




The impact of identity politics on democracy and religious system in Indonesia

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Abstract: Political identity in Indonesia has become an increasingly important issue in recent years. Ethnic, religious, and regional identities are often important factors in influencing people's political preferences. However, the impact of this political identity on Indonesia's democratic and religious system is debatable. The impact of political identity in Indonesia's democratic and religious system remains a complex and ever-changing issue. While some negative effects need to be addressed, political identity can also strengthen society and political participation. Therefore, continuous efforts are required to enhance the democratic and religious system in Indonesia and overcome conflicts arising from political identity. The purpose of this study is to clarify and analyze the impact of political identity on the democratic and religious system in Indonesia. This study aims to provide a better understanding of issues related to political identity and how these issues affect the political system and Indonesian society as a whole. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the development of thoughts and policies related to the democratic and religious system in Indonesia.

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Introduction

Political conditions in the country have encouraged people to be more aware of each other and work harder to build understanding between different groups. The Pancasila values of diversity and respect for different cultures should be the foundation for the government, as these values have proven to be the soul of the Indonesian nation. Indonesia is a large, pluralistic, and multicultural country and can maintain peace and harmony in the face of diversity. The background of identity politics in Indonesia can be traced back to colonialism when the Dutch colonial government divided Indonesian society based on ethnic and religious identity. At the time, the colonial government divided Indonesian society into three groups: natives, migrants, and Europeans. The natives were then further divided based on ethnicity and religion, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Muslims, Hindus, etc.¹

¹ Jamie S. Davidson, "Religion and Politics in Post-Soeharto Indonesia.," *Pacific Affairs* 76, no. 4 (2003): 537–558.

The practice of identity politics intensified during the reform period in the late 1990s and early 2000s when there was a relaxation in political control and press freedom in Indonesia. Political parties strengthened their ideological views by taking positions on religious, ethnic, and gender issues. One of the key moments in the history of identity politics in Indonesia was the 2014 presidential election, where the political campaigns of both candidates, Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto, were heavily based on identity politics rhetoric. The 2019 election was worse than the 2014 election because it was terrifying with its open identity politics and proceeded in a disorganized manner. Negative campaigns targeted Prabowo Subianto, while Jokowi was the subject of a black campaign.² By examining the pattern of the gubernatorial election in Jakarta in 2017, the presence of incumbent Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, the election provided a rare opportunity to analyze identity politics. However, Ahok, a Christian and ethnic Chinese, lost the election due to a 65 percent popularity rating. Conservative Muslims rejected him, arguing that a non-Muslim should not head a Muslim-majority province.³

Identity politics can give rise to intolerance and prejudice, which can result in the marginalization and abuse of minority groups that are seen as different. The possible repercussions of this move could jeopardize people's legal rights and damage Indonesia's rich religious and cultural diversity.⁴ While useful, this religion-centered explanation has three limitations. First, it needs to distinguish between voters' religion and candidates' religion at a conceptual level. Second, it confuses voter sentiment with political rhetoric and mobilization. Third, it relies too heavily on voters' explanations of their voting motivations. Identity politics influenced his voting behavior during the gubernatorial election in 2017.⁵ The impact of identity politics means that people care about and focus on different things. This can be dangerous because it can make people not care about each other and cause problems. The ideas of identity politics are alive and well, and they go back to the old ways of dividing people into different groups. The original idea behind the Republic of Indonesia was that everyone should be united, and that's what we should remember.⁶

In Indonesia, the emergence of identity politics is a sign of weakness as it shows that the centralized and hegemonic power of the New Order era is no longer in control. This power is represented by the emergence of several political forces that carry Islamic symbols and ideologies. Some of these forces are taboo even among "those in the know", as they have the potential to be revitalized.⁷ Political identity can significantly impact democratic and religious

² Osbin Samosir, "Democracy, Political Identity, and the Fate of Minority Politics: Reflections towards Indonesia's National Concurrent Elections in 2024," *"GLOBUS": Гуманитарные науки Том 7*, no. 2 (2021), <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/democracy-political-identity-and-the-fate-of-minority-politics-reflections-towards-indonesias-national-concurrent-elections-in-2024>.

