

# Siyāsah Shar'iyah and the Politicization of Religion in the 2019 Indonesian Presidential Election

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# Siyāсах Shar'iyyah and the Politicization of Religion in the 2019 Indonesian Presidential Election

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**Submission date:** 05-Jan-2023 10:36AM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 1988714399

**File name:** Siy\_sah\_Shar\_iyyah\_and\_the\_Politicization...\_1.pdf (357.57K)

**Word count:** 10171

**Character count:** 59115



## SIYĀSAH SHAR'IYYAH AND THE POLITICIZATION OF RELIGION IN THE 2019 INDONESIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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**Abstrak:** Politisasi agama dalam pemilihan umum telah menjadi isu global di banyak negara, baik negara-negara berbasis agama maupun sekuler. Indonesia telah melaksanakan pemilihan umum sejak tahun 1955 hingga 2019 dalam prosesnya banyak sekali muncul isu-isu keagamaan yang menyebabkan terjadinya konflik dan perpecahan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memetakan dan menganalisis isu-isu terbaru dan motif penggunaan isu keagamaan dalam kampanye Pilpres 2019. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian fenomenologis empiris. Data diperoleh dari pengurus dan anggota partai politik. Selain itu diperoleh dari media cetak, media elektronik, media online/internet seperti blok resmi pasangan calon presiden-calon wakil presiden dan media sosial. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa politisasi agama dalam kampanye Pilpres 2019 semakin menguat di tengah melemahnya polarisasi agama. Isu-isu keagamaan dalam kampanye telah menimbulkan simpati dan antipati publik sehingga mempengaruhi elektabilitas pasangan calon presiden-calon wakil presiden. Di sisi lain isu-isu yang mengkonter berusaha menormalisasi citra negatif yang dialamatkan pada pasangan calon presiden-calon wakil presiden. Isu-isu ini muncul untuk kepentingan sesaat sebagai wujud politik pragmatis, di samping politik kultural. Kepentingan ideologis tetap terbaca walaupun tidak mengemuka secara transparan, karena hambatan konstitusional. Dalam pandangan *siyāsah shar'iyyah*, politisasi agama dapat mengancam tujuan syariat untuk mewujudkan kemashlahatan. Politisasi dengan menggunakan isu-isu keagamaan merupakan komodifikasi agama yang tidak sejalan dengan cita-cita syariat itu sendiri.

**Kata kunci:** politisasi agama; kampanye; pemilihan presiden; *siyāsah shar'iyyah*

**Abstract:** The politicization of religion in general elections has been a global issue in both religious and secular countries. Since 1955 to 2019, Indonesia experienced political contests laden with religious attributes, which sparked conflicts. This research aims to analyze the relevant issues and motives associated with using religious elements in the presidential election campaign 2019. This study is empirical research and involves interviews with high-level officials of political parties. Furthermore, the online mass media, official blogs of candidate pairs for president and vice president, and social media were employed as secondary data. Following the analysis, the result implies that the politicization of religion in the 2019 presidential election campaign firmly appears amidst the decline of presidential and vice presidential candidates' religious polarization. The use of religious issues in the campaign yielded public sympathy and antipathy, affecting the electability of presidential and vice presidential candidates. Meanwhile, counter-elements contradict negative images that discredit presidential and vice presidential candidates. The motives for politicizing religion were identified as "political pragmatism" and "culturalism politics". Ideological interest was also identified as a motive but did not arise in the 2019 presidential election. From *siyāsah shar'iyah* perspective, the politicization of religion could threaten the sharia objective of creating social advantage (*maṣlahah*). Politicization using religious issues amounts to religious commodification, which is irrelevant to the sharia objective.

**Keywords:** politicization of religion; campaign; presidential election; *siyāsah shar'iyah*

## **Introduction**

The general elections of 2019 were the first concurrent elections in Indonesia (Solihah, 2018). The intense competition escalated political tension, significantly involving religious elements such as religious activities, jargon, attires, symbols, religious-based parties' logos, approaches to ulama (Islamic leaders), and visits to Islamic boarding schools.

