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THE DURABILITY OF RELIGION IN THE SECULAR AGE: RELIGIONIZATION IN INDONESIA

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Abstrak

Menguatnya agamaisasi pada skala global telah menimbulkan pertanyaan baru mengenai validitas tesis sekularisasi. Kajian yang mendukung tesis sekularisasi menyarankan perspektif alternatif, dengan menekankan korelasi antara tingkat keamanan dan kepatuhan beragama. Studi ini memperlihatkan ketika tingkat keamanan meningkat, ketergantungan pada agama akan berkurang, sebaliknya dalam konteks keamanan yang rendah, kebutuhan akan agama semakin meningkat. Sebuah penelusuran terhadap lintasan dan dinamika sekularisasi di Indonesia menunjukkan, di kalangan kelas menengah Muslim, sekularisasi telah meredakan perasaan tidak aman yang timbul akibat krisis sosial-politik. Pengamatan semacam ini menunjukkan, perjalanan sejarah keagamaan sangat terkait dengan dinamika sosio-politik. Selain itu, inisiatif pemerintah dan organisasi politik yang mendukung agama sebagai pilihan utama mempercepat tren agamaisasi. Studi ini menggunakan penelusuran proses dengan membagi proses sejarah menjadi tiga periode dan membandingkannya secara analitis untuk menjelaskan mekanisme sebab akibat antara modernisasi, sekularisasi, dan agamaisasi.

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Abstract

The global intensification of religionization has raised renewed questions about the validity of the secularization thesis. Research supporting the secularization thesis suggested an alternative perspective, emphasizing the correlation between *security levels* and religious adherence. It posits that as security levels rise, the reliance on religion diminishes, whereas in contexts of low security, the need for religion intensifies. An examination of the trajectories and dynamics of secularization in Indonesia reveals that among the Muslim middle class, secularization has alleviated feelings of insecurity arising from socio-political crises. Such observations suggest that historical trajectories of religionization are intricately linked to these socio-political dynamics. Furthermore, initiatives by the government and political organizations that endorse religion as a preferred choice expedite this transition towards religionization. This study uses process tracing by dividing the historical process into three periods and comparing them analytically to explain the causal mechanism among modernization, secularization, and religionization.

Keywords:
Middle class, modernization, religionization, secularization

Introduction

The modernization and secularization thesis, which posit a diminishing role for religion in the public sphere with societal advancement, are increasingly being challenged. Notably, studies conducted by Casanova,[1] Stark and Finke,[2] and Inglehart[3] challenge this prevailing notion. The modernization thesis asserts that as societies undergo modernization, social ties become more tenuous, rationalism and science ascend in influence, political and economic structures develop with increasing autonomy from religious influence. This progression is believed to culminate in secularization, consequently marginalizing the influence of

[1] José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 2004), http://www.amazon.com/Public-Religions-Modern-World-Casanova/dp/0226095355?asin=02260953554&depth=1.; José Casanova, "Rethinking Public Religions," in *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, ed. Monica Duffy Toft Timothy Samuel Shah, Alfred Stepan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 25–35.

[2] Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, "Secularization, R.I.P.," in *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (California: Univ of California Press, 2000), 57–80, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pnf0j.6

[3] Ronald F Inglehart, "Evolutionary Modernization Theory and Secularization," in *Religion's Sudden Decline: What's Causing It, and What Comes Next?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), https://global.oup.com/academic/product/religions-sudden-decline-9780197547045?cc=id&lang=en&#.

religion in the public domain.[4] However, Casanova's examination offers a contrasting perspective through the lens of 'deprivatization.' Using empirical evidence from Spain, Poland, Brazil, and the US, he demonstrates that the perceived sidelining of religion by secular forces can result in its renewed prominence in public discourse. Deprivatization is thus characterized as a phenomenon where religions not only preserve their traditional roles but actively "participate in the very struggles to define and set modern boundaries."[5]

Other studies, like those by Stark and Finke, and Inglehart adds more details to the explanation of why secularization does not entirely eliminate the role of religion. Using the religious market theory, Stark and Finke illustrate that the durability of religions hinges on their capacity to provide the needs of their followers.[6] On the other hand, Inglehart considers the level of security as a key factor. He suggested that secularization, when leading to lower level of security heightens the demand for religion.[7]

The study mentioned earlier indicated that the lasting nature of religion is influenced by social, political, and religious dynamics. According to Inglehart's data,[8] 33 out of 49 countries globally gave seen an increase in religious sentiments, based on surveys conducted from 1981 to 2007. This period was followed by the 2008 global financial crisis, setting the state for a surge in populist movement. This was evident in significant events like the Brexit vote in the UK and the election of Donald Trump as the US president in 2016. Additionally, countries that were most affected by the financial and subsequent political upheavals, including Greece, Portugal, Spain, Ireland, and Cyprus, saw a rise in left-leaning

[4] Fenella Cannell, "The Anthropology of Secularism," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39, no. 1 (October 2010): 85–100, https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev.anthro.012809.105039.

[5] José Casanova, "Rethinking Public Religions", 23-35

[6] Ronald F Inglehart, "Evolutionary Modernization Theory and Secularization."

[7] Ronald F Inglehart, "Evolutionary Modernization Theory and Secularization."