³ Osbin Samosir, "Democracy, Political Identity, and the Fate of Minority Politics: Reflections towards Indonesia's National Concurrent Elections in 2024."

⁴ Sri Dwi Harti et al., "Politics Identity in Christian Perspective and the Implication for Christian Politicians in Indonesia," *Pharos Journal of Theology*, no. 104(4) (August 2023), https://www.pharosjot.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_19_vol_104_4_indonesia.pdf.

⁵ Theresia Octastefani, "Measuring the Identity, Local Democracy and Transformative Politics: A Critical Case of the Jakarta Gubernatorial Election 2017," *Al Izzah: Jurnal Hasil-Hasil Penelitian* 14, no. 2 (2019), <https://ejournal.iainkendari.ac.id/index.php/al-izzah/article/download/1289/1103>.

⁶ Eve Warburton, "Political Polarization in South and Southeast Asia," ed. Thomas Corothers and O'Donohue Andrew (Singapore: Carnegie, 2020), https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Political_Polarization_RPT_FINAL1.pdf.

⁷ Budiman Sudjatmiko, "Politik Aliran Dalam Pancasila: Keniscayaan Sejarah Dan Antitesis Fundamentalisme," in *Politik Identitas Dan Masa Depan Pluralisme Kita* | (Jakarta: Yayasan Abad Demokrasi, 2012), 73–82, [https://spada.uns.ac.id/pluginfile.php/469841/mod_resource/content/1/Politik Identitas.pdf](https://spada.uns.ac.id/pluginfile.php/469841/mod_resource/content/1/Politik%20Identitas.pdf).

systems in Indonesia. Here are some of the possible impacts. Political identity can separate people into different groups, and if this identity becomes stronger than citizenship, it can lead to conflict between groups. This can threaten the stability of democratic systems and encourage religious and group strife.⁸

Political identity, especially religion, can influence the electoral process and voters' decisions. This can result in irrational elections based not on candidates' qualifications and abilities but on their identity.⁹ Political identity, particularly religion, can make people more dependent on religious leaders in political decisions. According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), an individual's involvement in social groups influences their attitudes and conduct. A person's self-image, for example, might be linked to their race/ethnicity, nationality, politics, or faith. Individuals experience the world through the lenses of those who share similar social groupings (i.e., in-groups) and those who do not (i.e., out-groups). This can reduce individual independence and strengthen the influence of religion in society.¹⁰

Political identity can be used as an excuse to discriminate or oppress certain groups. The four physical integrity rights also differ in how likely individuals are to attribute infractions to politicians rather than rogue state agents. A recent study discovered that there was increased political violence when the government imprisoned or "disappeared" persons for political reasons. The bodily integrity violations may occur as a result of politicians' incapacity to supervise the actions of police, jail guards, and the military. This can threaten human rights and violate democratic principles.¹¹ Yusmicha Ulya Afif, Afrin Suryaningtyas, and Phuji Maisaroh conclude that the game of identity politics is very visible in the 2017 DKI Jakarta election. The use of political manipulations that lead to religion and ethnicity, as well as the exploitation of the lawsuit that entangled Ahok as a ploy to obtain votes, is particularly noteworthy in this instance. The religious and ethnic elements of the candidate pairs are sufficient to have a good electoral influence and topple the minority candidate pairs.¹²

The purpose of researching the impact of identity politics on democracy and religious systems in Indonesia is to gain a deeper understanding of the complex interactions between identity politics, democratic governance, and religious diversity in the Indonesian context. Based on Kraynak's studies, the connection between political philosophy and Christianity. This could entail discussing how religion influences political philosophy, how Christian values mesh with democratic goals, and the difficulties presented by an imperfect or sinful world. This research serves both academic and practical purposes by shedding light on the challenges and opportunities that arise from identity politics in Indonesia and offering insights that can inform policy and public discourse.