Several social science thinkers predicted that religion's role in industrial society would disappear. However, in the latest decades, this thesis received some criticism. Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart (2011) argued that religion would never die nor lose its urgency. In this regard, the resurrection of religiosity in several modern states, like the U.S. and Europe, and the emergence of religious parties in Islamic countries lend credence to the above argument. In Poland, the resurrection of Jews was seen as a chance by the state to stimulate social transformation and improve the political agenda (Zubrzycki, 2012). In China, Buddhism was also supported well by the government to serve local politics (Laliberté, 2011).

In Indonesia, the influence of religious organizations in politics is getting stronger. In the 2019 presidential election, President Joko Widodo (popularly called Jokowi), his vice presidential candidate, Ma'ruf Amin, and their fellow contestants Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Solahuddin Uno shared the support of the various national and religious parties. Jokowi and Ma'ruf were supported by the majority of the national parties and some Islamic parties. Meanwhile, Prabowo and Sandiaga received support from other Islamic parties as well as the alums of 212, the action to defend Islam occurred on December 2 2016, in Jakarta, and *Ijtima Ulama*. These Islamic organizations also received the support of some national parties. This situation provided a fertile ground for a campaign laden with religious elements. The campaign was meant to appeal to Muslim voters, who formed the majority of voters.

The involvement of religious elements is in line with the rising religious awareness of the people. For instance, many people tend to wear Muslim attire. They tend to attend religious activities, ranging from the conventional *ta'lim* assembly to the modern executive one, which is increasing. Many religious T.V. broadcasters are growing in



number (e.g. Aswaja TV, tvMu, TvMUI, Rojatv, Insan T.V., MQT, mt@tv, DMI Chanel, Khazanah, etc.). Further, several preachers vigorously preach the integration of religion and politics, implying that "religious struggle is not only restricted to verbal preaching, but it should also involve politics and power."

Hilmy (2012) views the phenomenon of religious elements in politics in two ways: the integration of religion and politics and the manipulation of religion for the sake of politics. Religious symbols, like verses from the Quran, are used to gain sympathy from voters for temporary and personal purposes or even for the sake of particular groups. Moreover, Widyawati (2014) sees these religious elements as ineffective, recalling that Islamic parties have lost in most general elections.

The current research analyzed several previous studies on religious elements in the context of general elections. Those include a study by Susanto (2019) examining the politicization of religion based on populism theory. Next, Jonas Lindberg (2014) studied the changes in religious politicization in parliament's speech and debate. Further, Campbell (2020) studied the contribution of religious politicization to political polarization. Mourão Permoser (2014) discussed the religious politicization of minorities among European Austrian parliament members. There is no work analyzing religious attribute usage in general election campaigns thus far. This research, therefore, investigates the use of religious attributes in the 2019 presidential election, delving into the motives for using them; subsequently, the study analyzes the use of such attributes from the perspective of *siyāsah shar'iyyah* (Islamic politics).

This is empirical research with a qualitative method. The approaches employed in this research are those of Marsh and Stoter, including behavioral approach (Harrison, 2016). The behavioral approach deals with the behavior of political actors, those who vote and are voted for. All secondary data were obtained from the draft of the presidential and vice presidential candidates' vision and mission statements, their official blogs and social media accounts printed media, brochures, electronic media, and online media/internet.

Primary data were obtained from interviews, listening, note-taking, and manuscript reading. The informants interviewed were party officials

and those with adequate knowledge about the issues. Following the data analysis, data validation took place through Focused-Group Discussion (FGD), which was intended to discuss the research findings with competent parties to ensure the comprehensiveness of the research.

