# Dynamics of Civil Islam in Identity Politics of Indonesia and Malaysia

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**Abstract:** This study explores the role of Civil Islam within the context of identity politics in Indonesia and Malaysia, focusing on its impact on the democratization process and public policy formulation in both countries. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the research gathers data from primary and secondary sources to analyze how Civil Islam, through its interactions with the state and society, influences and is shaped by local political dynamics. The findings indicate that Civil Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia plays a crucial role in strengthening democracy through active participation in identity politics, directly responding to socio-political challenges emerging in the post-reform era. In Indonesia, the movement contributes to the consolidation of Pancasila as the foundational national ideology, while in Malaysia, it strives to harmonize ethnic and religious differences within a constitutional democracy framework. This study enriches our understanding of Islamic social movements not only as responses to social injustices but also as significant actors in the formulation and implementation of inclusive national ideologies. The findings have important implications for policymakers and social activists in designing strategies that promote social integration and political stability in culturally diverse regions.

**Keywords:** Civil Islam; democratization; identity politics; Indonesia; Malaysia.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengkaji peran gerakan Civil Islam dalam konteks politik identitas di Indonesia dan Malaysia, dengan fokus pada peranannya dalam proses demokratisasi dan pembentukan kebijakan publik di kedua negara. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, studi ini mengumpulkan data dari sumber primer dan sekunder untuk menganalisis bagaimana gerakan Civil Islam, melalui interaksi dengan negara dan masyarakat, mempengaruhi dan dibentuk oleh dinamika politik lokal. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Civil Islam di Indonesia dan Malaysia memainkan peran kritikal dalam menegakkan demokrasi melalui partisipasi aktif dalam politik identitas, yang merespons secara langsung terhadap tantangan sosio-politik yang muncul pasca-era reformasi. Di Indonesia, gerakan ini berkontribusi pada pemantapan prinsip Pancasila sebagai dasar ideologi negara, sementara di Malaysia, ia berupaya mengharmoniskan perbedaan etnis dan agama dalam kerangka demokrasi konstitusional. Studi ini memperkaya pemahaman kita tentang gerakan sosial Islam yang bukan hanya sebagai respons terhadap ketidakadilan sosial tetapi juga sebagai aktor penting dalam perumusan dan penerapan ideologi nasional yang inklusif. Kajian ini memberikan implikasi penting bagi pemangku kebijakan dan aktivis sosial dalam merancang strategi yang mendukung integrasi sosial dan stabilitas politik di kawasan dengan keragaman budaya yang tinggi.

**Kata Kunci:** Civil Islam; demokratisasi; politik identitas; Indonesia; Malaysia.

## 1.   Introduction

Both Indonesia and Malaysia have a lengthy history of semi-authoritarian administrations, dating back to the Mahathir Mohammad era from 1981 to 2003 and the Soeharto New Order era from 1967 to 1997, before being deposed by students. However, once Suharto had completed his political and

governmental duties, Mahathir Mohammad, who contested in the Malaysian election in 2018, was re-elected prime minister at a young age.

Under the rule of authoritarian ruling regimes, citizen participation in the public policy process is still considered relatively limited in both Indonesia and Malaysia as long as political and bureaucratic reform has not occurred. Slater (2012) in such circumstances, civil society's position as a power balancer is extremely strategic, particularly in questions of public policy formulation. It is very interesting to study the role of Islamic civil society in the public policy process in Indonesia and Malaysia using an interaction approach between the state and Islamic social organizations because it has a correlation with political culture, organizational functioning, and political behavior.

However, the examination of the dichotomy of Islamic identity in Indonesia consistently references Geertz's argument (1960) concerning the terms santri, priyayi, and abangan. Over time, this framework has faced critique from various scholars who argue that it fails to align with the complexities of contemporary reality (Bachtiar, 1981; Beatty, 1999; Hefner, 1987; Koentjaraningrat, 1994; Nakamura, 2020; Sutherland, 1975). This discrepancy arises from significant shifts within Islamic society, coupled with socio-economic and political transformations in Indonesia.

