



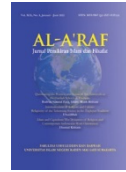
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IDENTITY POLITICS IN PROGRESS: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF SYAFII MAARIF'S IDEAS

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Abstrak

Kata Kunci:

Politik
Identitas, Etnis,
Agama,
Pendekatan
Populis

Dalam lanskap politik Indonesia, saat ini terlibat ada ketegangan antara politik identitas dan ideologi populis. Politik identitas merupakan istilah yang umum digunakan untuk menggambarkan tindakan dan gerakan politik yang terkait dengan identitas dan institusi agama, terutama dalam konteks Islam. Hal ini menimbulkan perhatian tentang bagaimana kita menginvestigasi politik identitas sebagai bagian dari pendekatan kontekstual, berbasis konstituen politik. Studi ini mencoba menginvestigasi pandangan politik Syafii Maarif. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan hermeneutik sosial dan metodologi interpretatif, hasil studi menunjukkan adanya tiga elemen utama dari politik identitas berdasarkan analisis Maarif: 1) etnis, 2) agama, dan 3) ideologi politik. Menurut Maarif, setiap aktivitas politik yang memiliki tiga karakteristik ini secara intrinsik penuh dengan politik identitas. Akibatnya, politik Islam sering dibatasi dan terbatas. Untuk mengatasi hal ini, temuan studi ini mendorong perlunya aktualisasi gagasan politik identitas dalam rangka menciptakan ruang politik populis. Sementara agama, etnis, dan ideologi politik berjalan bersamaan, pendekatan populis masih relevan dalam politik Islam, metode persuasi, dan koneksi politik tertentu berdasarkan pemilih.

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Abstract
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Approach

In Indonesia's political landscape, there is a current tension between identity politics and populist ideologies. Identity politics is a broad term used to describe political movements and actions related to religious identities and institutions, particularly in an Islamic setting. However, it raises concern about how we will investigate identity politics as part of a contextual, constituent-based approach to politics. The current study investigates Syafii Maarif's political views. By employing a social hermeneutic approach and interpretive methodologies, this thought is elaborated in this study. The investigation reveals three primary elements of identity politics based on Maarif's analysis: 1) ethnicity, 2) religion, and 3) political ideology. According to Maarif, any political activity that has these three characteristics is intrinsically saturated with identity politics. As a result, Muslim politics are often limited and narrowly defined. To address this constraint, the findings of this study advocate the actualization of the notion of identity politics to make space for populist politics. While religion, ethnicity, and political ideology coexist, a populist approach is still relevant in Islamic politics, persuasion methods, and specific constituency-based political connections.

Introduction

The discourse surrounding identity politics in Indonesia encompasses a nuanced interplay between intellectual inquiry and the strategic maneuverings of political entities.¹ Intellectuals engage with this topic as a subject of scientific inquiry, while political forces deploy it as a tool for advancing their goals, frequently manipulating its implications either advantageously or adversely to gain electoral triumphs or deteriorate their rivals.² This active discourse and implementation of identity politics have not only intensified its global appeal but also established a degree of prejudice in its understanding.

Numerous national political events intersect with identity politics, notably within the context of electoral competitions for regional leadership, the presidency, and parliamentary seats.³ As evidenced by the

¹ Gene M Grossman and Elhanan Helpman, "Identity Politics and Trade Policy," *The Review of Economic Studies* 88, no. 3 (May 22, 2021): 1101–1126, <https://academic.oup.com/restud/article/88/3/1101/5858143>.

² Marcus Mietzner, "Authoritarian Innovations in Indonesia: Electoral Narrowing, Identity Politics and Executive Illiberalism," *Democratization* 27, no. 6 (August 17, 2020): 1021–1036, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13510347.2019.1704266>.

³ Crasha V Townsend, "Identity Politics: Why African American Women Are

preparations and execution of the 2024 presidential-vice presidential campaign, identity politics has emerged as a pivotal theme in the political landscape.⁴ For instance, Ganjar Pranowo, a presidential contender supported by a party led by a media entrepreneur, strategically featured the Maghrib prayer call as a backdrop on private television. Similarly, Anies Baswedan has cultivated a public image by partaking in congregational prayers during his visits to various regions, while Prabowo Subianto has actively courted the Muslim community through visits to Islamic boarding schools.

The promotion of religious institutions and people as campaign platforms has provoked controversy among political watchers and candidate supporters about ethical concerns and the integrity of democratic processes.⁵ Identity politics has spread beyond electoral politics, showing itself in a variety of intergroup confrontations across the country.⁶ Controversy emerging from different perceptions of religious principles frequently serves as a cause for disputes and physical violence across groups.

Recognizing these multiple dynamics, there is a compelling reason for researchers to dive deeper into the workings of identity politics, both theoretically and in their manifestation within ordinary political speech and activities. As a result, this study aims to scrutinize the thoughts of Buya Syafii Maarif, an esteemed Islamic figure associated with the elite Muhammadiyah organization, in order to elucidate his perspective on

Missing in Administrative Leadership in Public Higher Education,” *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 49, no. 4 (July 6, 2021): 584–600, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1741143220935455>.

⁴ Sulkhan Chakim, “The Youth and the Internet: The Construction of Doctrine, Islam in Practice, and Political Identity in Indonesia,” *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 13, no. 1 (2022): 217–236.