[8] Ronald F Inglehart, "Evolutionary Modernization Theory and Secularization."

populism, with liberals gaining ground in the EU.[9]

The phenomenon of increasing religiosity is notably observed in non-western countries such as Indonesia and several countries in Asia and Africa. Based on a survey from the Pew Research Center in 2020,[10] Indonesia was listed as the "most religious country" out of 34 countries globally, a classification based on the proportion of respondents stating that "religion is very important in their lives." A staggering 98% of Indonesian respondents echoed this sentiment, followed closely by Nigeria (93%), and Kenya and the Philippines, both with 92%.[11]

In the lead-up to the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, Indonesia experienced a pronounced intertwining of religious sentiment and political identity, particularly evident in the actions of the 212 Movement. This movement, named after the date of its major demonstration, mobilized around 200,000 people in 2016. Its supporters called for the incarceration of the then-incumbent governor of DKI Jakarta, Basuki Thahaja Purnama (commonly known as Ahok). Ahok, of Chinese descent and a Christian, was accused of insulting religion. This incident serves as a stark illustration of the potentially detrimental effects of populism on democracy.[12]

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[9] Jürgen Mackert, "Introduction: Is There Such a Thing as Populism?," in *Populism and the Crisis of Democracy*, ed. Gregor Fitzi, Jürgen Mackert, and Bryan S. Turner (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), 1–13, https://www.routledge.com/Populism-and-the-Crisis-of-Democracy-Volume-1-Concepts-and-Theory/Fitzi-Mackert-Turner/p/book/9780367664770.

[10] Christine Tamir, Aidan Connaughton, and Ariana Monique Salazar, *The Global God Divide* (Washington, 2020), https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/07/20/the-global-god-divide/.

[11] Christine Tamir, Aidan Connaughton, and Ariana Monique Salazar, *The Global God Divide*.

[12] Marcus Mietzner, "Fighting Illiberalism with Illiberalism: Islamist Populism and Democratic Deconsolidation in Indonesia," *Pacific Affairs* 91, no. 2 (June 2018): 261–282, https://www.proquest.com/docview/2113246664; Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman and Prashant Waikar, "Fear and Loathing: Uncivil Islamism and Indonesia's Anti-Ahok Movement," *Indonesia* 106, no. 1 (2018): 89–109, https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/255/article/717836; Greg Fealy, "Bigger than Ahok: Explaining the 2 December Mass Rally," *Indonesia at Melbourne*, last modified 2016, accessed August 30, 2023, https://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/bigger-than-ahok-explaining-jakartas-2-december-mass-rally/.; Marcus Mietzner and Burhanuddin Muhtadi, "Explaining the 2016 Islamist Mobilisation in Indonesia: Religious Intolerance, Militant Groups and the Politics of Accommodation," *Asian Studies Review* 42, no. 3 (2018): 479–497,

This study seeks to analyze the counterintuitive phenomenon of how secularization amplifies individual religiosity, particularly within the Indonesian context. Post-reformation Indonesia has witnessed a discernible surge in religiosity, manifesting in diverse ways. These range from subtle shifts, evident in religiously influenced trends in attire, banking, and education, to more overt expressions, such as vigilante actions and violent extremism.[13] Despite the palpable consequences of severe crises on societal security, there's a notable gap in scholarly attention to this interplay between secularization and religiosity in Indonesia. By scrutinizing this pivotal juncture, this research aims to elucidate how secularization might paradoxically foster a more religious society. The study conducted by Elson,[14] Intan,[15] Seo,[16] and Syafiq,[17] predominantly concentrate on the state's role in either sidelining or accommodating religion, primarily in the context of the Pancasila interpretation.

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10357823.2018.1473335?journalCode=casr20.

[13] Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java: A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History, c. 1930 to the Present* (NUS Press Singapore, 2012), https://nuspress.nus.edu.sg/products/islamisation-and-its-opponents-in-java; Sally White & Greg Fealy, "Introduction," in *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, ed. Sally White & Greg Fealy (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008), https://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg/publication/373.

[14] R.E. Elson, "Nationalism, Islam, 'Secularism' and the State in Contemporary Indonesia," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 64, no. 3 (June 2010): 328–343, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10357711003736493.

[15] Benyamin Intan, "Religious Violence and the Ministry of Religion: 'Public Religion' in the Pancasila-Based State of Indonesia," *International Journal of Public Theology* 13, no. 2 (July 2019): 227–246, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334424613_Religious_Violence_and_the_Ministry_of_Religion_%27Public_Religion%27_in_the_Pancasila-based_State_of_Indonesia.

[16] Myengkyo Seo, "Defining 'Religious' in Indonesia: Toward Neither an Islamic nor a Secular State," *Citizenship Studies* 16, no. 8 (December 2012): 1045–1058, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13621025.2012.735028?journalCode=ccst20.

[17] Syafiq Hasyim, "The Secular and the Religious: Secularization and Shariatization in Indonesia," in *Secularism, Religion, and Democracy in Southeast Asia*, ed. Vidhu Varma (New Delhi, 2019), 111–134, https://academic.oup.com/book/40362/chapter-abstract/347022220?redirectedFrom=fulltext.

This study proposes two hypotheses. *Firstly*, in the wake of modernization-induced secularization, individuals, particularly the middle class and educated populace, tend to embrace religiosity as a means to mitigate heightened feelings of insecurity encountered during modern crises. *Secondly*, the state and political institutions exacerbate this turn towards religious behavior by promoting religiosity as a strategy to bolster societal security.

The findings from the study aims to enrich the discourse on secularization and religionization. On a practical level, these insights will enable policymakers and analysts to fathom the escalating religiosity in Indonesia and comprehend the increasing sensitivity surrounding religious debates. Furthermore, this research underscores the potential of religion as a catalyst for democratic progression and vice versa.