### **The Politicization of Religion in the 2019 Presidential Election**

The campaign undertaken by general election contestants usually triggers polarization. In Indonesia, polarization tends to divide political actors into two groups, nationalists and religious groups. In the 2019 general election, however, polarization was not supported by the prevailing circumstances owing to the following reasons:

First, the two presidential candidates, Joko Widodo, were in nationalist groups representing PDIP (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan/Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle) and Prabowo representing Gerindra. However, the candidates for vice president were associated with religious organizations. Ma'ruf Amin, who was Jokowi's vice presidential candidate, was not affiliated with any political party, but he was among those that founded PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa/National Awakening Party), a political party that is affiliated with the largest traditionalist Muslims organization called Nahdatul Ulama (NU). Similarly, although Sandiaga, who was Prabowo's vice presidential candidate, was not affiliated with a religious party, he was closely related to religious parties. Sandiaga's life is inseparable from piety based on his belief in God; he also maintains a good relationship with others.

Second, based on supporting parties, these two candidate pairs were supported by nationalist and religious parties. Nationalist parties, including PDIP, Golkar (*Golongan Karya*/the Party of Functional Groups), NASDEM (*Nasional Demokrat*/National Democrat), and HANURA (*Hati Nurani Rakyat*/People's Conscience Party), and religious parties, including PKB, PPP (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*/United Development Party), and PBB (*Partai Bulan Bintang*/Crescent Star Party), supported Jokowi and Ma'ruf. Similarly, Prabowo and Sandi were supported by nationalist parties, including Gerindra and Demokrat, and religious parties, including PKS (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*/Prosperous Justice Party) and PAN (*Partai Amanat Nasional*/National Mandate Party).

Third, regarding their support base, both Muslim and non-Muslim voters supported these two candidate pairs.

Fourth, in terms of the vision and mission statements of the candidates for president and vice president in 2019, Jokowi and his vice presidential candidate, who is from the ulama community, did not indicate any religious vision. On the other hand, Prabowo and Sandiaga, who are not from the ulama community, used religious words in their vision. Although the nationalist-religious polarization was not relevant in the general election of 2019, the phenomenon of the politicization of religion, especially Islam, became more prominent, and this is quite popular since the majority of the people in Indonesia are Muslims. The religious contents are varied, constituting ideological, political, economic, social and cultural aspects, and many more.

The results of the FGD with several experts indicate that some people believe Islam deserves support and protection through jihad and that Islamic values must be implemented consistently. By so doing, the issues challenging Islam will also get attention. For example, eating pork was considered halal by the Solidaritas Indonesia Party (Duski, 2019). On the other hand, there was concern that this religious issue was intended for a more macro design since some others still feel insecure when they see Indonesia as a safe country. However, it is not as easy as it seems to provide evidence with valid data or arguments (Karni, 2019).

According to the data obtained during the campaign of the 2019 elections, the two presidential candidates referred to religious elements used by the supporters of both nationalist and Islamic parties. The conflict sparked by using these religious elements was intense and raised tension among supporters. The two wings claimed they were close to Islam.

The representation of Islamic and nationalist characteristics of supporting parties was less pronounced, where Islamic parties seemed more nationalist and nationalist parties were more Islamic. Some cadres of parties denied that parties involved religious representation in the campaign, as Yeni expressed that it was not easy for PDIP to involve religious representation, especially related to Islam since PDIP is always known to have been nationalist. This indicates that attempts to use religious representation in PDIP may not be easily taken by the members of the public, especially the people in West Sumatra (Tanjung, 2019).



### **Sympathetic Elements**

Sympathy issues comprise those that are meant to attract favors without offending competitors. The following actions could be categorized as sympathetic issues:

The first is the release of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir from prison. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir is a religious leader sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment by the Supreme Court according to Decision 2452 K/PID.SUS/2011 of 2012. Ba'asyir had served 2/3 of his sentence, indicating that he could apply for parole. He applied through his lawyer earlier, but it had not been responded. Within the period of the campaign, President Joko Widodo, a candidate for president in 2019, stated that he planned to release Ba'asyir on the grounds of humanity. This information was revealed by Yusril Ihza Mahendra, a lawyer for the Jokowi-Ma'ruf campaign, during his visit to the Department of Corrections of Gunung Sindur Bogor on 18 January 2019. Yusril declared that President Jokowi planned to release Abu Bakar Ba'asyir. The president was concerned about his health, recalling that he is now 81 years old.