⁸ Greg Fealy and Sally White., ed., *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*. (Singapore: Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008).

⁹ Ahmad Muis Khoirunnisa Rizka Ayu, "The Impact of Identity Politics on Democracy in Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities* 2 2, no. 2 (2020): 61–67.

¹⁰ Raul Madrid et al., "The Relevance of Religion for Political Office: Voter Bias Toward Candidates from Different Religious Backgrounds," *Political Behavior* 44, no. 2 (June 4, 2022): 981–1001, <https://link.springer.com/10.1007/s11109-022-09782-6>.

¹¹ David Cingranelli et al., "Human Rights Violations and Violent Internal Conflict," *Social Sciences* 8, no. 2 (January 28, 2019): 41, <http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0760/8/2/41>.

¹² Yusmicha Ulya Afif, Afrin Suryaningtyas, and Phuji Maisaroh, "Ethnicity and Religion in the Identity Politics: A Historical Reflection of Jakarta Regional Head Election in 2017," *SULTAN Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 1, no. 1 (2022), <https://journal.civiliza.org/index.php/sultan/article/view/90>.

The Concept of Political Identity

In the new era of reform, democracy is more democratic than in the past. Political parties are more independent, and human rights are regulated. Democratic institutions are more functional, and the concept of *trias politica* (three-part government) is fully autonomous. However, Anam argues that ideologies that want to replace Pancasila can still emerge. Recently, there has been a rise in identity politics, which is related to the history described above. Political Islam wants to implement its ideology in the country.¹³ Some religious issues can be controversial and can lead to conflict in Indonesia. Since the 1990s and 2000s, many changes have occurred in Indonesian politics. This has led to many different political parties trying to gain support from religious people. However, there are also political parties that do not focus on religion but rather try to work together to meet the needs of everyone in Indonesian society. Religious figures are also involved in politics differently, as individuals and in religious organizations.¹⁴

Religious and ethnic feelings have long been important in Indonesian politics. In terms of religion, Indonesia has debated whether to include Sharia in its constitution since its inception. The impact of religious organizations is also growing, according to the research. Sumaktoyo stated that conservative Islamic groups have contributed to increasing social prejudice against religious minorities, and the conservative portion of Indonesian Muslim voters has increased in influence as the organization's capacity has increased.¹⁵ Religion and ethnicity play a daunting role in everyday life and even more so in political engagement. Religion and ethnicity can be divided at both national and local levels. The events of the recent Jakarta gubernatorial election in 2017 demonstrated the importance of religious and ethnic identity politics. These attitudes lead to polarization and segmentation among the people, which may be the beginning of the fragmentation of a nation.¹⁶

Antonio Gramsci was a Marxist philosopher and political theorist from Italy who made substantial contributions to political theory, notably in the areas of cultural and ideological analysis. While Gramsci's work is largely concerned with class conflict and the state, his theories have been extended to a larger understanding of the concept of political identity. One of Gramsci's central ideas is "cultural hegemony." This idea is essential to his view of how power works in society and how political identities emerge. Gramsci popularized the concept of "historical blocs," which are coalitions of social groupings, classes, and political forces working together to pursue their common interests. These historical blocs frequently have separate political identities defined by their shared history and practices.¹⁷

The concept of historical bloc differs significantly from Marxist notions for class in that it encourages analysis of social formations that cross-ownership and non-ownership categories and are bound by religious or other political ties along with those of economic interest. A historical bloc may or may not become hegemonic depending on how skillfully it establishes

¹³ Haikal Fadhil Anam, "Politik Identitas Islam Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Demokrasi Di Indonesia," *POLITEA Jurnal Pemikiran Politik Islam* 2, no. 2 (2019), <https://journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/politea>.