The study employs the process tracing method, categorizing the historical trajectory into three distinct eras: the Old Era, the New Order Era, and the Post-Reformation Era. Within each period, the authors underscore the interplay of social, political, and religious crises, elucidating the causative interrelations between modernization, secularization, and religionization. Process tracing, being apt for either testing or developing theory within a single-case study framework, can adeptly link specific observations to derive a case explanation.[18] The use of this method is intended to answer one of the three objectives usually chosen in process tracing, namely, whether a causal mechanism is present and whether it functions as theorized. [19] A causal mechanism here is defined as "a complex system that produces an outcome through the interaction of a

[18] Alexander L George and Andrew Bennett, "Case Studies and Social Science," in *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, ed. Alexander L George and Andrew Bennett (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005), 207, https://www.academia.edu/19264308/Case_Studies_and_Theory_Development_in_the_Social_Sciences.

[19] Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, "Case Selection and Nesting Process-Tracing Studies in Mixed-Method Designs," in *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2019), 144–150, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287260232_Process-Tracing_Methods_Foundations_and_Guidelines.

number of parts."[20] Data for this study were obtained from various relevant literature, official documents, and media reports.

Modernization, Secularization, and the Durability of Religion

Modernization describes a stage of social development driven by capitalism. It is characterized by the loosening of kinship ties due to the need for social and geographical mobility, strengthening rationalism and entrepreneurial spirit, as well as a scientific approach to the world.[21] Another feature is the gradual differentiation and specialization of social structures. All of these processes create "a separation of political structures from other structures and make democracy possible".[22]

Modernization often leads to the phenomenon of secularization, which is characterized by the independence and differentiation of socio-political institutions and places such as the state, the economy, and science from the sway and dominance of religion.[23] Religion, once powerful, has lost its influence because it is perceived as the antithesis rationality and as belonging to a pre-scientific and immature world view.[24]

However, the evolution of religion in the 21st century exhibits trends that seem to counteract previous patterns. In countries that were formerly communist, there has been a revival of religious practices. Furthermore, fundamentalist movements have expanded in Muslim-majority countries, and fundamentalist politics in Western nations have also gained strength. Amid these occurrences, secularization faces

[20] StuartS. Glennan, "Mechanisms and the Nature of Causation," *Erkenntnis* 44, no. 1 (January 1996): 49–71, https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF00172853.

[21] Andrew Webster, *Introduction to the Sociology of Development* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1990), 50.

[22] Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, "Modernization: Theories and Facts," *World Politics* 49, no. 2 (January 1997): 155–183, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/world-politics/article/abs/modernization-theories-and-facts/24CC3E289332FF2D39B5FACEAD75C408.

[23] Peter L Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Open Road Media, 2011); Steve Bruce, *God Is Dead: Secularization in the West*, vol. 3 (Blackwell Oxford, 2002).

[24] José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World.*

challenges from "a global resurgence of religion"[25] and the emergence of "a public religion".[26]

In response to these trends, scholars have sought explanations. Some have formulated the religious market theory, which posits that the demand for and need for religion remain consistent. Factors on the supply side of society's perspective on religion play a pivotal role in shaping religious behavior.[27] A declining congregation in established churches does not necessarily indicate the waning influence of religion. In fact, some individuals gravitate towards smaller churches, which they believe better address their spiritual needs.[28]

Inglehart[29] offers a distinct perspective on secularization and the dwindling influence of religion. He contends that this decline is intrinsically linked to levels of security. The more secure individuals feel, the less they rely on religion. While secularization may usher in industrialization, augmented welfare, and bolstered state provisions for its citizens, it doesn't inherently marginalize religion. The secular age, in fact, underscores the resilience of individuals with traditional religious beliefs, with human fertility rates becoming a central concern, even among the secularized.[30]

The aforementioned explanations bolster the perspective that underscores the indispensable role and vigor of religion. Religion serves as a societal institution, aiding its followers in navigating challenges posed by modernization, such as decreasing mortality rates,[31] enhancing

[25] Scott Thomas, Desmond Tutu, and Desmond Mpilo Tutu, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century* (Springer, 2005).

[26] José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World.*

[27] Ronald F Inglehart, "Evolutionary Modernization Theory and Secularization."

[28] Fenella Cannell, "The Anthropology of Secularism."

[29] Ronald F Inglehart, "Evolutionary Modernization Theory and Secularization."

[30] Ronald F Inglehart, "Evolutionary Modernization Theory and Secularization."

[31] Aliya Alimujiang et al., "Association Between Life Purpose and Mortality Among US Adults Older Than 50 Years," *JAMA Network Open* 2, no. 5 (May 2019): e194270, https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2734064.

happiness,[32] and curbing potential violence.[33] In modern society, religion has seven functions (positive and negative), including defusing anxiety through ritual, establishing standards, endorsing political obedience, and a moral code of conduct, especially toward strangers.[34]

Indonesia's experience also shows that secularization, which has been intensified since the New Order, experienced a reversal in the reform era. Following the collapse of the New Order, there was a notable resurgence of religious expressions in Indonesia. This ranged from "hard" manifestations, such as episodes of violence like terrorism, the rise of militant groups, and Islamic parties, to more widespread phenomena, such as the growth of Islamic economics, Islamic banking, halal products, and Islamic fashion.[35] The post-reformation period also evidenced the evolution of religious regulations, propelled not only by Islamic parties but also by secular-nationalists.[36]

This study argues that secularization has amplified feelings of insecurity among the middle and educated classes, leading them to seek solace in religion after confronting various crises. This hypothesis also suggests that as the level of security escalates, secularization does indeed diminish the influence of religion. The process of religionization is further accelerated by the behavior of state and political institutions that offer

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[32] Ronald F Inglehart, "Cultural Evolution: People's Motivations Are Changing, and Reshaping the World," *Changing Societies & Personalities* 2, no. 2 (2018): 164–166, https://changing-sp.com/ojs/index.php/csp/article/view/35/38.