However, the Directorate General of Rehabilitation Department Ministry of Law and Human Rights, Ade Kusmanto, confirmed that he did not receive any written statement from President Joko Widodo concerning the release of Ba'asyir. Furthermore, Ade clarified that Abu Bakar Ba'asyir is a terrorist sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment and would be released on 24 December 2023 (Hantoro, 2019). This was just a matter of propaganda; his release was postponed till after the campaign of the presidential election. This sparked disappointment in the Ba'asyir's family, as expressed by Abdul Rohim Ba'asyir (Jurnaliston, 2019).

The second is sending Muhammad Rizieq Syihab home. In 2017, Muhammad Rizieq Syihab, after his Umrah (pilgrimage program), decided to stay in Saudi Arabia since he experienced discrimination due to several allegations against him (Haryadi, 2018). One of the points of agreement between the Movement of National Defenders of Fatwa (GNPF) of Ulama and the pair of Prabowo and Sandiaga (candidates for president and vice-president) after Ijtima Ulama II is as follows:

"...prepared to use constitutional and attributive rights embedded in the president's official position to allow the process of rehabilitation, guarantee the repatriation, and recover the rights of Habib Rizieq Shihab as a citizen of Indonesia. Justice is also guaranteed for Ulama

activists 411, 212, and 313. Enforcement of justice is also required for other leaders once bullied" (Murhan, 2018).

The repatriation of Habib Rizieq is meant to gain sympathy from his supporters, which may attract more votes for Prabowo and Sandiaga.

The third is the support from Islamic leaders and the chairpersons of mass organizations. Both candidate pairs in the general elections of 2019 were supported by Islamic leaders and the chairpersons of mass organizations; some of them stated below:

*Majelis Silaturahmi Kiai* and the Persons in Charge of Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia (MSKP3I); Young Islamic Leaders of Jokowi (Samawi) in West Sumatera, Central Java, West Java, East Java, South Kalimantan, North Sumatra, Aceh, DKI Jakarta, Banten, and West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) (Kampai, 2018); National Deliberation of *Alim Ulama* held by *Munajat Indonesia Berkah* Assembly (MMIB) (Budilaksono, 2019); The Person in Charge of Islamic Boarding School Ash-Shiddiqiyah Jakarta (Beritasatu, no date); Sayyid Agil Siraj; Muhammad Luthfi bin Ali bin Yahya (Rais 'Aam Jam'iyah Ahlith Thariqah Al Mu'tabarah An Nahdliyyah) (Sadzali and Robby, 2020: xvii-xviii); Yusuf Mansur; Maimun Zuber (Person in charge of Islamic Boarding School Al-Anwar, Rembang, Central Java).

Furthermore, the support of religious leaders for Joko Widodo was not only from NU but also from Muhammadiyah, including Syafii Maarif (Yogya, 2019), Shofwan Karim (Head of DPW of Muhammadiyah, West Sumatera) (Irwanda, 2019), and many more.

On the other hand, the candidate pair Prabowo-Sandiaga gained support from the following religious leaders: (1) Habib Rizieq; (2) Bachtiar Nasir; (3) Abdul Shomad; (4) Adi Hidayat (AkhyarTv, 2019); (5) Abdullah Gymnastiar; (6) Hasib Wahab Ulama Tebuireng (SCTV, 2019); (7) Yusuf Muhammad Marta (Chairperson of GNPF); (8) Sabri Lubis (Ketua FPI); (9) Luthfi Bashori, Sidogiri Pasuruan, Prabowo Sandi Supporting Declarator (NU Garis Lurus); (10) Muhammad Bashori Alwi (senior member of NU); (11) Suyuthi Toha (Musytasyar PCNU East Java, the Person in Charge of Islamic Boarding School Mansya'ul Huda Tegal Delimo); (12) Al-Habib Hanif al Attas; (13) *Komando Ulama Pemenangan Prabowo Sandi* (KOPPASANDI); (14)

26 religious leaders from the Province of Aceh Darussalam (Setyadi, 2019); (15) *Ijtima Ulama II*, and many more.