By strengthening Islam's civil role, it is believed that Islamic groups will be able to become a force for progressive political change and foresee the dominance of conservative and extreme Islam, which harms democracy. The strength of social organizations in Indonesia can contribute significantly to preserving the strategic role of modern civil society formation in the maintenance of democracy.

Books and research literature on Islamic civil and Malay Islamic identity politics throughout the reform period are still scarce. The majority of the research focuses on Malay Islamic politics from independence to the New Order. As a result, in this literature review, we will propose several pieces of literature that are relevant to the research objectives and contribute to a conceptual framework that can be seen generally in two approaches to the study of Malay Islamic Politics in Indonesia and Malaysia, namely the modernist approach and the sympathetic traditionalist approach. These two approaches might be interpreted as the result of the dichotomy of Islamic interpretation schools that shape the history and varied kinds of Islam that exist in the two countries' societies.

Deliar Noer (1980), Taufik Abdullah, and Syafii Maarif (2012) are Indonesian modernist Muslim scholars who actively debate Islamic politics. Because of the writings of modernist Muslim intellectuals and their proximity to western intellectuals, the study of Indonesian and Malaysian Islamic politics not only examines how religious renewal became the axis of political movement, but it also provides an initial examination of the politics of Indonesian and Malaysian Muslims in the context of a modern and democratic state.

M Zaki Mubarak and M Zaini Abu Bakar's publications on Mahathir Mohammad's Islamic Politics in Malaysia and Suharto's Islamic Politics in Indonesia, as well as Islam and the State in Malaysia, underline that Islamic concepts and discourses in both Indonesia and Malaysia have always been a fascinating subject. Desires and manifestations of political culture and thought uniformity are seen as a reflection of Islam in both countries as a political ideal in a broader sense, namely as a way of life that, in time, will become a more systematic Islamic movement.

This movement shifts the primary actors in political and state life, which does not just make the state the sole main actor in determining the future political system. Powers other than the state, such as Islamic civil society and political society, are gradually gaining trust, which boosts the reputation of Islamic civil society and political society to assist bring about significant improvements for the Indonesian country.

## 2.　Method

The aim of this study is to explore how the Islamic civic movements in Indonesia and Malaysia utilize an identity political theory approach (Moleong, 2011). The resurgence of identity politics coincided with calls for freedom in the post-reform era, seeking to invigorate democracy, which had been stifled during the New Order period. Effective management of identity politics is crucial for

harnessing its potential as a source of strength and equilibrium in multicultural societies, fostering collective awareness vital for integration and national cohesion.

Expanding on Cressida Heyes' conceptualization, identity politics is perceived as a form of political activism rooted in the experience of injustice faced by social groups. It serves as a means of liberation from oppressive conditions by advocating for the interests of specific constituencies within society.

The cultivation of a national identity, particularly in culturally diverse nations like Indonesia and Malaysia, should prioritize unity and justice. National cohesion, a fundamental element in preserving a nation's stability, can be bolstered by fostering trust in the democratic political system and leveraging shared identities, such as religion, as social capital, as suggested by Bordieu. Nationalism, emerging in response to industrialization and fostering a sense of commonality, acts as a cohesive force that transcends individualistic tendencies, promoting solidarity among diverse groups.

This study employs a qualitative methodology supplemented by a comprehensive literature review. The research entails systematic collection and analysis of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources encompass direct publications covering Islamic civil issues in Indonesia and Malaysia, while secondary sources include scholarly works such as books, journals, essays, and papers examining the subject matter extensively. A meticulous review and synthesis of relevant literature are conducted to provide a comprehensive understanding of Islamic civil movements in the two countries. The qualitative analysis, employing a descriptive-analytical approach, aims to scrutinize the gathered information thoroughly.