⁵ Refly Setiawan, Melinda Esti, and Viktor V. Sidorov, “Islam and Politics in Indonesia,” *RUDN Journal of Political Science* 22, no. 4 (December 15, 2020): 731–740, <http://journals.rudn.ru/political-science/article/view/24949>.

⁶ Fakhrurrazi Fakhrurrazi et al., “The Pesantren: Politics of Islamic and Problematic Education Muslim Identity,” *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Studies* 3, no. 6 (December 30, 2021): 392–396, <https://ojs.unimal.ac.id/ijevs/article/view/5384>.

identity politics and its implications.⁷ By critically exploring Maarif's insights, this research seeks to provide readers with a framework for promoting a foundation for fostering equality and harmony within This study seeks to understand the socially constructed reality and the researcher's proximity to the subject under investigation, a characteristic often associated with figure research. In this instance, the research focal point is the elucidation of Maarif's perspectives on identity politics, which have been developed through academic processes and social interactions within society. Currently, conducting fieldwork for this work is crucial for enhancing data collection.⁸ In this work, the authors have established a solid understanding of the subject area and maintained social connections through personal interactions and participation in religious and intellectual forums.⁹ The data for the study originates from Maarif's written works and other primary sources such as publications, books, and scholarly journals, as well as secondary sources including popular writings and textual or video-based news coverage.¹⁰

According to Harahap,¹¹ conducting research on the thoughts of prominent figures entails an exhaustive inventory, extensive reading, and an in-depth study of their ideological corpus. The authors then critically assess these concepts, identifying their analytical strengths and shortcomings, and create a unified narrative that combines relevant parts while discarding unnecessary aspects irrelevant to the research subject. This research adopts a methodological approach known as social

⁷ Aditya Candra Lesmana and Budi Sutrisno, "Playing with Identity Politics: An Analysis Post-2019 Presidential Election," *Jurnal Sosiologi USK* 15, no. 2 (December 2021).

⁸ Christopher Arteria-Bach and Meredian Alam, "Just Going Nowhere," in *The Routledge Handbook of Poverty in the Global South* (London: Routledge India, 2023), 409–423, <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781032632391/chapters/10.4324/9781032632391-25>.

⁹ Yvonna S Denzin, Norman K, Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2014).

¹⁰ Arteria-Bach and Alam, "Just Going Nowhere."

¹¹ Syafrin Harahap, *Syafrin Metode Penelitian Tokoh*, 2nd ed. (Jakarta: Prenadamedia, 2014).

hermeneutic,¹² which involves the interpretation and understanding of Maarif's discourses, both verbal and written. Ranteallo et al.¹³ assert that the primary data sources consist of written texts authored or endorsed by the research subject. The secondary data encompasses various forms of information pertaining to the subject matter.¹⁴ This approach facilitates the comprehensive and systematic extraction of contextual meaning by integrating hermeneutical and interpretative methodologies.¹⁵

The Fundamentals of Identity Politics

Following Syamsurrijal et al's work,¹⁶ there are 500 selected articles addressing identity politics in Indonesia, drawn from journals indexed by Scopus spanning the period from 2012 to 2021. The analysis yielded three discernible orientations in scholarly discourse on the subject. Firstly, certain authors adopt a subjective perspective in their discussions of identity politics, often neglecting substantive analysis. Secondly, scholars criticize the fragility of the government's ability to mobilize power and formulate policies, especially when interest groups exploit identity politics as a means of contestation. Scholars discuss religious, racial, ethnic, and cultural differences, as well as social opposition to various government efforts aimed at reducing identity politics. Thirdly, scholars tend to delve

¹² Siti Nurhafizah Haji Mohamad and Meredian Alam, "Students' Mobility and Global Experiences," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Social Change*, ed. Rajendra Baikady et al. (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022), 1–10, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-87624-1_120-1.

¹³ Ikma Citra Ranteallo et al., "Rice Landrace Conservation Practice through Collective Memory and Toraja Foodways," *Society* 8, no. 2 (December 31, 2020): 794–817, <https://society.fisip.ubb.ac.id/index.php/society/article/view/211>.

¹⁴ Rahmadi, "Metode Studi Tokoh dan Aplikasinya dalam Penelitian Agama," *Al-Banjari* 18, no. 2 (July 1, 2019): 1412–9507, <http://jurnal.iain-antasari.ac.id/index.php/index/index>.

¹⁵ Harahap, *Syafrin Metode Penelitian Tokoh*. Nur Syasya Karim and Meredian Alam, "Struggling with Digital Pandemic: Students' Narratives about Adapting to Online Learning at Home during the COVID-19 Outbreak," *Southeast Asia: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 21, no. 2 (December 15, 2021): 15–29, <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/SEAMJ-02-2021-B1002/full/html>.

¹⁶ M Syamsurrijal et al., "Political Identity: A Systematic Review and Bibliometric Analysis," in *Political Identity* (Semarang: Icon Demos, 2021).

deeper into latent factors contributing to social conflict and the proliferation of identity politics within Indonesian society. Analysts recognize religion and nationalism as the primary origins of conflict, with race, culture, and ethnicity perceived as secondary triggers of social unrest.¹⁷