The fourth is the establishment of Yayasan Peduli Pesantren (YPP). YPP was founded by Hary Tanoesoedibjo, the Chairman of *Partai Persatuan Indonesia (Perindo)*. This foundation was established to develop Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia since the founder believes they have significantly contributed to children's education and cared for them. Hary Tanoé spent his time visiting several boarding schools in remote areas all over the archipelago and interacting with religious leaders (Badriyanto, 2016). On the one hand, establishing this foundation represents a sympathetic element.

On the other hand, it triggered questions about his involvement in a foundation laden with Islamic religious ideals despite being a non-Muslim. People from all walks of life reacted to this question. Eramuslim.com reported that thousands of boarding schools in Banten and West Sumatera refused the contribution from YPP because it represented a political interest that could spoil the unity of Islamic communities of Islamic boarding schools. This turndown was outlined in the statement of *Forum Pondok Pesantren* Representatives of West Sumatera. The draft was signed by Sukarta Fuadin, representing the boarding school of Subulussalam; Ilham from Sumatera Thawalib Parabek; Fauziah Fauzan from Dinniyah Puteri Academy in Padang Panjang; and the Chairperson of MUI West Sumatra Gusril Gazahar (Redaksi, 2016). Also, Aliansi Ulama Madura (AUMA) suggested that all boarding schools in Madura turn down any contribution from YPP (Yusri, 2016).

### **Non-Sympathetic Elements**

Non-sympathetic issues, also known as negative ones, offend and cause competitors to react. They are illustrated below:

First, Alleged criminal conduct by Islamic leaders. For example, Anti-Slander Young Intellectual Network reported his preaching suggesting new banknotes and coins with the logo of "hammer and sickle" to the Metro Jaya Police Department. This report was based on the allegation of violating Article 28 Paragraph 2 and Article 28 Paragraph 1 in conjunction with Article 45 Paragraph 2 of Law No.



11 of 2008 on Information and Electronic Transaction) (Undang-Undang Informasi dan Transaksi Elektronik). Another case was also reported by *Solidaritas Merah Putih* (Solmet) to Metro Jaya. Anti-Pornography Student Alliance also reported him to the Metro Jaya Police Department regarding the allegation of disseminating pornographic content (Susanto, 2017).

The cases reported, Rizieq was indicted in two: those involving disparaging the coat of arms and dispersing pornographic contents, but an inquiry into these two cases was ceased. These allegations forced Rizieq not to return home after his Umrah (pilgrimage program) in 2017 since he felt he was heavily discriminated against (Rahma, 2018). Attempts were made to bring him home but to no avail. His return became the topic of national political discussion.

Another example was a case of Bachtiar Nasir. Bachtiar Nasir was officially declared a suspect over the allegation of his involvement in the embezzlement of the funds of YKUS (*Yayasan Keadilan Untuk Semua*/Justice for All Foundation). This case arose in 2016 and was handled by the Criminal Investigation Agency of the Indonesian National Police (Bareskrim Polri). Moch Zain uploaded information on Facebook alleging that Bachtiar supported rebel forces (Jaysh Al-Islam) fighting against the government of Bassar Al-Assad in Aleppo, Syria. Zain asserted that Indonesian Humanitarian Relief (IHR) under Bachtiar's leadership sent aid to these rebel forces and that the funds for this aid were allegedly from the IDR 3 million raised by people and kept in the bank account of YKUS, which Bachtiar in Indonesia managed. The Head of Police, General Tito Karnavian, reported that Bachtiar Natsir's case reached foreign media, stating that the funds were received from IHR and the name of Bachtiar Natsir was involved. Also, two other individuals were alleged to be involved in the case, including Adnin Armas, the chairperson of YKUS, and Islahudin Akbar, a banker (bmw/wis, 2019).