## 3.    Result and Discussion

 *Discourse on Islamic Civil Movement in Indonesia*

The consolidation of democracy in Indonesia, as well as the presence of direct elections, has exacerbated the issue of identity politics. As a result, the characteristics of liberalization and emancipation are critical considerations concerning how they will be directed, particularly in the context of Pancasila's political interpretation, which makes democracy and national ideology more open discourse. It is critical to prioritize moderate nationalist and nationalist Islamist groups in order to strengthen Pancasila principles while also addressing the issue of identity politics in the reform era.

Across various perspectives and analytical frameworks, there exists a prevalent perception positing the government as a manifestation of repressive tendencies, juxtaposed with civil society perceived as a beacon of liberation. However, it is crucial to recognize that in numerous instances, the government and civil society form an interconnected entity that defies simplistic categorization or separation (Diamond, 1994).

The dynamics of the link between Pancasila, multi-culturalism, and democracy in national interpretation, which would shape people's political conduct, are hoped to be evolved in accordance with Indonesia's democratic climate. A comprehensive grasp of Pancasila, national identity, and the meaning of democracy that leads to national integrity is urgently required to be merged into a strong structure by restoring Pancasila's emancipatory character as a way of life as well as a unifying ideology for the nation. By blurring the definition of Pancasila democracy, a shift in understanding and interpretation of cultural politics is conceivable, which should metamorphosis into the spirit of political economic change based on the ideals of fairness and equality.

A related issue is how to avoid falling into the trap of merely electoral activity in a limited paradigm and only to meet the interests of specific groups. Pancasila must be able to articulate and reinforce the five pillars of nationality as a political ideology in the context of a multicultural country. As a result, the connectedness of the five principles must be able to represent the demands of a very diversified national life and connect one faith with another within the framework of justice, unity, and, most importantly, humanity.

Pancasila, as part of political interactions and cultural dialectics, is inseparable from the content of cultural knowledge aimed at neutralizing other ideologies that are not in line with Pancasila, whether

in educational institutions, public debates, or political party discourse. Thus, in an essentialist perspective of the state's holiness and perfection, Pancasila is nothing more than the state's foundation. Togetherness and social justice in Pancasila symbolize symbolically how culture and ideology can concurrently encourage the inclusion of Islamic values and essence into the first principle aiming at justice and equality in a multicultural society (Sujito, 2022).

In his work on civil Islam, Hefner (2001) provides an extensive analysis of the factors contributing to the establishment of ICMI as an Islamic organization in 1990. The organization emerged with the backing of the Soeharto regime, aiming to advocate for moderate Islam and garner Muslim backing for the regime. However, ICMI initially served as a conduit facilitating dialogue between the government and Muslim activists, thereby fostering an environment conducive to the independent expression of diverse ideological perspectives and actions within its sphere.

Consequently, divisions within ICMI became inevitable, particularly between the moderate Muslim faction and the Muslim bureaucratic faction. Soeharto subsequently addressed these divisions, particularly in response to criticisms from reformist Islamic figures, by enlisting support from hardline Islamic circles, and in some cases, conservatives and fundamentalists. Suharto endeavored to cultivate a base of devout Islamic supporters both to bolster his political authority and as a tactic for maintaining control through a strategy of divide and rule. Moreover, Soeharto reintroduced a political dimension to religion (and ethnicity) by exploiting issues related to tolerance and deference toward the state.

Ultimately, the Islamic faction splintered into two factions: one faction endorsed the perpetuation of authority and aligned with the Soeharto regime, while the other faction advocated for the advancement of genuine democracy consistent with Islamic principles. In this regard, there appears to be a consensus regarding the trajectory of Indonesian Islamic politics in the foreseeable future. Additionally, within the realm of political parties, Soeharto established a party aimed at channeling and controlling the civil influence of Islam. For instance, Golkar, a political entity utilized as a tool by the regime to secure victories in general elections, enjoyed a widespread support base across various societal strata.