[33] Brent B Benda and Nancy J Toombs, "Religiosity and Violence," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 28, no. 6 (November 2000): 483–496, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0047235200000647.

[34] Jared Diamond, *The World until Yesterday: What Can We Learn from Traditional Societies?* (Penguin, 2013), 367–368.

[35] Sally White & Greg Fealy, "Introduction."

[36] Michael Buehler, "Subnational Islamization through Secular Parties: Comparing Shari'a Politics in Two Indonesian Provinces," *Comparative Politics* 46, no. 1 (October 2013): 63–82, https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/cuny/cp/2013/00000046/00000001/art00005.; Robin Bush, "Regional Sharia Regulations in Indonesia: Anomaly or Symptom?," in *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, ed. Sally White Greg Fealy (Pasir Panjang: ISEAS Publishing, 2008), 174–191; Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java: A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History, c. 1930 to the Present.*

religion as a way of overcoming crises. This hypothesis builds upon the framework introduced by Inglehart regarding secularization.[37]

In this paper, "crisis" is defined as an unusual condition that can occur in many areas of life, such as economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions. In the social dimension, crisis is related to social pathology, social breakdown, and social disorganization. In politics, crises correlate with societal transformations and ongoing deliberations about suitable political actions. Despite the myriad interpretations and manifestations of crises, a consistent perception emerges: crises are universally regarded as undesirable, demanding timely resolution.[38]

Religionization, the process wherein individuals heighten their religiosity by adopting religious rituals and symbols, encompasses the amplified expression of religious practices in public domains. Its hallmarks include the manifestation of narratives, rituals, symbols, and religious edicts in individual lives, societal structures, and public institutions, such as government bodies, educational facilities, and even commercial enterprises. Religionization can manifest in two distinct trajectories: from the grassroots level to institutions (bottom-up) or vice versa (top-down). The former illustrates how religious narratives, rituals, symbols, and edicts at the individual and societal levels influence public institutions. This influence is evident when institutions align their orientations and policies with religious norms. Conversely, the latter trajectory illustrates scenarios where religious elements are institutionalized and then imposed upon individual and communal practices.

The concept of religionization, as presented here, draws inspiration from Zehavi's study on religious phenomena in Israel.[39] It distinguishes

[37] Ronald F Inglehart, "Evolutionary Modernization Theory and Secularization."

[38] Robert J Holton, "The Idea of Crisis in Modern Society," *The British Journal of Sociology* 38, no. 4 (December 1987): 502–520, https://www.jstor.org/stable/590914.

[39] Amos Zehavi, "Religionization from the Bottom up: Religiosity Trends and Institutional Change Mechanisms in Israeli Public Services," *Politics and Religion* 10, no. 3 (September 2017): 489–514, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/politics-and-religion/article/abs/religionization-from-the-bottom-up-religiosity-trends-and-institutional-change-mechanisms-in-israeli-public-

itself from the notion of religionization explored by Hefner in his examination of "non-standard traditions" in Indonesia, exemplified by communities such as the abangan in Java, *Wetu Telu* in Lombok, Gumai in South Sumatra, or indigenous practices of the Bugis community in South Sulawesi. In this context, Hefner elucidates religionization as "the reconstruction of a local or regional spiritual tradition with reference to religious ideals and practices seen as standardized, textualized, and universally incumbent on believers".[40]

Modernization and the Middle Class in Indonesia

The development of modernization and secularization in Indonesia intertwines with its colonial history. The interplay between colonialism and modernization opened avenues for the introduction of innovative administrative techniques. This enabled the construction of an imagined community, the dissemination of novel ideologies through both formal and informal education, and the provision of technical facilities crucial for nurturing an expansive national movement.[41]

Education emerged as pivotal domain undergoing modernization during the colonial era. The growth of public and religious educational institutions in Indonesia can be attributed to the more lenient colonial policies that favored the interests of the colonized populace, commonly referred as "an ethical policy." During the Dutch colonial regime, the

services/C18C18919B887C5E785B39D0C85C9168.

[40] Robert W Hefner, "Where Have All the Abangan Gone?: Religionization and the Decline of Non-Standard Islam in Contemporary Indonesia," in *The Politics of Religion in Indonesia* (Routledge, 2011), 71–91.; Robert W. Hefner, "Islam and Covenantal Pluralism in Indonesia: A Critical Juncture Analysis," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 18, no. 2 (2020): 1–17, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15570274.2020.1753946.; Mega Hidayati Zuly Qodir, Hasse Jubba, "Contesting Ethnic and Religious Identities in the 2019 Indonesian Elections: Political Polarization in West Kalimantan," *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 29, no. 1 (2022): 111–142, https://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/studia-islamika/article/view/12940.; Maftukhin, "Islam Jawa in Diaspora and Questions on Locality," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 10, no. 2 (2016): 375–394, http://jiis.uinsby.ac.id/index.php/JIIs/article/view/352.