In a further study, Muhammad Abdullah Darraz, Executive Director of the Maarif Institute for Culture and Humanity, and his colleagues explore Maarif's ideological legacy and actions. Their work underscores Maarif's synthesis of critical intellectual inquiry and religious morality, exemplified by the integration of rhetoric and action. Maarif's philosophical framework champions freedom of thought, thereby averting the peril of societal stagnation, often likened to the metaphorical concept of the "fossil man." Furthermore, Maarif espouses Islamic principles characterized by the openness, inclusivity, and pragmatic problem-solving approaches that are embodied in national and state issues. He also advocates for an open-minded outlook, a commitment to progress, optimism, and resilience, rejecting a minority mentality in interfaith and interorganizational relations encompassing various religious denominations and social groups.¹⁸ In Habibi's study, he defines identity politics as the politicization of religion by various regimes throughout Indonesian history, from the Colonial Order to the Reformation Era. Religion has played a variety of functions throughout history, ranging from legitimization to suppression, depending on the political pressure. Notably, Islamic actors and organizations face fluctuating levels of governmental accommodation and repression, reflecting broader power dynamics within Indonesian society.¹⁹

The literature on identity politics is primarily concerned with

¹⁷ M Syamsurrijal et al., "Political Identity: A Systematic Review and Bibliometric Analysis."

¹⁸ M Shofan, *Merawat Kevarasan Publik Refleksi Kritis Kader Intelektual Muda Tentang Pemikiran Ahmad Syafii Maarif*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Maarif Institute, 2018).

¹⁹ Muhammad Habibi, *Identity Politics in Indonesia*, 1 (Yogyakarta, February 2, 2017), <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315338050>.

problematizing its manifestations, repercussions, and the relationship between religion and politics. To supplement previous research, the current study focuses on Maarif's groundbreaking contributions to the articulation and expression of identity politics. Maarif's profound engagement with the nuances of identity politics, both conceptually and in daily practice, underscores his commitment to fostering equality and social harmony amidst Indonesia's diverse cultural landscape. His vision is disseminated through scholarly writings, academic forums, and religious gatherings across various mosques and places of worship. According to Maarif, identity politics in Indonesia predominantly revolves around three core elements: ethnicity, religion, and ideology, reflecting national and local interests championed by elites. His seminal insights have significantly enriched Islamic, national, and humanitarian discourses, contributing to a deeper understanding of societal dynamics in contemporary.

Identity politics as a political system and beliefs that prioritize groups based on race, gender, or sexual orientation. Identity politics, then, is a political system and practice that promotes specific, exclusive group interests in racial, religious, ethnic, social, or cultural identities, overriding the interests or concerns of larger political groups. Identity politics is an aspect of political technique, namely how a person or group of people thinks about themselves in relation to a country's politics and government. It thus refers to the tendency of people of certain religions, races, social backgrounds, etc., to form limited or exclusive political alliances, moving away from traditional, broad-based party politics. There is a polarization between *us* and *them*. The antonym of identity politics is pluralism, namely the structure of society with various identity groups, both religious identities and different traditions, which are bound by a comprehensive, diverse (inclusive) identity in certain areas and common interests.²⁰

²⁰ Dino Bozonelos, *Comparative Government and Politics Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (California: The LibreTexts, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges Open Educational Resources Initiative, 2023), <https://libretexts.org>.

Starting in the 1960s, identity politics became a standard term in science. At the end of the 1960s, there was no new data or entry for the term "identity politics," including in the International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences. In the 1970s, this term began to appear. Kauffman's name and his activities with United States (US) civilians are associated with this because he sparked the human rights movement, which received broad support from the black community. During that era, the perception of communities of color as supporters of various forms of extremism led Kauffman's actions to foster the emergence of "identity politics," a leftist group that opposed violence against black people. The shooting scandal of pastor and civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968, sparked the action.

The term identity politics signifies the cessation of the appropriation of leftist political ideology from neo-Marxist theory, which attributes social movements to economic inequality stemming from capitalist dominance rather than identity politics. Identity politics is an ideology that mirrors or parallels the stance of other ideologies, such as Marxism.²¹ Bernstein emphasizes identity politics as part of the Neo-Marxist approach. Firstly, identity politics relies on a theory of power that views class inequality as the only real source of exploitation and oppression. Secondly, people often understand identity politics not as a political practice that challenges important power relations, but rather in symbolic, cultural, or psychological terms. This understanding sometimes makes normative political claims, thereby ignoring the value of identity politics.²² A sociological approach perceives ideology and politics as a framework that guides activists in their public activism.²³ Alam's study (2023), adopting a Bourdieusian perspective, refers to this as "heterodoxa."²⁴

²¹ Steve Moxon, "Partner Violence as Female-Specific in Aetiology," *New Male Studies: An International Journal* 3, no. 3 (2014): 5–33, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330467428>.

²² Mary Bernstein, "Identity Politics," *Annual Review of Sociology* 31 (2005): 47–74.

²³ Arteria-Bach and Alam, "Just Going Nowhere."

²⁴ Meredian Alam, "Activists' Heterodoxic Beliefs in Fostering Urban Environmental Education in Indonesia," *Local Development & Society* 4, no. 1 (January 2, 2023): 1–15. **AL-A'RAF**– Vol. XXI, No. 1, June 2024

Maarif understood that the behavior of dominant groups towards minorities greatly influenced identity politics in the first place. His opinions are based on US sociohistorical conditions. According to him, potential identity politics arise when members of a social group feel oppressed, excluded, or blackmailed by a large dominant group in a nation or state. The anti-identity politics movement in the US in 1960-1970, driven by SNCC (the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) students, is an example of this view. They oppose local government policies that weaken the rights of civil society. Other references are similar movements pioneered by Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, and Malcom X. This civil movement inspired US President Lyndon B. Johnson to create the Civil Rights Act as a regulation to eliminate discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, and others.²⁵