Despite both Indonesia and Malaysia being democratic nations with general elections as key democratic parameters, they each possess distinct parliamentary systems and judicial institutions defined by their respective constitutions. A significant discrepancy arises in the post-election scenario. Criticism of general election outcomes in Malaysia, exemplified by the 2013 general election, is met with interrogation, compounded by the authoritarian implementation of Malaysia's internal security law, which stifles democratic principles. This stance markedly contrasts with Indonesia's more accommodating approach, which allows greater latitude for electoral critique aimed at refining the electoral system. This juxtaposition highlights how democratic processes can influence governance dynamics.

In the realm of identity politics, both Indonesia and Malaysia have addressed this issue by affording society opportunities to demonstrate that religious dogma and nationalism are convergent ideologies striving to uphold national sovereignty and fortify national allegiance.

The challenges faced by Civil Islam during the reform era encompass two significant dimensions. Firstly, the external aspect, which pertains to environmental concerns, can assist Civil Islam in fulfilling its various roles in responding to government policies affecting all facets of societal life. Secondly, the focus is on enhancing the capacity of Civil Islam to play a vital and constructive role in society. The concept of Civil Islam underscores the aspiration to construct an independent and autonomous Islamic social order.

Civil Islam, with its diverse roles and dimensions, must align with its substantive and pivotal character to comprehend its duty as overseer and controller of state policies. Effective oversight of government authority requires various tools, including media scrutiny and non-governmental organization supervision. Disparities in the forms and patterns of oversight are closely linked to real socio-political conditions.

Moreover, while civil Islamic activists operate within the state framework, Civil Islam collaborates with the government, necessitating a primary focus on government policies. Hence, the aspirations

conveyed by Civil Islam represent the collective will and desires of the community. Given its association with national political growth dynamics, the government tends to be particularly sensitive to oversight by non-governmental actors. However, civil society activists perceive their input and oversight as motivated by a desire for positive change, requiring measurable regulations and plans for follow-up actions.

Civil society organizations exemplify activists' courage in opposing governmental policies. While civil society's courageous stance has the potential to ensure simultaneous government oversight, flaws in supervisory functions, such as sporadic and fragmented actions, hinder coordinated campaigns against government policies.

The establishment of democracy in Indonesia faces multifaceted challenges beyond the capacity of any single civil society organization. Consequently, democratic consolidation heavily relies on political leadership and an effective political party system. Strengthening political parties and ensuring the military's commitment to safeguarding national security and integrity are imperative.

However, civil society plays a crucial role in democratic consolidation by acting as a watchdog against elite manipulation. Robust civil society consolidation is essential to withstand manipulation by power elites or commercial interests, ensuring the representation of societal interests.

Enhancing Civil Islam in Indonesia necessitates identifying and addressing key societal issues, mobilizing national potential, and embracing reorientation to revitalize civil society's self-reliance. To foster civil society development, independence, public access to government institutions, and an open public forum are imperative. Strengthening civil society political engagement as a counterbalance to government power ensures policies align with public desires (Said, Yusoff, & Agustino, 2012). Ultimately, a balanced power dynamic between government and civil society is pivotal for upholding democratic principles and safeguarding societal interests amidst the potential influence of oligarchic elites on policy-making.

*Islamic Civil Movement in Malaysia*

Malaysia, as a former British colony, has a parliamentary system of government based on the British Westminster model. Malaysia is a federal country with 13 states, the capital of which is Kuala Lumpur. Meanwhile, the democratic system is an institutional royal system led by Yang Di Pertuan Agung, who also serves as the state's emblem of leadership.

According to Department of Statistics Malaysia's 2000 population and housing census data, 60 percent of Malaysia's population is Muslim, 19.2 percent are Buddhist, 6.3 percent believe in and practice Hinduism, 2.6 percent are traditional Chinese, and the rest are religious (Helmiati, 2007). Animism is one of them. Then, in 2016, the number of Malaysian Muslim inhabitants increased, indicating that Islam in Malaysia grew by around 6% in approximately 16 years, which may also be taken as implying that the birth rate to Malaysian Muslim families is increasing.