[41] Freek Colombijn and Joost Coté, "Modernization of the Indonesian City, 1920–1960," in *Cars, Conduits, and Kampongs* (Brill, 2015), 1–26.

volkschoolen (people schools) education system was instituted, offering basic education to native Indonesians. Concurrently, Muslim networks in the Middle East, especially Egypt, were growing.[42]

This policy shift created an educated and secular society. The presence of this new community was in line with Dutch colonial interests of cultivating a small group of Western-educated individuals to occupy various administrative positions in response to their expanding public service requirements.[43] Simultaneously, this policy fostered a network of educated Muslims within the middle class, primarily through the *pesantren* system. Soekarno and Mohammad Hatta, the first president and vice president of the Republic of Indonesia, were products of the first educational paradigm. While KH Hasyim Asy'ari, the founder of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and KH Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah, were the result of the second pattern of education.

During the Old Order era, modernization and development progressed slowly. The nascent government channeled its energies into establishing governmental structures and resolving internal dissensions. The middle class in the early days of independence and in the following years was a "relic" of the Dutch colonial period'. They were civil servants, a social class that is generally connected with *priyayi* (the aristocracy). Generally, they had a junior or senior high school education background. This new class had a republican and democratic orientation, partly Marxist.[44]

The term *priyayi* refers to the categorization proposed by Clifford Gertz in *The Religion of Java* (1960), while the other two class categories are *santri* and *abangan*. While *santri* denotes a Muslim community adhering to

[42] Azyumardi Azra, "Genealogy of Indonesian Islamic Education: Roles in the Modernization of Muslim Society," *Heritage of Nusantara: International Journal of Religious Literature and Heritage* 4, no. 1 (July 2015): 85–114, https://heritage.kemenag.go.id/index.php/heritage/article/view/63.

[43] Solvay Gerke, "Global Lifestyles Under Local Conditions: The New Indonesian Middle Class," in *Consumption in Asia: Lifestyles and Identities* (Routledge London, 2000).

[44] Solvay Gerke, "Global Lifestyles Under Local Conditions: The New Indonesian Middle Class."

Islamic orthodoxy, abangan characterizes a Javanese Muslim faction with a more relaxed approach to Islamic practices.[45] Despite questioning Geertz's category, most studies still use the baboon's work as the basis for explaining the Muslim middle class.

This paper adopts Geertz's categorization, albeit with a simplification. The authors delineate the middle class into two primary groups. The 'religious Muslim middle class' encompasses the '*santri*' subgroup from Geertz's classification, while the 'secular' group consolidates both the 'abangan' and '*priyayi*' subgroups. Recognizing this demarcation, it is essential to understand that the boundaries can sometimes blur. For instance, there have been instances where both the '*abangan*' and '*priyayi*' communities have displayed pronounced religiosity. Such ambiguities highlight the challenges of defining the middle class solely on metrics like education or income, suggesting that other markers, such as tastes and habits, might be relevant.

During the New Order era, the middle class grew as a consequence of extensive modernization and development efforts. Propelled by both military force and civilian bureaucracy such as the *Golongan Karya* (Golkar) network,[46] the New Order's development policies succeeded in carrying out significant economic transformations. In three decades, growth has grown exponentially, reducing poverty, expanding infrastructure development, and improving medical and health services. Based on the 1996 national census, those who are categorized as professionals, executives, and managers, and white-collar office workers made up 8.6 percent of the working-class population, translating to approximately 7.4 million individuals. However, this figure dropped to around 5 million during President Habibie's tenure, a decline attributed to the economic

[45] Robert W Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class," *Indonesia* 56, no. 56 (October 1993): 1, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3351197.

[46] Dan Slater, "Altering Authoritarianism: Institutional Complexity and Autocratic Agency in Indonesia," in *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power*, ed. James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 132–165.

crisis faced by Indonesia government.[47]

Development experienced a slowdown during the 1998 crisis and in the following years. The collapse of the New Order destabilized existing structures, leading to a proliferation of violent disputes. Succeeding President Suharto, Baharudin Jusuf Habibie grappled with reformative demands and the imperative of national cohesion. Notably, his policies facilitated East Timor's independence. Yet, certain strategies laid the groundwork for the ensuing reform agenda.

The next elected president, K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid, was considered a breath of fresh air for democracy. He undertook significant steps to promote democracy, such as revoking the ban on festivities for the Chinese community. Nonetheless, his tenure also witnessed violent religious discord and culminated in political confrontations, leading to his ousting during the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) Special Session. The reins of power transitioned to Megawati Soekarno Putri, who previously served as vice president.

The post-reform governments of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) and Joko Widodo (Jokowi) ushered in an era marked by developmental stability. Both carry out a policy of continuing "new developmentalism".[48] The development of this model is characterized by targets for rapid economic growth through interventions in economic activity to create new comparative advantages by issuing policies. These interventions typically favored open trade policies to access international markets.[49]

Based on Credit Suisse's Global Wealth Databook 2013, during the SBY era, 17.6% of households fell into the middle-class category, defined as adults with wealth ranging between $10,000 and $100,000. Those

[47] Solvay Gerke, "Global Lifestyles Under Local Conditions: The New Indonesian Middle Class."

[48] Eve Warburton, "A New Developmentalism in Indonesia?," in *The Indonesian Economy in Transition: Policy Challenges in the Jokowi Era and Beyond*, ed. Hal Hill and Siwage Dharma Negara (ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2019), 34–56.