Maarif also referred to the views of L. A. Kauffman, a journalist and social movement activist who organized grassroots masses in the US. The University of California Press published Kauffman's concept of the protest movement or civil rights movement under the titles "How to Read a Protest: The Art of Organizing and Resistance" in 2018 and Verso Books published "Direct Action: Protest and the Reinvention of American Radicalism" in 2017. The anti-politics of identity in his writings also appeared in various mainstream media, such as The Guardian. L. A. Kauffman describes the argument for why identity politics is opposed to universal politics. There are private dimensions among US citizens, such as hereditary identity, cultural background, religion, state status, race, beliefs, and so on. Prioritizing its implementation above individual and cultural identity is crucial. In Bernstein,²⁶ L.A. Kauffman argues that identity politics is contextualized within cultural terms. Identity politics represents the elaboration and expression that should serve as the

2023): 128–145, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/26883597.2022.2058887>.

²⁵ Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Politik Identitas dan Masa Depan Pluralisme Kita*, ed. Rizal Panggabean Ihsan Ali Fauzi, 1st ed. (Jakarta Selatan: Pusat Studi Agama dan Demokrasi dan Yayasan Paramadina, 2010).

²⁶ Bernstein, "Identity Politics."

fundamental focus of political work. This strategy politicizes areas of life that were not previously defined as politics, such as sexuality, interpersonal relationships, lifestyle, and culture. People consider identity politics cultural because they perceive it as an advocacy for recognition and respect for differences, unrelated to institutional structures and political economy. When it comes to citizen culture, the people's contention against the state's excessive use of capital resources can reinforce activism.²⁷

The cultural perspective in photographing identity politics is Maarif's point of view. On various occasions, he employs special diction associated with identity political activities. Most often, he refers to movements labeled as religion or political activities that are dressed in Islamic robes. Identity politics is increasingly prevalent as a political movement, spearheaded by a coalition of individuals or groups under the banner of religion, particularly Islam. This interpretation of identity politics suggests that Maarif is oversimplifying its terminology. However, this impression is premature as Maarif's perspective encompasses a wide range of identity politics dimensions.

Maarif's Views on Ethnicity in the Identity Politics

Ma'arif categorizes the popular forms of identity politics in Indonesia into three types: ethnicity, religion, and political ideology. Apart from these three things, Maarif admits that there is diaspora identity politics and separatism. The actualization of identity politics in the form of ethnicity can indicate how dominant groups treat minority citizens. Maarif captured this treatment in the contemporary case of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), who faced a conviction for blasphemy against Islam. Maarif criticized two things, namely the aspect of Ahok's ethnicity as a citizen of Chinese descent and the aspect of Ahok's religious formality as a non-Muslim, as a source of political opponents accusing Ahok of

²⁷ Meredian Alam, "Reconstructing Anti-Capitalism as Heterodoxa in Indonesia's Youth-Led Urban Environmentalism Twitter Account," *Geoforum* 114 (August 2020): 151–158, <https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0016718520301548>.

politicizing verses from the Qur'an for political purposes in preparation for the 2016 regional head elections. Maarif expressed satire towards Ahok, who was sentenced to 400 years for insulting religion and Ahok's actions. The agenda behind Ahok's conviction is short-term politics, namely that Ahok's political opponents intend to stop and defeat Ahok in the election for governor of DKI Jakarta. Maarif considers that mentioning God's name to justify treating people on ethnic and religious grounds is an act of blasphemy.

Maarif understands that Ahok's case also pertains to the provision of facilities to Sembilan Naga (nine conglomerates). He asserts that the Muslims' perspective in this case is flawed. Which party provides facilities for the dragons, who can number in the tens, not just nine? It is not difficult to find the answer to this question: The facilitators are Indonesian authorities and banking institutions, most of whom are Muslims. I include the parties that criminalized Ahok for having a colonialist mentality and who shouted like true patriots.²⁸ He referred to the case as the "personification of religion" in opposition to Ahok's behavior, which was concealed behind a sectarian cloak. This is a personal mission, an unholy goal, or even heinous behavior. This goes against the stated mission of Islam in the Qur'an Al-Maidah: 44 & 46, which is to guide humanity from darkness into light. Then he quoted the Qur'an surah al-Hujurat (49) verse 13 regarding the plurality of God's creation.²⁹ Muhammadiyah, an organization under Maarif's leadership from 1998 to 7 July 2005, has a different attitude. Muhammadiyah General Chair Haedar Nasir holds the normative view that the meeting point for Ahok's dispute must end in court.

Murod reads Maarif's defense regarding ethnic identity as showing the dilemma of Muhammadiyah's political approach, between "keeping

²⁸ Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam Kekinian dan Kedisinian*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Jakarta: IRCiSoD, 2019).