Jakarta's reform wave reached Kuala Lumpur in 1997. Malaysia saw a period of protests against Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. However, the enormous wave of protests failed to form a transitional administration, and Mahathir Mohamad retained his position as Malaysia's prime minister. Mass demonstrations, on the other hand, endorsed Anwar Ibrahim, who served as deputy Prime Minister from 1993 to 1998 and Minister of Finance from 1980 to 1998, as well as deputy chairman of the UMNO party, to succeed Mahathir Mohammad.

In Malaysia, there are various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that focus on civil society or civil Islamic movements (Maksum, 2017). The Consumer's Association of Penang, one of several NGOs in Malaysia, was founded in 1969 on Pulau Pinang by S.M. Idris. This NGO operates in the Malaysian economic sector and has strong international networks, especially in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

The bravery and development of NGOs in Malaysia has provided the media a mental push to publish stories critical of Malaysian government policy, whether in Malay, Chinese, English, or other languages. The imprisonment of Anwar Ibrahim sparked the formation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Malaysia, which eventually became the biggest opposition since they were

able to unite parts of society who opposed Mahathir's policies at the time, resulting in the People's Justice Party.

Malaysia, formerly a British colony, adopts a parliamentary system of government modeled after the British Westminster system. It is a federal nation consisting of 13 states, with Kuala Lumpur serving as its capital. The democratic framework in Malaysia is structured as a constitutional monarchy, with the Yang Di Pertuan Agung serving as the ceremonial head of state. According to data from the Department of Statistics Malaysia's 2000 population and housing census, approximately 60 percent of Malaysia's population adheres to Islam, while 19.2 percent identify as Buddhist, 6.3 percent practice Hinduism, 2.6 percent follow traditional Chinese beliefs, and the remainder adhere to various other religions, including Animism (Helmiati, 2007). Subsequent data from 2016 indicates a notable increase in Malaysia's Muslim population, suggesting a growth rate of approximately 6% over a span of 16 years, implying a rise in the birth rate among Malaysian Muslim families.

The reformist movement that swept through Jakarta in 1997 also reached Kuala Lumpur, leading to protests against Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in Malaysia. Despite the significant wave of protests, no transitional administration was formed, and Mahathir Mohamad retained his position as prime minister. Nevertheless, the mass demonstrations voiced support for Anwar Ibrahim, who had served as deputy Prime Minister from 1993 to 1998, Minister of Finance from 1980 to 1998, and deputy chairman of the UMNO party, advocating for his succession over Mahathir Mohammad. In Malaysia, numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are dedicated to civil society or civil Islamic movements (Maksum, Abdullah, Mas' udah, & Saud, 2022).

Among these, the Consumer's Association of Penang stands out, established in 1969 on Pulau Pinang by S.M. Idris. This NGO primarily operates within Malaysia's economic sector and maintains robust international networks, particularly in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The boldness and growth of NGOs in Malaysia have spurred the media to publish critical narratives of Malaysian government policies in various languages, including Malay, Chinese, English, and others. The incarceration of Anwar Ibrahim catalyzed the formation of NGOs in Malaysia, ultimately evolving into the largest opposition force, as they successfully unified segments of society opposed to Mahathir's policies at the time, culminating in the formation of the People's Justice Party.

In terms of the Malaysian democratization movement, Philip discovered that the emergence of civil Islam in Malaysia was caused by the regime at the time acting repressively towards the masses who were demanding justice and the downfall of the Mahathir regime, which the demonstrators saw as no longer capable of carrying out the mandate as a guide for the Malaysian nation. However, Mahathir Mohammad's leadership did not remain mute; in fact, Mahathir used the ISA law to repress groups that did not share the government's political beliefs.

The People's Justice Party is gaining public support. It is not unexpected that key NGO figures such as Iren Fernandez, Chandra Muzafar, and others joined the People's Justice Party as a result. Of course, the joining of these major personalities cannot be divorced from the opposition group's protest against persecution, eroding human rights, and the arrest of Anwar Ibrahim. The NGO leaders stated that they intended to join PKR because Anwar Ibrahim case was full of political intrigue, and they were there to control the arbitrary actions of the state, which uses power and the courts for the political interests of the ruling elite.