[49] Eve Warburton, "A New Developmentalism in Indonesia?"

surpassing a wealth of US$1 million formed 0.1%.[50] By 2016, the number of the middle class in Jokowi's leadership reached 20% of the populace met the World Bank's middle-class criteria, identified by a monthly consumption expenditure of 1.2 million rupiah.[51]

Secularization and Religionization in the New Order Era

The development of secularization in Indonesia has been ambiguous since the republic's inception. While religion is discouraged from directly influencing public decision-making, it simultaneously remains a potent influence on the nation's ethos. This duality is encapsulated in the assertion that "Indonesia is neither an Islamic nor a secular state". Such Indonesian secularism diverges from traditional secular models, being more aligned with state administrative practices due to the influence of Pancasila.[52]

The dialectical tensions between secularization and religionization have persisted since the state's formation.[53] These two streams surfaced, as reflected in the discussion at the BPUPK (*Badan Penyelidik Usaha-usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan*) meeting. The group that represents the spirit of religionization, advocating for the inclusion of the term "Godhead" in Pancasila and the mandatory imposition of Islamic law for Muslims, was in contrast with the faction promoting a "limited secularization" encapsulated in the current Pancasila.

Post the political turmoil of the 1980s, the rise of the Indonesian middle class gained momentum. At that time, rumors circulated about a

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[50] Aria W. Yudhistira, "Tujuan Ekonomi SBY Ciptakan Kelas Menengah Baru," *katadata.co.id*, last modified 2014, accessed July 1, 2023, https://katadata.co.id/arsip/finansial/5e9a573641548/tujuan-ekonomi-sby-ciptakan-kelas-menengah-baru.

[51] So Yoon Lee, "An Urban Explanation of Jokowi's Rise: Implications for Politics and Governance in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 40, no. 2 (August 2021): 293–314, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1868103421990853.

[52] Myengkyo Seo, "Defining 'Religious' in Indonesia: Toward Neither an Islamic nor a Secular State."

[53] Ismatu Ropi, *Religion and Regulation in Indonesia* (Gateway East: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-10-2827-4.

"constitutional coup" accompanied by plans to assassinate the president and 75 other leaders.[54] Suharto, in a pivotal speech in Pekanbaru, denounced certain groups as being non-committal to Pancasila, accusing them of following Marxism, Leninism, Communism, Socialism, and Marhaenism. Such allegations were often aimed at Suharto's critics, for instance former generals A. H. Nasution, Ali Sadikin, and former Police General Hugeng Iman Santoso.

Eight years before the 1980 political crisis, Indonesia experienced a rice crisis due to the dry season, which also hit Asian countries. This crisis contributed to the birth of Malari (Malapetaka Fifteen January, or '15th of January disaster') and riots in several areas in 1974.[55] The political crisis of 1980 coincided with the second stage of the New Order's "experimentation of totalitarianism," which took place from 1980-1998.[56] This effort is carried out by building "ideological understanding" through the interpretation of *Pancasila.* At this time, through an official MPR decree, mass indoctrination was established by enacting the Guidelines for Understanding and Experience of Pancasila (P4). By 1982, adherence to Pancasila became a mandated guideline for all Indonesian organizations.

The New Order policies, particularly the implementation of P4 and the uniformity of organizational principles, alarmed a segment of the middle class and the Muslim political elite. Some of them consider that the P4 policy and uniformity of organizational principles will replace Islam or other faiths. Moreover, some of the languages used come from pre-Islamic languages, such as *Ekaprasetia Pancakarsa,* which means one oath to support five ideals. The United Development Party held a walkout in the DPR against this policy. The two religious organizations NU and Muhammadiyah carried out this policy while still insisting that Pancasila

[54] Ulf Sundhaussen, "Regime Crisis in Indonesia: Facts, Fiction, Predictions," *Asian Survey* 21, no. 8 (August 1981): 815–837, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2643885.

[55] Peter McCawley, "The Indonesian Economy during the Soeharto Era: A Review," *Masyarakat Indonesia* 39, no. 2 (2017): 269–287, https://jmi.ipsk.lipi.go.id/index.php/jmiipsk/article/view/591.

[56] Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java: A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History, c. 1930 to the Present.*

did not replace the role of religion and continued to carry out the principles of their socio-religious organization.[57]

A marked resurgence in religious symbols and practices became evident within the burgeoning middle class. Elite Islamic schools were built in various big cities and provide modern facilities and a curriculum fusing national and religious teachings.[58] Religious symbols such as headscarves were starting to become a common sight in public schools and public spaces. This became symptomatic after the Directorate General of Elementary and Secondary Education allowed the use of the headscarf after it was previously banned. To the ruling authorities, the headscarf symbolized an iteration of Islam perceived as a potential destabilizer of political harmony.[59]

In Java, the populace, once anchored in Javanese Islam, evolved into *neo-santri,* who tended to be apolitical and distinct from the *pesantren*-based political Islam of the 1950s. Because of their apolitical nature, *neo-santri* received government support.[60] In this circle, there is a growing phenomenon of the increasing use of Arabic names and the shrinking of pure Javanese names. Kuipers' research delved into these social intricacies, focusing on regions like Yogyakarta, Bantul, Lamongan, and Lumajang in Central and East Java.[61]

Simultaneously, as religionization was gaining ground, the specters of secularization and Westernization imprinted themselves on segments of the Indonesian middle class. Since the 1970s, Western consumer styles

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[57] Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java: A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History, c. 1930 to the Present.*

[58] Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java: A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History, c. 1930 to the Present.*

[59] Noorhaidi Hasan, "The Making of Public Islam: Piety, Agency, and Commodification on the Landscape of the Indonesian Public Sphere," *Contemporary Islam* 3, no. 3 (October 2009): 229–250, https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11562-009-0096-9.