¹⁴ Laura. Johnston, "'Sistem Demokrasi Dan Religius Di Indonesia,'" *Kompas*, last modified 2023, <https://www.kompas.com/sistem-demokrasi-dan-religius-di-indonesia>.

¹⁵ Nathanael Gratias Sumaktoyo, "Ethnic and Religious Sentiments in Indonesian Politics: Evidence From the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 21, no. 1 (2021): 141–164.

¹⁶ Sugit S Arjon, "The Sleeping Giant: The Awakening of Religious Identity," in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Social and Political Sciences (ICSPS 2017)*, vol. 129 (Paris, France: Atlantis Press, 2018), 207–210, <http://www.atlantis-press.com/php/paper-details.php?id=25891364>.

¹⁷ Vasilis Maglaras, "Consent and Submission," *SAGE Open* 3, no. 1 (January 1, 2013): 215824401247234, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2158244012472347>.

alliances with other groups or classes. Gramsci argues to achieve cultural hegemony, the rulers of a historical bloc have to establish a worldview that appeals to a wide range of different communities within society, and they must be able to claim with some plausibility that their specific needs are those of the community at large.¹⁸

Kosher, quoting George Mosse, the nation's secular-religious establishment in the nineteenth century, with its mass rituals, created the foundation for twentieth-century fascism. By adopting a religious mode and developing public rituals, the new politics promised more than monetary progress: it promised spiritual fulfillment through the experience of strong group identification.¹⁹ The phrase's identity and identity politics are relatively new, with the former popularized by psychologist Erik Erikson in the 1950s and the latter only emerging in the 1980s and 1990s cultural politics. Today, identity can relate to various things, from societal categories or positions to basic knowledge of oneself (as in "my identity was stolen"). In this way, identity politics has always existed.²⁰ On the one hand, politicians have greater incentives to engage in political propaganda on matters that split people. Political propaganda, on the other hand, exacerbates voter divides. Identity politics is crucial to this interaction because people are more easily convinced by leaders who share their social values.²¹

Arjon asserts that there is no connection between religion and political violence. However, religion is a potential source of personal-level moral, ideological, and organizational resources that can, in certain circumstances, inform, legitimate, or sustain the most admirable forms of moral and political engagement. Furthermore, fear introduces religious factors into conflict and influences social insecurity, among other factors.²² In addition, disputes and riots based on religion and ethnicity erupt and spread faster than other types of conflict and violence in Indonesia. This is precisely what identity politics offers: a collection of stereotypical behaviors that weaken or obliterate the semantic layer of complete uniqueness or cause a shift from individual consciousness to strong group consciousness. In identity politics, deconstructive and constructive techniques are usually mixed, with the former reducing individual identity and the latter establishing a new community identity.²³

The Impact of Identity Politics

We argue that the impact of identity politics on democratic and religious systems is a widespread and fundamental phenomenon in Indonesia. The most typical human reaction to adversity is not intellectual analysis and significant political action but rather the search for emotional protection and retreat into activities that distort the full consciousness of individuality. This is precisely what identity politics offers: a collection of stereotypical behaviors that weaken or obliterate the semantic layer of complete uniqueness or cause a shift from individual consciousness to strong group consciousness. In identity politics, deconstruc-

¹⁸ T. J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (1985), <https://sites.evergreen.edu/politicalshakespeares/wp-content/uploads/sites/226/2015/12/lears-cultural-hegemony.pdf>.

¹⁹ Jan Koster, "Ritual Performance and the Politics of Identity," *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 4, no. 2 (June 6, 2003): 211–248, accessed February 16, 2023, <http://www.jbe-platform.com/content/journals/10.1075/jhp.4.2.05kos>.

²⁰ Fukuyama Mayumi, "Society 5.0: Aiming for a New Human-Centered Society" (July 2018), accessed August 8, 2021, <http://www8.cao.go.jp/cstp/>.