The case of Slamet Ma'arif: Slamet Ma'arif, the chairperson of Persaudaraan Alumni (PA) 212 (Brotherhood of Alumni), was declared a suspect by the Sub-Regional Police Department (Polres) of Surakarta, Central Java, due to an allegation of violation of the general election during the Tabligh Akbar (mighty congregation) of PA 212 in the Greater Solo on January 13 2019. The Commissioner of Division of Prosecution



against Violation committed by the General Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu), Poppy Kusuma, reported to the Polres of Surakarta and presented some shreds of evidence of the violation of general election during the Tabligh Akbar of PA 212 in Solo (Santoso, 2019)

The cases of Tengku Zulkarnain: Tengku Zulkarnain was reported to the police by a volunteer of Jokowi Mania (Jo-Man) over an allegation of spreading a hoax on Twitter regarding holed ballots sent in seven containers. He was also reported over the allegation of violating Article 14 Paragraph (1) (2) and/or Article 15 of Law No. 1 of 1945. The chairperson of Jo-Man, Immanuel Ebenezer, ensured that the tweet posted by Tengku Zul, which was proven to be a hoax, was deleted from his account. He attempted to make the general election look illegitimate. Jo-Man volunteer showed the screenshot of the tweet of @ustadtenkuzul, which was submitted as evidence to the police. The tweet reads as follows:

...the ballots in seven containers sent from China were already used and holed for candidate pair Number 01. It seemed that the upcoming general election was intended to be illegitimate. If it can't wait, why not send a petition urging the candidates to step down? It is worth a try (Muchlis, 2019).

The supporter of Prabowo-Sandi used the issue of indictments against religious leaders against Joko Widodo to portray him as someone who targets Islamic leaders. Still, such accusations were warded off by Joko Widodo during his visit to members of NU, other religious leaders, and students of the Islamic boarding School Al-Ittihad Cianjur, West Java (Jordan, no date). Ma'ruf also denied the targeting of those religious leaders for criminal prosecution. He argued that the legal process applies to all unconditionally. Prosecution of religious leaders does not amount to targeting. Anyone suspected of committing a crime will pass through the legal process, determining whether the accused is guilty (Hidayat, 2019).

Indonesian tabloids have multiple harmful elements, e.g., Tabloid Barokah and Buletin Kaffah. Tabloid Barokah published an article on 20 January 2019 (Bestari, 2019). This tabloid cornered Prabowo with the highly controversial article "*Prabowo Marah, Media Dibelah*" (Prabowo was infuriated, Media spoiled). It was reported that Prabowo was involved in the reunion of 212 or at least in a gathering. He was

outraged by the small number of people joining the reunion and was adamant that it was linked to the role of the media. In a special report, Tabloid Indonesia Barokah published an article entitled "Membohongi Publik untuk Kemenangan Politik" (Public Lies for Political Victory). This article shared information on hoaxes associated with the supporting teams of Prabowo, including Ratna Sarumpaet and Neno Warisman (Nathaniel, 2019).

On the other hand, an issue of bulletin Kaffah was deemed to have cornered Joko Widodo-Ma'ruf. According to Ace Hasan Syadzily, the National Campaign Team (TKN) spokesperson for Joko Widodo-Ma'ruf, the National Winning Body (BPN) of Prabowo-Sandi was found overly panicking following the article of Tabloid Indonesia Barokah. However, there was also a black campaign against Joko Widodo on Bulletin Kaffah, disseminated all over mosques. This black campaign was seen in the narration of the 18 January 2019, issue, edition 075. The bulletin reads: "Say No Jokowi" and "Stop supporting a Failing and Untrusted Leader". This black campaign planned to demarket Joko Widodo and was laden with religious sentiments, as seen on the leaflet with the hashtag #2019GantiPresident (replace the president). Also, in edition 075, published on 25 January, Bulletin Kaffah stood for candidate pair number 02, suggesting that a Quran recital was required as part of the presidential election. Once again, the article was laden with religious sentiments and clearly explained who stood behind this bulletin (Fajri, 2019).