²⁹ Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam Kekinian dan Kedisinian*.

the distance” and “keeping close.”³⁰ Maarif opted to maintain connection while applying nondiscriminatory Islamic values and preserving human values. So, identity politics has its foundation in ethnicity, with the goal of maintaining proximity as a result of Maarif's *ijtihad*. His attitude sparked criticism. Some Muslims consider Maarif infidels, bought to defend infidels. Maarif responded to this accusation by coining the jargon, "Man is the enemy of whatever he does not yet understand." In the light of this view, Maarif is of the view that religious rights should not be monopolized and co-opted. Everyone is free to determine their religion. He advocates for religious pluralism, arguing that each individual has unique rights when it comes to their religious beliefs. Everyone should comprehend the universal teachings of their religion and embrace a society that encompasses diverse ethnicities and religions. This pluralist perspective serves a detrimental purpose: it aims to eradicate fanaticism, foster diversity within the unified society, and foster mutual understanding. He admits that his views contradict certain verses in the Qur'an, such as the view that Islam is a religion whose role must be accepted and bring goodness to everyone in the world (*rahmatan li al-'alamin*). The mission doctrine aims to convert everyone to Islam. Maarif understands that the doctrine could be operationalized with a peaceful and voluntary approach.³¹

On Tuesday, September 11, 2018, at the seminar "Pluralism in Indonesia: Perspectives from Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama" at Graha Suara Muhammadiyah, Maarif presented arguments about the mission of Islamization and religious plurality to achieve legality. In the Qur'an *Surah Yunus* (10): 99 says, "And if your Lord wills, everyone on earth will believe." Do you wish to compel people to become believers? According to Maarif, this verse eliminates the need to question the understanding of diversity or plurality: "Talking about plurality is talking

³⁰ Ma'mun and Murod Al-Barbasy, "Muhammadiyah dan Politik: Dilema Antara Keep Close dan Keep Distance," *Kontekstualita* 34, no. 2 (2017).

³¹ M Qorib, *Pemikiran Ahmad Syafii Maarif Tentang Pluralisme Agama* (Jakarta, 2012).

about sunnatullah, natural law." Similarly, we can interpret his message as the Creator's recognition of the richness of life in this world. Every religious follower must be open and tolerant.³²

Maarif is of the opinion that Islam needs power to impart its teachings, which include din as well as *daulah* (religion and state). Does formalizing the Islamic ideology and political system become necessary? Maarif was a fundamentalist in his youth, dreaming of integrating religion and state or power within the framework of an Islamic political system. In 1976, Maarif began his master's program at Ohio University in Athens, USA. Maarif inquired about the first opportunity to meet professor Fazlur Rahman face-to-face in class. "Professor Rahman, please give me one fourth of your knowledge of Islam; I will convert Indonesia into an Islamic state."³³

Following numerous class meetings and individual discussions with Fazlur Rahman, Maarif refrained from posing the same question. This was due to Rahman's articulated perspectives, which served as Maarif's point of reference: "In Islam, religion and state are inseparable," implying that Islam unifies religion and politics. The appointment of Abu Bakar Ash-Sihidieq as the first caliph represented the actualization of the Islamic political system. There is a democratic dimension in Abu Bakar's leadership. In his speech after his appointment as caliph, Abu Bakar said that this position was a mandate or trust from the people to carry out the orders of the Qur'an and hadith. As long as the caliph implements the constitution (Qur' and hadith), his power is legal. On the other hand, if the caliph violates the constitution, his mandate ends.

Open consensus deliberation in the hall of Bani Saidah, Medina, can lead to the appointment of the caliph. The representatives of the Islamic group were Abu Ubaidah bin Jarrah, Umar bin Khattab, Aqsid bin

³² Ribas, "Pluralitas Sebagai Sunnatullah," *Suara Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta, January 18, 2021).

³³ Shofan, *Merawat Kewarasan Publik Refleksi Kritis Kader Intelektual Muda Tentang Pemikiran Ahmad Syafii Maarif*.

Khudair, Basyir bin Saad, and Abu Bakr. The appointment of a caliph, who the people desire, reflects the dimension of democratic power. Deliberation is a strategy to determine leaders from below (grass roots), as is the case in a democratic system.³⁴

Rahman's influence on Maarif was very strong in a thesis published with the title *Islam and Politics Split Bamboo Theory: The Future of Guided Democracy (1959-1965)*, Maarif reconstructed his thoughts about Islamic ideology and the political system. In the sub-chapter on Islam and insight into power, Maarif said that Islam supports the democratic system. There is an irony, Islamic countries are still confused about finding a political system that can be used to achieve Islamic moral goals. Then in the next sub-chapter, Maarif asks a rhetorical question, what does Islam need with or without a national state? Does the establishment of national states among Muslims need to be questioned and condemned? According to him, the Qur'an teaches the doctrine of universal spiritual bonds between believers, but this doctrine cannot be automatically institutionalized because the Muslim population is so large and spread across various countries. "Is it possible to create a strict Muslim government with a head of state? Obviously impossible."³⁵ The reason is that there is one Islamic country that has sharia legitimacy among Muslim-majority countries (e.g Saudi Arabia), the others are not legitimate.

Maarif emphasized that pre-Islamic Arabia, or what emerged later after Islam struggled with Persia and Rome, was a democratic society. According to Hasan Ibrahim Hasan in the book *An-nuzhum al-Islamiyah*, the tribal government has a democratic character. The indications are that it contains elders or elders or senior prime ministers (*al-majlis asy-syuyukhbul qabila*). This assembly deliberates and makes decisions on important issues

³⁴ Rizki Rumondang, "Sistem Pemerintahan Islam Menurut Fazlur Rahman," *Nusantara* 9, no. 10 (2022): 4029–4038, <http://jurnal.um-tapsel.ac.id/index.php/nusantara/index>; Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984).