What the NGO leaders did, in turn, was able to raise tremendous political consciousness in Malaysia. Not long after that, civil society movements such as the HINDRAF group, which strongly criticized restrictions on religious freedom and the freedom to respect other religions, made these issues a rational reason for joining Malaysian civil society and opposing the repressive policies of the regime in power at the time.

Because of Malaysia's numerous ethnic interests, the most difficult task that the Malaysian people must face is precisely how to construct and present governmental conditions that are more exclusive and receptive to different contributions. Thus, the future success of growth in Malaysia will be predicated on a strategy to achieve ethnic and political balance based on the Malaysian state's national

interests. However, the political moves made by national consensus thus far have the potential to destabilize the system and demolish dreams for the achievement of a powerful nation.

Malaysian civil society and its prospects for change differ substantially from that of Indonesia. Non-governmental and Islamic organizations are not allowed to operate in broader areas, and influencers such as SIS and BIM are not free to act as agents of change. Because Malaysia was holding its eleventh election in 2008, the civil Islamic movement gained traction. Finally, the election succeeded in uniting civil society into a single political party, which was joined by the Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), the Justice Party, and the Democratic Action Party in an attempt to capture power.

During the first phase of Mahathir's presidency, he firmly emphasized strategy and political issues to the Melayu people, not only focusing on the country's economy but also on how to conduct domestic and foreign policy, so that the Melayu's concerns regarding Islam were given serious consideration.

A catchphrase emphasizing the fact that, despite differences in race, socioeconomic status, religion, and culture, all Malaysians are fundamentally the same. Each one of them is a Malaysian. The Malaysian people's greatest problem will therefore be figuring out how to create a more exclusive and tolerant political environment that would allow for an ethnic and political balance based on Malaysia's national interests. Additionally, identity politics should be defeated by a cosmopolitan multiculturalism approach, in which a cosmopolitan society is established that is not overly preoccupied with identity, because identity politics is linked to political interests and ideological issues.

On the other hand, the demise of Barisan Nasional, which had previously held a sway in elections, has caused the 2018 General Election Results (PRU) in Malaysia to draw attention from around the world. When Malaysians decided to reject Najib Razak's leadership, which was highly influenced by political oligarchy, it was a historic and pioneering move. The coalition of People Justice Party Democratic Action Party, Amanah, and Bersatu known as Pakatan Harapan was successful in gaining the support of the populace. Thus, the oligarchic elite and Chinese influence in Malaysia's political economy are prevented in large part by civil society and civil society organizations.

Following Mahathir Mohamad's victory over Najib Razak in the 2018 Malaysian general elections. The cooperation that had been agreed upon with China was subsequently reviewed by Mahathir. Mahathir Mohamad first indicated that he would postpone the project with China in order to lighten the nation's financial burden, which was at the height of a debt crisis. However, Mahathir later declared once more that his administration had terminated a significant megaproject with China. Malaysia was at a turning point at this time, striving to pay off enormous debts owed to foreign parties, notably China, particularly the oligarchic elite that had been controlling the Malaysian state (Khoo, 2020).

In order to bring about political change in Malaysia, Mahathir's role and commitment were crucial in ensuring fair elections. In the meantime, Mahathir's pledge to build a clean government—which he made known during the election campaign—was fulfilled by reforming and launching movements for social justice for all Malaysians, clean government, and equality in society.

*Discussion*

The proliferation of Islamic educational and financial institutions aimed at fortifying Malaysia's Islamic resurgence underscores the burgeoning influence of Islam in both Indonesia and Malaysia. These institutions are tasked with cultivating Islamic scholars endowed with profound knowledge and exemplary character. The overarching goal of the Islamic resurgence is to foster unity and prosperity within the diverse Malay populace of Indonesia and Malaysia. While addressing socio-political religious issues by facilitating broad access and spaces, Indonesia and Malaysia serve as epitomes of Malay Islam within the framework of identity politics. This framework allows individuals to demonstrate that religious doctrine and nationalism, although distinct ideologies, share the common objective of upholding national sovereignty and reinforcing national allegiance. The notion of civil Islam was not inherently predetermined and conceptualized; rather, it emerged as a consequence of cultural and institutional dynamics, which continue to evolve and necessitate positive changes achievable within the realm of human capacity (Benda, 1965).

