ULIL ALBAB : Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin
Vol.5, No.12, November 2026

Conceptual Review of Islam and Politics in the Style of Santri

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Article History:
Received: 27 Agustus 2026
Revised: 20 Oktober 2026
Accepted: 09 November 2026

Keywords: *Islam, Politic, Santri.*

Abstrak: *As the foundation of the state, Pancasila holds a pivotal position in the conduct of national and state life. Derived from the values and local wisdom of the Indonesian archipelago, Pancasila was agreed upon by the nation's founders as a kalimatun sawa a common ground—uniting the diverse ethnic groups, religions, races, and social factions that identify as Indonesian citizens. However, amidst the advancement of knowledge and the emergence of ideological conflicts, Pancasila is currently facing serious challenges from conservative Islamic groups that question or even reject its status as the state ideology. They argue that Pancasila has failed to inspire the government to achieve public welfare; consequently, they contend that as a Muslim-majority nation, Indonesia ought to implement Sharia law. Amidst the turbulence caused by conservative Islamic groups, a form of hyper-nationalism has also emerged, with proponents likewise claiming to embody the values of Pancasila. In the name of Pancasila, they oppose the involvement of foreign companies, capital, and labor in the management of the nation's wealth. Conversely, in the name of upholding Pancasila as the state ideology, the government frequently takes measures against conservative Islamic groups deemed threats to national sovereignty that are perceived by some as excessive.*

INTRODUCTION

Islam is a universal religion that encompasses all aspects of life; politics, the state, and the homeland are integral parts of Islam. There is no separation between religion and politics, as politics is part of the perfect Islamic message. As the saying goes, there is no good in a religion devoid of politics, and no good in politics devoid of religion. In Islam, politics holds a significant position, and engaging in it can even be obligatory. Scholars of the past have articulated the value and importance of politics (Majid, 2007). *Hujjatul Islam* Imam Al-Ghazali stated that the worldly life is a cultivation ground for the Hereafter; religion cannot be perfected without the worldly realm. Championing religious values is ineffective without political power. Upholding religion and striving for political power are twin elements (*al-din wa al-sulthan tawamaan*) (Hidayat, 2021). Imam Al-Ghazali elaborated: "Upholding religious teachings and possessing political power (a

ruler) are twins. Religion is the foundation of the struggle, while the political ruler is its guardian. A struggle lacking a religious foundation will collapse, and a religious struggle lacking a guardian will be in vain." From Al-Ghazali's perspective, one can conclude that political engagement is obligatory, as it is a prerequisite for practicing one's faith properly and securely (Abdullah, 2020). This is how Islam views politics; however, because political practice is often tainted by malice, corruption, dishonesty, and fraud, a general impression has emerged that politics in certain contexts is dirty and should be avoided. The Islamic reformer Muhammad Abduh was also once deeply critical of politics and politicians; based on his observations and experiences at the time, he saw that the political sphere was rife with ethical violations, corruption, dishonesty, and deceit (Zaprulkhan, 2017).

Muhammad Abduh once expressed a prayer seeking refuge from the realm of politics specifically from those who pursue it, those involved in its affairs, those who orchestrate it, and those who are governed by it. However, drawing upon the philosophy of Imam Al-Ghazali, it becomes evident that engaging in politics is a Sharia obligation; this is because the mandates of Sharia can only be realized within and through political power or the ruling authority (the state apparatus). This aligns with the *Usul al-Fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence) maxim: *Ma la yatimmul wajib illa bihi fahuwa wajib* (If an obligation cannot be fulfilled without a particular prerequisite, then that prerequisite also becomes obligatory) (Mas'ud, 2021). In other words, if the duty to propagate the virtuous values of Islam cannot be effectively carried out without engaging in politics, then political engagement itself becomes a religious obligation. This principle explains why Muslims have engaged in politics participating in state affairs and even establishing a state since the very inception of Islam; a practice exemplified by the Prophet (PBUH), the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and early Islamic leaders (Mujani, 2007).