Another example of negative elements is blasphemy. There was an allegation of blasphemy. The statement of Rocky Gerung, "*Kitab Suci adalah Fiksi*" (scriptures are fictional) in Indonesia Lawyers Club (ILC) aired on tvOne on Tuesday night, April 10 2018, sparked a controversy (Ilyas, 2018). Rocky Gerung was reported to the Criminal Investigation Centre of Police for blasphemy by the Secretary General of Cyber Indonesia, Jack Boyd Lopian. This report (Number L.P./512/1V/2018/Barreskrim) was received on 16 April 2018. Rocky allegedly violated Article 156a of the Penal Code. Jack believed that the scriptures are the Quran, Torah, and others. The word "fictional" was deemed to offend God and His Prophets. Fictional is defined as imaginary and unreal. In other words, it could mean that Jesus is fictional for Christians, and Mohammed is fictional for Muslims (Matondang, 2018).

Another example of negative elements is the existence of extremists and minority groups. Rumor has it that Prabowo was close to radical Islamic movements whose agenda was establishing a caliphate in the archipelago. This rumor is inextricable from some incidents during his campaign. Radical groups of Muslims are considered to have connections with terrorists (Bela *et al.*, 2021). In mid-March 2019, on his trip to Cianjur, East Java, on political duty, Prabowo was found in a car with number plate B 264 RIS. The car was owned by Chep Hermawan, the chairperson of the Islamic Reform Movement (Garis). This car was allegedly used to transport 156 Indonesians to Syria to join ISIS. Also, in his campaign in Manado, North Sulawesi (24 March 2019), a flag of *al-liwā'*, with a phrase of monotheism, was seen in the crowd of people. This flag was often linked to Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), an organization that consistently voiced the concept of a caliphate (Teguh, 2019).

This rumor was seen as an opportunity for Joko Widodo since NU, moderate Muslims, and the minority groups of other religions supported him. The fear of radicalism reinforced the support of the minority groups for Joko Widodo. In North Sulawesi, Nasdem Party gained two seats from no seats at all. In East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), Nasdem and Joko Widodo won (Anshar, 2019). The minority groups saw radicalism as something that could jeopardize their existence, while NU, was seen as a moderate Islamic group that is more tolerant and accommodating of minority groups.

### **Counter-elements**

These are opposing issues, either reactions or responses to issues raised by one of the campaign participants. Religious issues are used to evoke mass sentiment because they can easily influence the public's emotions. Indonesian people are known to be religious, especially the people of Aceh, West Sumatera, South Sulawesi, East Java, and West Nusa Tenggara. There are differences in the religious tendencies of religious groups in various regions; for example, the difference between the religious tendencies of East Java and South Sulawesi. In East Java, NU, one of the prominent organizations, is profoundly established, and the existence of charismatic religious leaders mostly averts religious sentiments. In South Sulawesi, NU is not as entrenched as it is in



East Java, allowing religious sentiments to penetrate the society deeply, and no one attempts to respond to these issues. This seems to be true since Prabowo, with religious manipulation, increased his chances of winning in South Sulawesi. The statement "Let Jokowi lose, or we will no longer hear *adhān*" was voiced, and it quickly entered the people's minds, reaching the traditional market and the ears of farmers (Irvan, 2019; Anshar, personal communication, 15 August 2019).

In West Sumatra, non-sympathetic religious issues against Joko Widodo were massively heard. The concept of Islam Nusantara (an interpretation of Islam that considers local Indonesian culture) was introduced by NU could not change the perspective of the people of West Sumatera. Jokowi faced a turndown from Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) of Sumbar; the decision was taken during the Local Coordinative Meeting of MUI of Sumbar and MUI of the Regency/Municipality of the Greater Sumbar held in Padang on 21 July 2018 (Damarjati, 2018). Jokowi lost in West Sumatera since only a few parties supported him, and some opponents attacked some who attempted to support him.