²¹ Nicola Gennaioli and Guido Tabellini, *Identity Politics*, *SSRN Electronic Journal* (Munich, 2023), <https://www.ssrn.com/abstract=4410239>.

²² Arjon, "The Sleeping Giant: The Awakening of Religious Identity."

²³ Koster, "Ritual Performance and the Politics of Identity."

tive and constructive techniques usually overlap, with the former reducing individual identity and the latter establishing a new community identity.²⁴

In politics, the notion of "identification" is considered either as a source of democratic stability, as in the pluralism literature, or as a source of uniquely issue-based grievances, in which members of marginalized groups agitate on behalf of members of specific and different preferential causes.²⁵ Mason explains that when we think of partisan identity politics as a social identity that can align with or diverge from other identities, we can predict that party members who are not aligned with their religion, race, or ideology will feel a less effective attachment to their party than members of the same party whose religion, race, and creed are fully aligned with their party.²⁶ Primordialism, on the other hand, is the belief that deeply religious phenomena exist in the world. People who hold this view believe that social identity groups are characterized by certain things, such as region, religion, culture, language, and social organization. They also think that these groups have strong ethnic and religious identities. Primordialists believe these groups can best achieve their collective goals by working together.²⁷

Raiser cites Jeff Haynes' 1998 book *Religion in Global Politics*, which investigates the process of religious "appropriation" in many parts of the world. He concludes that religions gain new influence in the public domain when they help protect the cultural identity of threatened social groups, building internal cohesion in the face of cultural change. "The bottom line," Haynes writes in Raiser, "...key to understanding the socio-political function of religion today is that it often provides resources for people to try to deal with the impact of modernization processes or post-modernization conflicts."²⁸

We cannot escape identification or identity politics. Identity is "a powerful moral principle handed down to us," in the words of Charles Taylor, quoted by Mayumi, and has transcended nations and cultures because it is based on the basic psychology of the human breath. This moral theory suggests that we have a true inner identity that is not recognized and that the entire external society may be false and tyrannical. It centers our natural need for recognition of our dignity and gives us a vocabulary to voice our discontent when such recognition is not given.²⁹

Al-Farisi revealed that identity politics is a monumental creation of the state to label its citizens. This labeling becomes important in matters of political regulation, or it could also be the politics of state control over its citizens to know 'who is an opponent' and 'who is a friend'. State regulation and control over its citizens does not stop here.³⁰ In contrast, Arjon reveals that religious and nationalist Indonesians tend to trust specific individuals rather than ideas

²⁴ Koster, "Ritual Performance and the Politics of Identity."

²⁵ Lilliana Mason and Julie Wronski, "One Tribe to Bind Them All: How Our Social Group Attachments Strengthen Partisanship," *Political Psychology* 39 (February 1, 2018): 257–277, accessed February 16, 2023, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/pops.12485>.

²⁶ Mason and Wronski, "One Tribe to Bind Them All: How Our Social Group Attachments Strengthen Partisanship."

²⁷ Widyawati, "Menguatnya politik identitas di indonesia baik karena faktor agama, sosial, dan etnis," *Jurnal Pendidikan Pancasila Dan Kewarganegaraan* II, no. 2 (n.d.), <https://jurnal.untan.ac.id/index.php/JPPKn/article/view/44627>.

²⁸ Konrad Raiser, *Religion, Power, Politics* (Geneva: WCC Publications., 2014), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-03704-2_1.

²⁹ Fukuyama Mayumi, "Society 5.0: Aiming for a New Human-Centered Society."