The study of Islamic civil and civil society is an evolving process shaped by the dynamics and factors aligning with the needs of democratic societies. The study's novelty lies in the underutilization of political parties in Indonesia and Malaysia, which, if continued, may render them obsolete as the darlings of democracy. This void has been effectively filled by Islamic civil society and civil society, both of which are gaining traction in Indonesia and Malaysia. The advent of democracy has provided space for political parties, Islamic civil movements, and civil society to coexist. Consequently, the Islamic civil movement is poised to positively contribute to democratic and social life by serving as a balancer of state power and facilitating collaboration between society and the state, oriented toward shared interests and the common good.

The Islamic resurgence witnessed in Indonesia and Malaysia reflects Muslims' endeavor to adhere to perceived Islamic values, uphold Islamic principles, and sustain an Islamic worldview (Case, 1993). Concurrently, Islamic philosophy has gained ground among Indonesian and Malaysian Muslim communities, particularly within Islamic missionary groups and activists. The Islamic civil movement not only shapes Malay society's Islamic ethos but also facilitates knowledge integration, thereby fostering a comprehensive Islamic civilization. This multifaceted contribution has significantly enriched modern Malay civilization, both theoretically and practically, in the contexts of Indonesia and Malaysia.

Several pivotal factors have fueled the growth of Islamic civil movements in Indonesia and Malaysia. Indonesia's participation in this evolution is evidenced by the presence of Islamic social groups such as NU, Muhammadiyah, and Persis. Similarly, Malaysia's Islamic civil society has been bolstered ideologically and practically by entities like ABIM, Darul Arqom, the Malaysian Islamic Consumers Association (PPIM), and the National Muslim Youth Movement (MAPAN) (Chong, 2018).

As a result, the Islamic civil movement in Indonesia and Malaysia has emerged as a catalyst for reform in both countries. The contributions of Indonesian Islamic figures such as Abdurrahman Wahid and Amin Rais underscore that reform efforts stem not only from societal apprehensions about economic and political instability but also from a collective aspiration for change. Consequently, the Islamic civil movement has effectively filled the void left by political parties co-opted by the Soeharto regime (Priyono, 2014). Furthermore, the distinct cultural and political landscapes of Indonesia and Malaysia have shaped Islamic civil movements with unique characteristics. While Malaysia's civil society has embraced a robust pattern of Malay Islamic identity politics under the mantra "no Islam, no Malays," Indonesia's civil society has adopted a more nuanced approach encapsulated in slogans like "Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin" and "moderate Islam."

## 4.   Conclusion

This research highlights the significant role of Civil Islam in the democratization processes in Indonesia and Malaysia through active participation in identity politics. In Indonesia, the movement reinforces Pancasila as the foundational national ideology, whereas in Malaysia, it seeks to harmonize ethnic and religious differences within a constitutional democracy framework. These findings illustrate that Civil Islam not only responds to social injustices but also proactively shapes public policy and inclusive national ideologies.

This study contributes new insights into how Civil Islam can act as a driving force in democracy consolidation and as a mediator in political identity conflicts. Through detailed analysis, the research emphasizes how religion-based social movements can influence and shape local political dynamics, offering an alternative model for addressing complex social and political issues through approaches grounded in local and religious values.

While this study significantly contributes to our understanding of Civil Islam, it has several limitations. First, the research is based on secondary data and publicly available reports, which may not fully reflect the current situations or more detailed local nuances. Second, the focus on Civil Islam might overlook the roles of other influential social or religious groups. For future research, it is recommended that more extensive field studies be conducted involving direct interviews with stakeholders in Civil Islam as well as other groups. Additionally, further research could examine the

long-term impacts of policies influenced by Civil Islam on political stability and social integration in both countries.

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