According to Harun Nasution, Islam can be understood in both theological and historical terms. Theologically, Islam is singular and embodies absolute, indisputable truth. From a historical perspective, however, Islam manifests a diversity of thought and practice shaped by the specific spatial and temporal contexts in which it exists (Nasution, 1985). This aligns with the views of Nurcholish Madjid, who regards Islam as both a doctrine and a civilization. As a doctrine, Islam is the religion revealed by Allah SWT to Muhammad, with the Quran and Hadith serving as its primary sources; as a civilization, it represents the perception and expression of religious life among Muslims, conditioned by their specific regional and temporal contexts (Zaprulkhan, 2019). Diverse understandings regarding the relationship between religion and state in Islam have emerged, reflecting the sociological, historical, anthropological, and intellectual backgrounds as well as the struggles of various thinkers. These perspectives are further shaped by differing interpretations of the Quran and the Prophet's Hadith, which serve as the primary points of reference (Hilmy, 2022). Broadly speaking, prevailing patterns indicate that throughout its history, Islam has evolved into various schools of thought, including secular, conservative, neo-fundamentalist, and neo-reformist (Qodir, 2012).

The trajectory of conservative Islam as a component of Indonesian civilization has been marked by various dynamics. During the New Order era, conservative Islam tended to remain subdued and had limited agency due to the pressure it faced (Hikam, 1999). This situation shifted following the end of the New Order marked by Suharto's resignation as President of the Republic of Indonesia on May 21, 1998. The movement and resurgence of conservative Islam gained significant momentum during the 2014 presidential and vice-presidential elections. The contest featured two pairs of candidates: Joko Widodo and M. Jusuf Kalla, and Prabowo Subianto and Hatta Radjasa. Applying Clifford Geertz's trichotomy, both Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto

shared an *abangan* background. Nevertheless, conservative Islamic groups threw their support behind the Prabowo Subianto-Hatta Radjasa ticket, perceiving it as more Islamic; notably, their supporting coalition included the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) which is explicitly founded on Islamic principles and the National Mandate Party (PAN), which possesses an Islamic mass base.

The resurgence of conservative Islam intensified significantly during the blasphemy case involving the Governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok). Attacks against Ahok surged across various regions of Indonesia. The conservative Islamic movement reached its peak with the "212" rally spearheaded by the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and joined by PKS, HTI, Persis, and Wahdah Islamiyah which demanded Ahok's arrest and imprisonment. This mobilization persisted throughout Ahok's trial, culminating in a sentence that represented the height of the criminalization of a citizen under mass pressure fueled by religious sentiment.

RESEARCH METHOD

Historical research which is essentially the study of historical sources involves the implementation of the stages encompassed by the historical method: heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The last of these stages is not actually a research activity, but rather an act of historical writing (documenting the research findings). The implementation of historical research consists of.

Heuristics

Heuristics is the process of searching for and locating necessary sources. The success of this search depends fundamentally on the researcher's insight regarding the required sources and their technical skills in locating them (Kuntowijoyo, 2003). In terms of their format, historical sources include archives, documents, books, magazines/journals, newspapers, and so forth. Based on their nature, historical sources are categorized as either primary or secondary. A primary source is one created close to the time the event occurred, whereas a secondary source is one created long after the event took place. Researchers must clearly distinguish between primary and secondary sources. Locating primary sources is essential in historical research, as scholarly historical writing cannot rely solely on secondary sources.

Source Criticism

Sources for scholarly historical writing are not just any sources; they must first be evaluated through external and internal criticism (Abdurahman, 2007). External criticism assesses whether a source is indeed the one required and determines whether it is an original, a derivative, or a forgery; in other words, it evaluates the source's authenticity. Internal criticism assesses the credibility of the data contained within the source. The primary goal of source criticism is to select data in order to establish historical facts. Ideally, each piece of data should be recorded on a separate sheet (using a card system) to facilitate classification according to the writing's framework.

Interpretation

Once sufficient facts have been gathered to explore and discuss the research problem, interpretation is undertaken that is, interpreting the meaning of the facts and the relationships between them. The interpretation of facts must be grounded in objectivity. Even if a subjective approach is adopted in certain instances, it must be rational rather than emotional. The reconstruction of historical events must yield a historical account that is accurate or approximates the truth (Sjamsuddin, 2007).

Historiography

The final stage of historical research (the historical method) involves weaving together the facts and their meanings chronologically (or diachronically) and systematically into a historical narrative. Both of these qualities must be clearly evident, as they are defining characteristics of scholarly historical work and of history as a discipline (Reiner, 1997).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Indeed, linking religion and politics is seemingly not an easy task. This is because religion is often interpreted in a limited sense associated solely with ritual activities. Consequently, discussions about religion are confined to places of worship, prayer or ritual events, weddings, funerals, and the like. Similarly, Islamic religious education is often limited to *aqidah* (creed), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *tarikh* (history), *tasawwuf*/*akhlaq* (Sufism/ethics), and Arabic language studies.