[60] Robert W Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class."

[61] Joel C. Kuipers and Askuri, "Islamization and Identity in Indonesia: The Case of Arabic Names in Java," *Indonesia* 103, no. 103 (2017): 25–49, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5728/indonesia.103.0025.

have begun to emerge. Nightclubs became more widespread, alcohol became more widely available, and the lifestyle of young people was considered to be less concerned with customs. This middle class has promoted consumption and leisure patterns as core values through lifestyle and consumption images as depicted in television, radio, and press broadcasts. Emblematic of this shift were scenes of families and youth frequenting international food chains like McDonald's and Pizza Hut, or the ubiquity of brands like Benetton and Hammer among students.[62]

The confluence of "political and cultural crisis" elicited distinct responses from the Muslim middle class, predominantly manifesting as varied forms of religionization. Hefner argues that the reaction of the Muslim middle class to the symptoms of secularization offers more "ethical prescriptions" in Islam than diffuse "existential anxiety". The last symptom is experienced more by secular people who originate, and therefore have cultural experience, from rural areas or small towns in Java. Hefner referred to Benedict Anderson's depiction of studying cartoons and media images among the Jakarta elite. Among the Jakarta elite from neo-traditionalist circles, there is growing anxiety that their children will have special privileges and leave the etiquette as their parents used to do.[63]

Religionization, which deepened in the era of the 1990s was only a continuation of the changes caused by the crisis. As Suharto grappled with diminishing influence over the military apparatus and escalating dissident voices, he pivoted towards Islam, casting it as the novel cornerstone of his governance. He showed a more friendly attitude towards Islam. The presence of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), facilitated by the New Order, indicated a change in Suharto's political direction.[64]

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[62] Solvay Gerke, "Global Lifestyles Under Local Conditions: The New Indonesian Middle Class."

[63] Robert W Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class."

[64] Robert W Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class."

Secularization and Religionization in the Post-Reformation Era

The continued economic crisis that turned into a political crisis, set the stage for an intensified drive towards religionization. Religion is needed to increase the level of insecurity in an uncertain situation. During the New Order, it seemed that religionization could occur within certain limits, i.e., as long as it did not threaten the ruler. However, when the New Order fell and the post-reform Order began, the pattern of religionization was increasingly diverse, at least in the following three faces: personal piety; political, social, and legal; and the Islamic economy.[65]

In the early days until 2004, religionization resembled a free market for religious expression. This spectrum ranged from "hard expressions" such as acts of terrorism, militant factions, to more mainstream expressions such as Islamic economics, Islamic banking, halal products, and Islamic fashion.[66] Intriguingly, the post-reform era witnessed the proliferation of sharia-based legislation, championed not solely by Islamic parties but also by secular-nationalist factions.[67]

In a free market, contestation and even conflict between religious groups seems commonplace. Often, the victims are the minority groups. When Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) was elected through the first direct democratic election in Indonesia's history, the trend of religionization became increasingly orderly. With his military background, SBY possessed the capability to address conflicts using a security-oriented approach. Even though he was often perceived as slow to act, he did manage violent cases, even if they didn't always achieve a just resolution, as illustrated by the Ahmadiyya incidents.

Religionization, characterized by a conservative style, gained

[65] Greg Fealy & Sally White, "Introduction."

[66] Greg Fealy & Sally White, "Introduction."

[67] Michael Buehler, "Subnational Islamization through Secular Parties: Comparing Shari'a Politics in Two Indonesian Provinces."; Robin Bush, "Regional Shariah Regulations in Indonesia: Anomaly or Symptom?," *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing Intitute of Southesast Asian Studies, 2008).; Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java: A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History, c. 1930 to the Present.*

momentum during the SBY era. He opened channels for Islamic political forces within his coalition. SBY selected the Prosperous Justice Party to support his government, awarding them several ministerial positions. He named Suryadharma Ali, the Chairman of the United Development Party (PPP), as the Minister of Religious Affairs. Suryadharma had previously made statements that disadvantaged minority groups, including Ahmadiyya, Shia, and the Christian community.

SBY also appointed KH Maruf Amin, the Chairman of the MUI, to the Presidential Advisory Council (Dewan Pertimbangan Presiden, Wantimpres). KH Maruf was instrumental in issuing conservative and contentious fatwas, such as those against Ahmadiyya and those declaring secularism, pluralism, and liberalism as forbidden (*haram*) in 2005.[68] Speaking to participants at the MUI Congress that year, SBY conveyed his intent to assign a pivotal role to MUI in matters of Islamic faith, suggesting that state should listen to MUI *fatwas*.[69]

Progressive and critical groups from civil society organizations have emerged as crucial entities voicing concerns against the government's overreach in religious affairs. Senior figures, such as KH Abdurrahman Wahid, Syafi'i Maarif, and Dawam Raharjo, lead this opposition. These leaders serve as a guiding force for younger activists from both NU and Muhammadiyah.

In its later years, the SBY government received a lot of criticism for giving place to conservative groups and being indecisive about the heads of vigilante groups, such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI).[70] This policy fostered increased intolerance, an issue that the subsequent presidential candidate, Joko Widodo, aimed to address.

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[68] Robin Bush, "Religious Politics and Minority Rights during the Yudhoyono Presidency," in *The Yudhoyono Presidency: Indonesia's Decade of Stability and Stagnation*, ed. Dirk Tomsa Edward Aspinall, Marcus Mietzner (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2015), 239–257.