³⁵ Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam dan Politik Teori Belah Bambu Masa Demokrasi Terpimpin (1959-1965)*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1996).

such as war and peace. Shura in the pre-Islamic tradition is identical to *urf* or tribal customs and customs, while shura in Islam is based on faith that has universal value. According to Maarif, Islam fully supports the democratic system, even when facing important problems that are different from the democratic systems that have developed in non-Muslim countries.³⁶ Regarding Islam and political ideology in Indonesia, Maarif, in his book “The Arab Crisis and the Future of the Islamic World,” explains that Islam in Indonesia has a powerful potential, particularly since it is associated with the largest Muslim population in the world. Arifin argues that Muslims contribute greatly to the current democratic discourse. Maarif asks two critical questions: i) Does Islam provide theological support for democracy, or are the two incompatible? ii) What is the position and role of the Muslim community in the democratization process?

Maarif is concerned by the view that political Islam does not have a strong democratic basis on the grounds that this system implements a secular government. At that time, there was Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) as an example of opponents of the democratic system. On the contrary, they think of a caliphate as an Islamic system. Maarif rejected this minor view and emphasized that Islam is compatible and in harmony with democracy. Maarif contends that religion would not be firmly established without state facilities, referring to Ibn Taymiyyah's views in the book “*As-siyasi as-syar'iyyah*” (translated as “The Good Governance of Islam”). But Maarif refused; Islam is *dīn* (religion) and *daulāh*. If Islam encompasses both *din* and *daulāh*, it automatically equalizes religion and state, equating tools with treatises. Religion is something that is immutable (fixed), whereas the state is something that is mutable (changes) according to space and time demands.³⁷ In other words, Islam, in upholding the

³⁶ Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam dan Politik Teori Belah Bambu Masa Demokrasi Terpimpin (1959-1965)*.

³⁷ Ahmad Asroni, “Pemikiran Ahmad Syafii Maarif Tentang Negara dan Syariat Islam di Indonesia,” *Millah* X, no. 2 (February 1, 2011); M Nurul Yamin, *Komunikasi Politik Muhammadiyah Strategi, Artikulasi, Dan Wacana Politik Muhammadiyah Tahun*

morality of its teachings, does not require the format of a theocratic state or Islamic state.

The Emergence of Maarif's Ideology

In the explanation of Islam's ideology, Maarif's concept of integrating religion and the state within the framework of the Islamic religion is included. We need to delve deeper into the author's perspective on the evolution of Maarif's thinking. The authors categorize three stages of Maarif's thought evolution. Firstly, the *puritan* (pure) thinking stage. This condition can be associated with being a student at Madrasah Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah in Balai Tengah, Payakumbuh, KM 03 Tanjung Bonai, Lintau Buo, Sumatera Utara. As an *ibtidaiyah* or elementary school student, Maarif enjoyed his childhood by studying Islamic religion and practicing it as his teachers taught him.

Secondly, during his time as a *Tsanawiyah* and *Aliyah* student (Junior High School and Senior High School) at Madrasah Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, as well as his current studies at Yogyakarta State University (UNY) and Ohio University in Athens, USA, he internalized fundamentalist thinking. The idea of opportunities to integrate religion and the state in Indonesia, or the aspiration to transform Indonesia into an Islamic country, characterizes the fundamentalist character.³⁸ Rusli Karim, a deceased Muhammadiyah activist and fellow lecturer at his university, served as the discussion partner during this phase. His thoughts often reflect the essence of Islamic "fundamentalism" in the substance and diction he used. For example, when it comes to corruption, Rusli Karim said, "Islamic teachings clearly make it impossible to compromise with corruption. Allah has set a clear line, but people are increasingly blurring this religious commandment day by day. Or, in terms of the Islamization of national values, "Muslims must master modern

1994-2005, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: OSSCOMM, 2012).

³⁸ Alam, "Activists' Heterodox Beliefs in Fostering Urban Environmental Education in Indonesia."

science and technology and have the responsibility to uphold a life based on divinity and humanity." As a result, Maarif and Rusli Karim share the idea of internalizing ideological elements in religion and have aspirations to integrate religious, national, and state values.³⁹

Third, there is the moderate-progressive stage of thinking. Maarif admires the moderate Islamic figure Fazlur Rahman (1919–1988), a man born in Hazara, Pakistan, who was a professor of Islamic philosophy at the University of Chicago, USA. His physical interaction and thoughts with Fazlur Rahman were the starting point to emphasize his fundamentalist attitude and also the final period of letting go of that attitude. When he first spoke in the lecture room, Maarif expressed his belief in Islam as spiritual values as well as a future political ideology that was about to be formalized in the form of a state (Shofan, 2018, 2023). However, that thought changed to moderate after Maarif attended Fazlur Rahman's lecture. This was the initial milestone in changing Maarif's perspective from Islamist-traditionalist-fundamentalist to modernist-progressive.

Exploring Maarif's Inclusive Thought

Others believe that this phase mirrors Maarif's inclusive, realistic, and rational perspectives on Islam and the state. This change became a topic of discussion, often accompanied by accusations that Maarif was a follower or that he changed Fazlur Rahman's views from fundamentalism to secularization, often referred to as the "anti-Jakarta Charter."⁴⁰ Observers of Maarif describe his ideological transformation from a fundamentalist puritan Muhammadiyah figure to a progressive Muslim thinker. Inspired by Abdullah Saeed's ideology, Qibtiyah's study asserts that three ideas define the character of a progressive thinker. Firstly, study

³⁹ Rusli Karim, "Tren Perkembangan Masa Depan dan Peran Umat Islam: Tinjauan Sosial Budaya," *Bestari* 1, no. 1 (July 1, 1990); M Rusli Karim, "Erosi Nilai Agama dalam Masyarakat," *UNISLA* 29, no. XVI (1998).