³⁰ Al-Farisi Leli Salman, "Politik Identitas: Ancaman Terhadap Persatuan Dan Kesatuan Bangsa Dalam Negara Pancasila."

or principles. As a result, during conflicts and political violence, religious leaders such as Imams or priests, tribal chiefs, or local kings of ethnic group leaders play an important role in escalating or avoiding wars. Unfortunately, the Indonesian government tends to minimize the importance of two important factors in Indonesia: religion and ethnicity.³¹

Sari, quoting Frederik Barth, argues that religion and ethnicity are constantly changing, and the boundaries of membership of an ethnic group are often negotiated and renegotiated. It depends on political struggles among existing groups. Frederik Barth calls this phenomenon of identity negotiation situational. At this limit, actors try to exploit cultural symbols and display specific ethnic behaviors that change over time, according to specific situations, or according to personal or social interests. This is important because it is closely related to self-image and self-esteem as individuals and as a group. This identity will always be experienced, communicated, processed, or constructed by each individual in their interactions.³²

Gramsci's historical bloc notion is inextricably related to establishing political identity. Political identity is the perception of people and groups with larger social, economic, and political organizations. In Gramscian terminology, political identity is molded by the dominant cultural and intellectual hegemony. The prevailing ideas and narratives transmitted by the ruling class through cultural institutions and the media shape people's political identities. Building a counter-hegemonic political identity frequently entails creating coalitions amongst various socioeconomic groups with common grievances against the ruling class. It may also need the formation of alternative cultural and intellectual viewpoints that oppose the prevailing worldview.³³

Identity Politics and its Impact on Democracy and Religion

As the world's third biggest democracy, populism has yet to establish a systematic definition due to its complexities; several approaches to depicting the phenomena have been taken, ranging from ideational, structural political economy to political strategy.³⁴ In Indonesia, democracy is seen as more than merely conducting regular elections and hence is not restricted to the Schumpeterian notion of democracy but as a national identity and way of life. Indonesia wanted to move away from the history and stigma of compelling the opposition to agree on something to persuading and consenting ideas through democratic institutions and means, from the dehumanization of the multi-party system, subjugation of free speech, and militarism to the restoration of the multi-party system, decentralization of power, and comprehensive political reform based on constitutionalism.³⁵

In terms of religion, this research contends that political identity can influence religion in Indonesia. Political identity, particularly religion, can contribute to the influence of religion in society. It can enhance religious values and enhance people's respect and follow religious

³¹ Arjon, "The Sleeping Giant: The Awakening of Religious Identity."

³² Sari Endang, "Kebangkitan Politik Identitas Islam Pada Arena Pemilihan Gubernur Jakarta - CORE Reader," *KRITIS: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik Universitas Hasanuddin* 2, no. 2 (2016), accessed February 16, 2023, <http://journal.unhas.ac.id/index.php/kritis>.

³³ Renate Holub, *Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism*, ed. Christopher Norris (New York: Routledge, 1992), 115.

³⁴ Rizky Widian, Putu Agung Nara Indra Prima Satya, and Sylvia Yazid, "Religion in Indonesia's Elections: An Implementation of a Populist Strategy?," *Politics and Religion* 16, no. 2 (June 11, 2023): 351–373, https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/S1755048321000195/type/journal_article.

³⁵ Dinna Wisnu, ed., *Populism, Identity Politics and the Erosion of Democracies in the 21st Century a Reflection from Bali Civil Society and Media Forum 2018* (Jakarta: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2019), <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/indonesien/15936.pdf>.

teachings more.³⁶ Political identity, particularly religion, can contribute to public policy and government action. It can strengthen or weaken religious values in society.³⁷ Political identity, particularly religion, can enhance group unity and relationships between group members. This can make people join and support their group more in a religious manner.³⁸

Lewicki mentions that it is not appropriate to think of Christian identity politics as a reaction to social diversity. Thus, racial differences are created and maintained by the politics of identity, together with a racialized division of labor.³⁹ The reality of identity politics with faith (spirituality) promotes humility, love for justice and truth, and empathy for those who are marginalized. All of this can be achieved through the spirit of collective dance shown in the worship celebrations of the congregations in the neighborhood and daily practical actions.⁴⁰ This affirmation of the inherent worth of each human has historically been brought about in large part by the Bible and Judeo-Christian culture. According to Saint Paul (Galatians 3:28), a person is no longer fundamentally classified as male or female, slave or free, Greek or Jew. In God's eyes, everyone is equally and immensely valued. The idea of an unconditional personal identity and value originates historically in religious discourse.⁴¹