[69] Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java: A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History, c. 1930 to the Present*.

[70] Robin Bush, "Religious Politics and Minority Rights during the Yudhoyono Presidency."

Jokowi, who was partnered with Jusuf Kalla, incorporated strategies to combat intolerance in their Nawacita (nine agendas) during their 2014 campaign. This narrative distinguished them from their rival, Prabowo Subianto, and SBY's first-brother, Hatta Rajasa. Prabowo was known to be close to the Islamist camp. As recorded in history, Joko Widodo won the election and pursued a tougher policy towards conservative groups.

Jokowi's victory, who previously served as Mayor of Solo and Governor of DKI Jakarta, provides another picture of the "crisis" faced by urbanites. Based on vote acquisition data, Jokowi won in nine provinces that are categorized as the most urbanized provinces in Indonesia, such as Riau and East Kalimantan, including DKI Jakarta.[71]

Urbanization, which creates economic growth, also affects poverty among people who are less educated and have fewer skills. The last group usually lacks access to adequate housing and faces difficulties accessing basic services such as electricity, clean water, health care, and education. This situation creates social segregation and grievances.[72] Furthermore, more affluent urban sectors frequently endure unsatisfactory, opaque, and corrupt public services. Jokowi's victory as governor was supported by the image of his success while leading the City of Solo with fast, open, transparent, and populist services. During his time as governor, he made major changes to public services.

During Jokowi's administration, PKS chose to be an opposition party. In 2017, the government dissolved Hizbuttahrir Indonesia. Three years later, he disbanded the Islamic Defenders Front. These actions were undertaken with the endorsement of two major religious organizations: NU and Muhammadiyah. Supportive sentiments from these groups were echoed by the elite figures of both organizations in media outlets.[73]

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[71] So Yoon Lee, "An Urban Explanation of Jokowi's Rise: Implications for Politics and Governance in Post-Suharto Indonesia."

[72] So Yoon Lee, "An Urban Explanation of Jokowi's Rise: Implications for Politics and Governance in Post-Suharto Indonesia."

[73] Yopi Makdori, "FPI Dibubarkan, Muhammadiyah Sebut Tindakan Pemerintah Bukan Anti-Islam," *liputan6.com*, last modified 2020, accessed June 29, 2023, https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/4445893/fpi-dibubarkan-muhammadiyah-sebut-

This stringent policy has increased the level of insecurity, especially among Islamists and secularists who have conflicting interests with those in power. One of the pinnacles of this expression of insecurity was the establishment of the 212 Movement in 2016. This action did not only target Ahok but also Jokowi, Ahok's ally.[74]

In terms of harnessing religious issues, Jokowi's approach does not diverge significantly from that of his predecessors. At the domestic and international levels, he campaigns for tolerant and moderate Indonesian Islam. Joko Widodo promoted *Islam Nusantara* (Archipelago Islam) and *Islam Berkemajuan* (Progressive Islam) as examples and good practices.[75] The first term refers to the movement that was developed by NU, and the second by Muhammadiyah.

Jokowi ought to conduct himself in a manner that suggests he is not at odds with Muslim aspirations. Narratives promoted by the 212 Movement, such as the "criminalization of the clergy" and the portrayal of the "regime as supporting blasphemy," position Joko Widodo as an adversary to Muslims. Previously, in the DKI Jakarta elections and the 2014 presidential election, he also faced accusations of being a communist.

The PDI-P and its members have also made efforts to be perceived as not opposing Muslims. Occasionally, they find themselves the target of narratives that depict them as secular and communist.[76] This might explain why, in several regions, the party known as the Abangan Party supports the birth of regional regulations with religious nuances.

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tindakan-pemerintah-bukan-anti-islam.; Tim Redaksi, "NU Dukung Pembubaran FPI," *kompas.com*, last modified 2020, accessed June 29, 2023, https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2013/07/29/0305379/NU.Dukung.Pembubaran.FPI.

[74] Osman and Waikar, "Fear and Loathing: Uncivil Islamism and Indonesia's Anti-Ahok Movement."

[75] Ahmad Najib Burhani, *Islam Nusantara as a Promising Response to Religious Intolerance and Pluralism*, *ISEAS Trends*, 18 (Singapore, 2018), 1-29, https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/trends-in-southeast-asia/trends-in-southeast-asia-2018/islam-nusantara-as-a-promising-response-to-religious-intolerance-and-radicalism-by-ahmad-najib-burhani/.

[76] Ikhwan Hastanto, "Dari Semua Partai di Indonesia, Pakar Jelaskan Alasan PDIP Sering Dikaitkan Sama PKI," *www.cice.com.*

Conclusion

The critique of the secularization thesis, based on its perceived inability to account for the increasing religiosity observed in contemporary societies, is not entirely justifiable. By analyzing the trajectory of modernization and secularization in Indonesia, this study contends that the thesis still holds significant relevance. The surge in religiosity, especially within the middle class, signifies a departure from secularization, propelled by various crises. The trend of increased religiosity is substantially shaped by the actions of state and political entities that promote particular religious ideologies as coping mechanisms.

In other words, if the state's promotion of religion is not the overriding factor and crises can be addressed through secular means, then secularization might indeed diminish the prominence of religion. This study reveals that numerous crises throughout Indonesian history, including more recent ones, have profoundly influenced the rise in religiosity across various facets of people's lives. It's imperative to recognize that the shift towards greater religiosity doesn't always undermine societal well-being or democratic values. However, certain manifestations of this trend can be potentially detrimental.

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