⁴⁰ Leni Marlina IAIN Bengkulu, *Hubungan Islam dan Negara dalam Pandangan Ahmad Syafii Maarif*, *Jurnal Manthiq*, vol. III, 2018.

Qibtiyah, views the Qur'an as a text revealed within a specific time, context, and environment. Its texts address the circumstances in that environment. Secondly, the Qur'an is viewed as both a book of law and a source of moral and ethical advice, with both specific and universal implications. The particular or limited dimension means that the values in it are bound to the scope and reflection of the context in which the Qur'an was revealed.⁴¹ The universal dimension means that the values in the Qur'an apply universally, not limited by a specific context. Thirdly, the idea of the Qur'an as an important discourse for classical Muslim thinkers and, according to the neomodernist group, must be reconsidered.⁴² In lieu of this argument, a recent study by Alam et al.⁴³ highlights the importance of Islamic ideologies, which can prompt activism among pious Indonesians in a public space in order to express their religious identity by performing Qur'an recitals.

When entering the moderate-progressive stage of thought, Maarif positioned the phenomenon of formalization of Islam in the state system, as was the case in Europe, as counterproductive because the drivers came from their hometowns where the state and society were anti-pluralism and anti-democracy. By avowing Bassam Tibi, Maarif categorizes two targets of the identity politics movement to develop a religious state: religious formalism in the state, such as forming a religion-based state, which Tibi calls the Europeanization of Islam (the Europeanization of Islam), and the integration of religious values in the state system, which is called the Islamization of Europe. Adopting Murad Wilfried Hoffman's ideas, Maarif recognizes identity politics as a sign of decline, as Hoffman equates

⁴¹ Alimatul Qibtiyah, "Dari Ego-System Menuju Eco-System Laku dan Pemikiran Budaya Syafii Maarif dan Amin Abdullah," *Maarif* 18, no. 1 (2023), <https://www.kompas.id/baca/opini/2022/06/15/buya-feminis-muslim-indonesia>.

⁴² Alimatul Qibtiyah, "Dari Ego-System Menuju Eco-System Laku dan Pemikiran Budaya Syafii Maarif dan Amin Abdullah."

⁴³ Amiera Nur Afiah et al., "Resilience of Local Communities Experiencing Disaster in Lombok," in *The 2nd International Conference on Social Knowledge Sciences and Education (ICSKSE 2022)*, 2022, 78–89, https://www.atlantispress.com/doi/10.2991/978-2-494069-63-3_9.

this movement with intellectualism, which implies pluralism; a lack of pluralism implies decadence. This alignment of views demonstrates that Maarif disagrees with the identity politics movement, which aims to deify the state.⁴⁴

Maarif emphasized that those driving identity politics among Muslims are not always sincere. There are short-term targets based on sectoral political interests. According to Ghozali,⁴⁵ this condition serves as the foundation for his assertion that identity politics, often disguised in Islamic robes, is merely a facade. For these firm reasons, he emphasized that there are no longer opportunities for the Islamic political system to be adopted as a political and state system, as democracy, with all its advantages and disadvantages, is still viewed as the best system ever introduced to mankind. Following the proclamation, Indonesia has attempted to establish several democratic models that are more in line with the nation's personality.⁴⁶

The next question is, can Indonesia do without identity politics? Kuntowijoyo, a cultural observer who is Maarif's colleague and discussion partner, believes that religion and the state are two historical units that are fundamentally different. Religion is synonymous with positive news and warnings, while the state is a coercive force. Religion can influence history through collective conscience, whereas the state influences history with decisions, power, and war. The state is an external pressure, while religion is an internal force. Kuntowijoyo⁴⁷ asserts that when religion and state are institutionalized in parties, they can come together, a phenomenon that can be observed in Indonesia, a country rooted in Pancasila. Kuntowijoyo's opinion is similar to Maarif's view on religion (Islam), that it requires power to impart its teachings, which include *din* as well

⁴⁴ Maarif, *Politik Identitas dan Masa Depan Pluralisme Kita*.

⁴⁵ Abd Rohim Ghozali, "Preman Bertoga," *Suara Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta, April 30, 2023).

⁴⁶ Maarif, *Islam dan Politik Teori Belah Bambu Masa Demokrasi Terpimpin (1959-1965)*, vol. 1, p. .

⁴⁷ Kuntowijoyo, *Identitas Politik Umat Islam*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Bandung: Mizan dan Ummat, 1997).

as *daulah* (religion and state), but Maarif said that the actualization of religion does not need to be formalized in the Islamic political system.

However, the question remains: does the actualization of Islamic politics always equate to political ideology or identity politics? In this final context, Maarif views the role of religion-based politics as always being synonymous with identity politics. Is this a universal truth? Kuntowijoyo holds the belief that religion can fulfill its role as political legitimacy, and it can significantly influence political events such as general elections. As an illustration, he gave an example of Islam's position during the New Order. At the start of the Soeharto government's rule, it did not discriminate against Islam. The relationship between the state and Islam has always tended to be suspicious. The establishment of the Indonesian Muslim Scholars Association (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia*, or ICMI) in the 1990s marked a shift in the situation. The intellectual institution pioneered by Baharuddin Jusuf Habibie (the former Indonesian president) was taken into account by President Soeharto, even though ICMI was not a political institution but had political influence or impact.