Identity Politics Meets Christian Identity on Democracy

Popular traditions precede official legislation in democracies because "the consent of the whole people expressed by a custom counts far more." People "participate actively in forming the norms through which they are governed" in several ways, including customs.⁴² Franke mentions that individualistic philosophy contains absoluteness and inviolability regarding each distinct idea, that is, at least, somewhat religious and, in certain cases, even uniquely Christian from a cultural standpoint. Because it is unconditional, a person's value is drawn from, or appropriated from, the absolute value of a supreme being or divinity.⁴³ Kraynak argues although Christianity is necessary to uphold the fundamental moral precepts of modern liberal democracy, it is neither inherently liberal nor democratic.⁴⁴ We have to

³⁶ Mustafa Didin Saepudin, "Islam and Identity Politics in Indonesia: Understanding the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election," *Religion, State and Society* 47 4 (2019): 360–377.

³⁷ Malik Imron Sahri, "The Role of Religion and Identity Politics in the Indonesian Democracy," *Journal of Politics and Democratization* 2, no. 2 (2017): 26–36.

³⁸ Aris Ananta Suryadinata Leo, Evi Nurvidya Arifin, *Indonesia's Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2015).

³⁹ Aleksandra Lewicki, "The Christian Politics of Identity and the Making of Race in the German Welfare State," *Sociology* 55, no. 6 (December 29, 2021): 1228–1244, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00380385211008368>.

⁴⁰ Juan Carlos, "Political Identity In The Perspective Of The Christian Faith: Welcome To The Future," *International Journal of Education, Language, Literature, Arts, Culture, and Social Humanities* 1, no. 2 (June 21, 2023): 168–178, <https://pbsi-upr.id/index.php/ijellacush/article/view/189>.

⁴¹ William Franke, "A Negative Theological Critique of Postmodern Identity Politics," *Religions* 10, no. 8 (August 19, 2019): 488, [https://ir.vanderbilt.edu/bitstream/handle/1803/15613/A Negative Theological Critique of Postmodern Identity Politics.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://ir.vanderbilt.edu/bitstream/handle/1803/15613/A%20Negative%20Theological%20Critique%20of%20Postmodern%20Identity%20Politics.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

⁴² Matthew P. Cavedon, "Early Stirrings of Modern Liberty in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas," *Politics and Religion* 16, no. 4 (December 27, 2023): 567–584, https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/S1755048323000159/type/journal_article.

⁴³ Franke, "A Negative Theological Critique of Postmodern Identity Politics."

⁴⁴ Douglas Farrow, "Christian Faith and Modern Democracy: God and Politics in the Fallen World, by Robert P. Kraynak," *Arc: The Journal of the School of Religious Studies* 31 (May 1, 2003): 223–225, <https://arcjournal.library.mcgill.ca/article/view/999>.

acknowledge the unsettling reality that while God is necessary for modern liberal democracy, He is not as liberal or democratic as we would like Him to be.⁴⁵

The government is responsible for enforcing the law fairly and impartially so everyone has equal rights and can participate in democracy. This is done by strengthening institutions that are independent and free from political influence. It is a faith that demonstrates to us that the Judeo-Christian understanding of humanity offers the greatest logical explanation for human dignity and that the ultimate basis for human justice is divine love.⁴⁶ Civil society organizations can help strengthen democracy by assisting governments to participate in the political process and supporting these organizations in their development. Recognizing liberal democracy's intrinsic antagonism to faith and transcendence, Kraynak proposes that Christians examine "Christian constitutionalism," or "constitutionalism without liberalism."⁴⁷