Likewise, discussions regarding economics, politics, social issues, and other matters are often approached exclusively from the perspective of *fiqh*; the focus invariably falls on categories such as obligatory (*wajib*), forbidden (*haram*), permissible (*mubah*), discouraged (*makruh*), and recommended (*sunnah*). When a matter is linked to religion, the questions that arise concern its legal status whether it is *halal*, *haram*, *makruh*, *sunnah*, or *mubah*. Similarly, regarding *aqidah*, the questions center on whether a person falls into categories such as *musyrik* (polytheist), *munafiq* (hypocrite), *mukmin* (believer), *muslim*, *zindiq* (heretic), and so forth.

From another perspective specifically regarding behavior, which is closely linked to *akhlaq* (ethics) or *tasawwuf* (Sufism) the focus shifts to concepts such as patience (*sabar*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), contentment (*qana'ah*), reliance on God (*tawakkal*), steadfastness (*istiqamah*), humility (*tawadhu'*), and blessings (*barakah*). Therefore, discussions on Islam and politics are invariably linked to *aqidah*, *fiqh*, *akhlaq*, and *tasawwuf*. In more technical terms, when political issues are viewed from the perspective of *fiqh*, questions arise regarding the legal ruling on voting for legislative candidates, political parties, or candidates for positions such as regent, mayor, governor, president, and vice president. Furthermore, when political debates emerge within the community, they are often resolved through the lenses of *aqidah*, *fiqh*, and *akhlaq* or *tasawwuf*. For instance, a common question is whether it is permissible to vote for a legislative candidate from a party that is not founded on Islamic principles.

In fact, if the religion in question is Islam, linking religion and politics becomes straightforward. Islam, for instance, speaks of justice. To ensure that the concept of justice is truly implemented within society including democratic societies Islam provides clear guidance on how justice should be prioritized and enacted, drawing from both the Quran and the examples found in the Prophet's Hadith (Romas, 2000).

Islam also encourages people to pursue knowledge to the highest and broadest possible extent. Since the government bears the responsibility of managing communal life, formulating policies, and executing them effectively, it would be unfair for Muslims not to participate in this process. Similarly, Islam offers clear concepts regarding the organization of economic, social, legal, and societal affairs (Subiyakto & Mutiani, 2019).

However, because Islam has often been understood primarily through its ritualistic aspects, it is frequently perceived as limited or narrow in scope. Such a limited understanding often leads people to question the connection between religion and politics. Therefore, to properly grasp the link between religion and politics, one must not reduce Islam merely to a "religion" in the narrow sense; rather, it should be viewed as a comprehensive way of life that encompasses knowledge, human development, justice, and the quality of one's work or righteous deeds (Man, 2018).

Islam ought to be understood as a broad, holistic, and comprehensive system of lifespanning the individual, the family, and the social sphere, as well as society and the state much like the model established by the Prophet Muhammad when he built the community of Medina. Conversely, when Islam is viewed solely within the confines of "religion," it appears restricted. Religious education and faculties of religion often limit themselves to subjects such as *aqidah* (theology), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *akhlaq* (ethics), *tasawwuf* (spirituality), and *tarikh* (history). Likewise, religious studies are often confined to *ushuluddin* (fundamentals of faith), *sharia* (Islamic law), *tarbiyah* (education), *adab* (etiquette/literature), and *dakwah* (outreach). Anything outside these areas politics included is often not regarded as part of Islam (Mulkhan, 2020).

When Islam is understood in its entirety holistically and comprehensively grasping the relationship between religion and politics (specifically Islam) becomes straightforward. Islam cannot be separated from political activity. The Prophet himself, as the bearer of the Islamic message received directly from God, engaged in political activities. This implies that Islam should always be present in every aspect of life, including politics (Maarif, 2018).

Islam is a religion that serves as a mercy to all creation. The advent of Islam represents a force for good and a symbol of peace for the entire world, as it places a high priority on peace and justice. Leadership in Islam (*Khilafah Islamiyah*) is inseparable from the values of justice. From an Islamic perspective, leadership is considered essential; the presence of a leader ensures there is someone to organize, manage, or govern others, thereby bringing greater order to human affairs. Consequently, obedience to a leader is of great importance (Sunanto, 2012).

As a divine religion (one originating from God), Islam does not govern solely the afterlife. It also provides guidance on worldly matters—such as how to lead, how to respect leaders, and other issues regarding earthly life which are understood through *fiqh muamalah* (Islamic jurisprudence concerning social and economic interactions). Politics is also among the matters regulated by Islam. Linguistically, the term "politics" derives from the Arabic *siyasah*, which stems from the root *saasa*. In this context, *siyasah* signifies leading, organizing, training, and governing. It is also associated with the phrase *saasa al-qawm*, meaning to govern, organize, train, and lead a people or community (Tarigan et al., 2023).