In line with the political reforms of the 1999 reform era and beyond, the actualization of Islamic politics was represented in the legalization of political parties that had a mass-based and ideological vision, thus the birth of “Islamic parties” such as the Prosperous Justice Party, or *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* (PK/PKS), and other political-based parties. non-Islamic masses. Even though Islamic parties have not received as much support as nationalist parties, their presence is a form of what Kuntowijoyo refers to as the actualization of religion in politics. Then, is the presence of a religion-based party synonymous with the actualization of identity politics? Referring to Kuntowijoyo's concept,⁴⁸ the institutionalization of religion and state in parties can bring them together, a phenomenon observed in Indonesia based on Pancasila. Therefore, the formalization of Islamic parties does not constitute identity politics. In terms of personal identity,

⁴⁸ Kuntowijoyo, *Identitas Politik Umat Islam*.

when parties, legislative candidates, regent candidates, governors, and presidents with Islamic religious preferences approach constituents who share the same religious background, this is referred to as a political strategy.⁴⁹ In this context, this political strategy is known as populism.

Jeremy Webber interprets populism as a highly fluid concept, with various commentators identifying different characteristics as its core.⁵⁰ He asserts that critics often use populism as a derogatory term to describe political actors who, in the name of the people, implement policies they deem unwise. However, right- or left-wing groups can employ populism as a political strategy or method.⁵¹ The ideological differences between the two groups have implications for the distinction between the means (political ethics) and the ends (political goals).

Populism focuses on the distortion of various forms of democratic practice, with its core elements being populist movements that prioritize the voice of the people or speak on behalf of society, engage in anti-elitism, contrast the positions of the government and the people, make moral appeals, and criticize or distrust procedures and government institutions. Apart from that, populism can mean manipulative, two-faced, or saying one thing and doing another.⁵² Populism often serves as a catalyst for the advancement of liberalism, but it can also have the opposite effect. Jane Mansbridge and Stephen Macedo⁵³ define the four core elements of populism as (a) uniting or acting in the name of the people, (b) moral content or calls, and (c) critical actors from the elite. In a different vein,

⁴⁹ Ahmad Arif Widiyanto et al., “Revitalizing Local Wisdom: The Governance of Religious Diversity in Manado,” 2023, 1746–1757, https://www.atlantispress.com/doi/10.2991/978-2-38476-152-4_176.

⁵⁰ Jeremy Webber, “Understanding Populism,” *Social and Legal Studies* 32, no. 6 (December 1, 2023): 849–876.

⁵¹ Widiyanto et al., “Revitalizing Local Wisdom: The Governance of Religious Diversity in Manado.”

⁵² Meredian Alam, Pam Nilan, and Terry Leahy, “Learning from Greenpeace: Activist Habitus in a Local Struggle,” *Electronic Green Journal* 1, no. 42 (February 16, 2019), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/41s879p5>.

⁵³ Jane Mansbridge and Stephen Macedo, “Populism and Democratic Theory,” *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 15, no. 1 (October 13, 2019): 59–77, <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-101518-042843>.

Andrés Velasco (2021) interprets populism as not an ideology but a political strategy that does not pretend to offer 'complex [or] comprehensive answers to the political questions generated by modern society.' The weakness is that populists do not believe in pluralism because they believe there is one view that deserves political legitimacy; they alone can represent the people.⁵⁴ The other four characteristics of populism compromise: a homogeneous society, an exclusive society, greater direct popular government, and nationalism.⁵⁵

Referring to the various views above, the identity approach in politics and others can have an ideological tendency, or vice versa does not automatically have an ideological tendency.⁵⁶ This strategy pertains to the relevance and context of the political objects, their targets, and their religious and other backgrounds. It serves as a strategy of persuasion towards the people, utilizing it to fight or criticize power, which is actualized through moral and other appeals. This aspect of Maarif's concept of identity politics appears to be negated.⁵⁷

Conclusion

Maarif's explanation of thoughts related to identity politics can be summarized as follows: Firstly, identity politics is the actualization of religious values in daily life in society, which prioritizes three elements: ethnicity, religion, and political ideology. First of all, the actualization of all three elements of identity politics could undermine unity between groups of people of different nationalities, religious beliefs, and political ideologies, as well as conflict between Muslims and the state.

⁵⁴ Widiyanto et al., "Revitalizing Local Wisdom: The Governance of Religious Diversity in Manado."

⁵⁵ Irene Bucelli Andrés Velasco, "Populism: Origins and Alternative Policy Responses," in *Populism: Origins and Alternative Policy Responses*, ed. Irene Bucelli Andrés Velasco, 1st ed., vol. 1 (London: Latin America Research Commons Press, 2021), 9–34.

⁵⁶ Widiyanto et al., "Revitalizing Local Wisdom: The Governance of Religious Diversity in Manado."

⁵⁷ Afiah et al., "Resilience of Local Communities Experiencing Disaster in Lombok."

Secondly, the actualization of religious values necessitates official support, yet religious values are not the same as the formalization of religion through a governmental structure or state. Thirdly, democracy as a system that is relevant to Islamic values. Even though it eliminates the universal dimension of Islamic values in the political system, democracy as a political system is in accordance with the historical dimensions and teachings of Islam.

Thirdly, Maarif's perspective on identity politics tends to reject both the concept of identity politics and the political approach of institutions or parties, as well as Islamic politicians. Muslim politics requires a contextual perspective, which translates to a populist approach. This approach focuses on society's social base, or constituents based on ethnicity, religion, and political orientation. The populist approach should not always be synonymous with identity politics, but rather a strategy to achieve political targets. This last dimension is not specifically constructed in Maarif's thought.

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