Hanson argues that while the church acknowledges the value of providing a space for the weak in politics or, more deeply, in creation, it has a different mission and message and resists the temptation to engage in identity politics. Therefore, identity politics provides Christians with a chance for introspection as well as a realization that identity politics is not the only answer to all of the world's issues. Furthermore, because everyone is a member of God's created human family, they are all valid in an ordered depiction of the Christian world.⁴⁸ Consequently, a Christian acknowledges their neighbor as a fellow creature of God and a recipient of God's love via Christ. There has frequently been a temptation to embrace identity politics inside the church. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the institutional church has frequently been on both sides of the political spectrum. Stated differently, the church and its adherents have forgotten who they are at their core—the church as the bride or body of Christ, everyone else as God's created being, and believers as God's adopted child.⁴⁹

Religious belief lessens a person's ability to protest since it is closely linked to ideals that support maintaining social order, such as tradition and adherence to social norms. However, participating in religious social events raises the profile of group interests, encourages the pious to participate in politics, and increases the likelihood that attendees will develop civic virtues. All of these factors positively impact political protest.⁵⁰ Such political obligations imply the necessity of civic and moral education institutions that shape citizens' characters, making them difficult to reconcile with safeguards for individual rights.⁵¹ Kraynak is correct when he says that Christian personalism highlights aspects of Christian anthropology, including an understanding of subjective consciousness and the exercise of self-determination.

⁴⁵ Ronald H. Noricks, "Kraynak, Robert P. Christian Faith and Modern Democracy," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 15, no. 1 (2003): 205–206, http://www.pdcnet.org/oom/service?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft_val_fmt=&rft.imuse_id=jis_2003_0015_0001_0205_0206&svc_id=info:www.pdcnet.org/collection.

⁴⁶ Kraynak, Robert P., "Justice without Foundations," *New Atlantis* 32 (2011): 103–120, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318726197>.

⁴⁷ Robert Kraynak P., *Christian Faith and Modern Democracy God and Politics in the Fallen World* (Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 2021), 115.

⁴⁸ Michael Hanson, "Christian Identity Meets Identity Politics: A Lutheran Approach to Political Engagement" (Concordia Seminary, 2021), <https://scholar.csl.edu/phd/90>.

⁴⁹ Hanson, "Christian Identity Meets Identity Politics: A Lutheran Approach to Political Engagement."

⁵⁰ Pazit Ben-Nun Bloom, Gizem Arikan, and Allon Vishkin, "Religion and Democratic Commitment: A Unifying Motivational Framework," *Political Psychology* 42, no. S1 (December 23, 2021): 75–108, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/pops.12730>.

⁵¹ Robert P. Kraynak, "The Relation of Christianity and Liberal Democracy in America," *Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe* VI (2009), <https://repozytorium.ka.edu.pl/bitstreams/4eb24779-5eca-4900-a131-e48097e7b263/download>.

It also honors human rights, individuality, the interiority of spiritual life, and personal identity.⁵²

Conclusion

This paper argues identity politics cannot be used as a pattern or basis for achieving real democracy because identity politics will not lead to the goal of unity and togetherness. The pluralism of the Indonesian nation is a reality that should be capitalized into a source of political power to build a stronger democratic system, but it must still be friendly to the values of Pancasila as the state ideology. The impact on democracy in Indonesia is twofold. On one hand, a healthy democracy encourages the expression of diverse voices and the protection of minority rights, including religious minorities. On the other hand, identity politics can pose a threat to democratic principles by fostering division and hindering cooperation among different religious and ethnic groups. In navigating these challenges, Indonesia must promote dialogue and understanding among diverse religious and cultural groups. Building an inclusive national identity and respecting all citizens' rights, regardless of their religious affiliation, is essential for maintaining a stable and vibrant democracy. The impact of identity politics intersecting with Christian identity in Indonesia has far-reaching implications for democracy and religious systems. Striking a balance that upholds democratic values, protects minority rights, and promotes social cohesion is essential for Indonesia's continued stability and prosperity as a diverse and pluralistic nation.

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