interreligious interactions, was investigated by LSI in 2018 by conducting surveys in a few Jakarta neighborhoods. The table below is a list of the researchers’ findings (Burhanuddin, 2018).

No.	Indicator	2016	2017	2018
1.	Reject the Indonesian President from non-Moslem groups.	48%	53%	59%
2.	Refuse Regional Leaders (Governor, Mayor, and Regent) from non-Moslem groups.	41%	50%	55%
3.	Refuse to build non-Moslem houses of worship.	52%	48%	52%

**Table 1** The results of a survey of the phenomenon of intolerance after the Islamic populism action in the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI).

The table shows that intolerant practices are being used, as evidenced by the rejection of certain Moslem groups for participating in politics. Furthermore, some Islamic groups are restricted from participating in politics. In Indonesia, populists and Islam have had a long history of conservative Islam intolerance. “*Aksi Bela Islam 212*” is only a minor example of the community tolerance that exists, but it offers compelling proof of the intolerance created by several Moslem factions within Islam (Ahnaf & Lussier, 2019).

Indonesian Moslems have grown intolerant because of populist Islam’s protest actions in Jakarta from 2016 to 2019. The rise in intolerance brought on by the Islamic right-wing movement, shows that some Moslem groups have a discriminatory mindset. Political intolerance and the prohibition on the establishment of non-Moslem places of worship are two blatant indications that Indonesia’s peaceful coexistence of various religious communities is in jeopardy.

Dr. Zainal Abidin Bagir revealed in discussions with scholars that these populist moves also had a negative effect on interreligious dialogue in Indonesia. Furthermore, according to Dr. Zainal Abidin Bagir, if politicians utilize this populist movement as a political tool, it could pose a serious threat to Indonesia’s interfaith harmony and variety (Z. A. Bagir, 2018; Winarni et al., 2019). Dr. Suhadi Cholil said the same thing, that Indonesia’s interreligious dialogue is also in danger from the populist movement. Dr. Suhadi Cholil noted that the failure of the Indonesian government’s initiatives to support a moderate culture in religious life in Indonesia was due to the shift in mindset experienced by some Moslems.

Religious moderation education is vital to maintaining the continuity of inter-religious dialogue in Indonesia. Without the promotion of a moderate outlook, the Indonesian populace may develop an intolerant understanding that

can give rise to radicalism. The difficulty in creating a moderate culture, or what is currently referred to as “religious moderation,” in the lives of many people in Indonesia, however, lies in the definition of the phrase “religious moderation.” This agenda of religious moderation is perceived as putting Moslems in Indonesia in a corner because many justifications for religious moderation are inspired by the phenomenon of religious violence committed by radical Islamic groups. By regulating the internal affairs of civil society, the Indonesian government is also accused of violating the right to freedom of religion and belief (Andy et al., 2020).

On the other hand, when the Indonesian government is intensively instilling a culture of moderation through religious moderation programs in Indonesian society, identity politics is rampantly carried out by many politicians in Indonesia. It is undeniable and has been proven that the use of identity issues can provide massive support for politicians. “*Aksi Bela Islam 212*” cannot be separated from the intervention of politicians who are using the populist movement to gain support. Politicians who use identity issues in practice can hinder Indonesia’s absorption of moderate values, as well as the threat of extremism posed by technological advances.

In Indonesia, many civil societies are subject to intolerance and extreme beliefs that come via social media. On numerous social media sites, there is a significant increase in extremist propaganda. Radicalized organizations in Indonesia use social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Telegram to influence the civil society there. Extremist organizations’ major targets are young people. These young Indonesians are chosen for recruitment using YouTube video programs and online gaming sites. It is quite concerning that this epidemic affects young people, and Indonesia requires a workable strategy to stop the propagation of extremism on social media (Lattu et al., 2021)

The implementation of the principle of religious moderation in Indonesia is complicated by the emergence of extreme

ideologies that continue to exist in Indonesian civil society. Hence the need for institutional cooperation and contributions from religious authorities, close friends, and family. Religion plays a major role in determining a person’s character and mentality, according to anthropologists. Therefore, the contributions of religious leaders are necessary to mold the congregation’s character, particularly its moderate sentiments.

## Conclusion

The Islamic populist protest movement, which has caused growing discrimination and intolerance towards non-Muslims among several groups of Muslims in Indonesia, has posed a threat to the continuation of interreligious dialogue. The Islamic populist movement triggers exclusive attitudes from several Muslim groups, whereas in inter-religious dialogue these exclusive attitudes are avoided. This article’s goal is to give policymakers and peacemakers inspiration for long-term peace initiatives. The authors are optimistic that Indonesia’s religious harmony would be promoted by the religious moderation program. Governments in Indonesia should develop strong public policies to limit any chance for politicians to use identity politics. Considering that many politicians nowadays think Indonesian religion might be used for political gain.

The findings of this essay can be improved in the future by examining how Indonesia’s populist Islamic dynamics would affect human values in the lead-up to the general election. Additionally, it is well-known that Indonesia is in danger of an economic recession as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak, and that religion plays a significant influence in several different aspects of people’s life. The author expects that this article may inspire additional research by tracking the evolution of political movements from religious groups in response to the danger of an economic slump. The inspiration for this idea came from thinking about the recent rise of Islamic populism.



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