Village Political Patronage

Bulutellue Village located in Sinjai Regency and exuding the charm of traditional rural life stands as a silent witness to complex local political dynamics. Despite steadfastly upholding local values and traditions, the village is not immune to challenges, one of which is the practice of political patronage. This article explores how political patronage shapes the political views of Bulutellue's residents and threatens the foundations of local democracy.

Nestled amidst a charming rural landscape, Bulutellue Village is surrounded by lush green rice fields and a community whose lives are deeply intertwined with agriculture. The village possesses local wisdom and unique cultural traits that serve as an ancestral legacy. Yet, despite its remote location, the village is not insulated from political dynamics, including patronage practices that may not always be visible on the surface.

Political patronage at the village level often manifests through the allocation of development projects or social assistance intended for the entire community. However, implementation tends to be selective; groups or individuals who support the village leadership often reap greater benefits than those who do not. Such projects are frequently used as tools to garner political support, creating dynamics of inequality that undermine local democracy.

For instance, infrastructure projects such as roads or irrigation systems are prioritized in areas

that support the village leadership, while non-supporting areas may be neglected or receive minimal attention. This fosters community division and can erode the sense of solidarity that has long been a source of strength for the village.

These practices of political patronage significantly impact public political opinion. First, polarization between supporters and opponents of the village leadership can generate social tensions that disrupt local harmony. This dynamic affects relationships among residents and can fracture the sense of communal unity that characterizes the village.

Second, unequal access to development projects breeds dissatisfaction within the community. Residents who feel neglected or economically disadvantaged tend to view the village administration with greater skepticism. This poses a challenge to the establishment of sustainable local democracy.

Third, electoral processes can be distorted by patronage practices. Offering incentives or rewards to potential voters can transform an election which ought to reflect the will of the people into a transaction of personal interests. This undermines the essence of democracy, which should be grounded in free and fair participation.

Addressing political patronage in Bulutellue Village requires a collaborative effort involving the village government, the community, and civil society organizations. First, raising public awareness regarding the negative impacts of political patronage is crucial. Public education programs highlighting the importance of inclusive and participatory democracy can foster a better understanding among residents. Second, transparency in the management of public resources must be strengthened. The village government needs to disclose information regarding budget allocations and development projects to enable public oversight. Robust oversight mechanisms involving civil society organizations can assist in evaluating the implementation of these programs. Third, active community participation in village decision-making processes must be encouraged. Village deliberations and other participatory forums can serve as platforms for directly voicing the community's aspirations and interests. Community empowerment is key to building a genuine local democracy.

Despite its beauty and rich traditions, the village is not immune to the challenges posed by political patronage, which can undermine local democracy. Through the combined efforts of the government and the community, the village has the potential to move toward a political system that is fairer, more inclusive, and sustainable. Understanding the dynamics of political patronage and working toward participatory solutions will help Bulutellue Village build a solid foundation for local democracy and empower its residents to achieve a better future.

CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding discussion, it can be concluded that, from a normative-doctrinal perspective, Islamic teachings encompass democratic principles and elements albeit in a generic or broad sense. These principles and elements include *as-syura* (consultation), *al-'adalah* (justice), *al-amanah* (trust/accountability), *al-masuliyyah* (responsibility), and *al-hurriyyah* (freedom). Democratic practices were indeed implemented during the era of the Prophet Muhammad and the Rightly Guided Caliphs (*Khulafaur-Rashidin*); however, most subsequent Islamic nations did not inherit these democratic values. This situation is not unique to Islamic countries; it is also observed in non-Islamic (Western) nations. Indeed, this is a challenge faced by many countries. Generally speaking, religious values have not yet been widely applied to contribute to the governance of many nations let alone secular ones. Consequently, the assertions made by Fukuyama and Huntington claiming that Islam is empirically incompatible with democracy are not entirely accurate, given

that democracy is not fully implemented in non-Muslim countries either.

The intersection of Islam and politics is a compelling topic within the realm of Islamic thought, particularly at both national and international levels. This is because Islam is not merely a religion in the conventional sense; rather, it governs various facets of life extending beyond the spiritual realm to encompass political, social, economic, and cultural dimensions. All these aspects are addressed within the framework of the Islamic faith.

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