Since 2014, Jokowi has faced criticism stating that he was not close to religious organizations, especially Islamic religious groups. Thus, counter-elements or arguments are required to contradict such criticism and erase the notion in people's minds. The introduction of Ma'ruf Amir into the election was an icebreaker aimed at neutralizing the allegations. The National Campaign Team (TKN) of Joko Widodo-Ma'ruf came up with counter-elements against the negative ones (Danu, personal communication, 15 August 2019)

The tension of the religious elements in the society overshadowed other aspects, such as the government's success in infrastructure development. Infrastructure-related issues are not as popular as religious matters in society, and infrastructure development is mostly felt by those living in the border areas of Papua, Kalimantan, and others. The development directly affects the people in those areas (Anshar, personal communication, 15 August 2019).

The role of Ma'ruf seemed to entice the two poles, the nationalist and religious poles in the society and political parties. Jokowi is believed to belong to the nationalist pole, and had to deal with criticism from the religious pole. However, Jokowi was also supported by religious



parties, such as PPP, PKB, PBB, and so forth. To counter the existing criticism, a religious leader stepped in as a symbol of religious authority to confirm that Joko Widodo is not a pure nationalist but a nationalist-religious. It was not easy to prevent the involvement of religious elements in the 2019 general election campaign, especially issues arising from the BPN. Ma'ruf, a religious symbol, was introduced to balance the negative religious perception of Jokowi (Anshar, personal communication, 15 August 2019).

The term "campaign" is not recognized in *siyāsah shar'iyah*, and finding a similar concept or law about political campaigns in Islam is not easy. The argument that can be used about the political campaign is the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad forbidding individuals to beg for positions. It is not appropriate to plead for positions before God, but God will help His people to find their success when they are assigned to a position, as reported in the hadith of Nabi PBUH narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim from Abd al-Rahman ibn Samurah (al-Bukhārī, no. 6622).

The connection between begging for a position and a campaign is apparent as candidates publicly display their photos and deliver their visions, missions, and programs orally or in writing, directly or on electronic, printed media or social media. Campaigns are intended to accommodate the introductory process of the candidates to the public for voting. In the hadith of Abdurrahman bin Samurah, demanding a position is textually prohibited. Nevertheless, it is permissible in the hadith of Abu Hurairah that one requests to be a judge provided he behaves fairly and is not allowed to be fraudulent (Abū Daud, no. 3577). They were analyzing the latter opinion that making oneself available as a presidential or vice presidential candidate is lawful, especially if others propose. Every endeavor to convince the voters could be performed as long as it is intended to ensure justice and social advantage or *maṣlahah* (Yati, 2022), knowing that the ultimate sharia objective is *maṣlahah* itself (Ni'ami & Bustamin, 2021).

The presidential election in 2019 was not conducted in the context of enforcing the sharia of Islam. Religious elements tend to be used as political elements by the candidates of elections. When understood more profoundly, the basic concept of *siyāsah shar'iyah* (Fiqh Siyāsah) emphasizes bringing benefits to the people according

to sharia principles. That is, ornamenting the campaigns with religious touch does not contravene sharia principles. The political campaigns as part of the presidential election refer to *siyāsah wad' iyyah*, accepted as *siyāsah shar' iyyah*, and this is obvious in the two candidate pairs for president and vice president who are Muslims. Their vision and mission are generally intended to benefit people from all dimensions. From the perspective of *fiqh al-siyāsah*, political struggle, according to Abd al-Raḥmān Tāj, is aimed at manifesting the merits relevant to sharia or the values of Islam. However, the Quran and Sunnah do not specifically govern it (Tāj, 1415).

Religious issues from the 2019 presidential election can be seen as aspects of each candidate's mission, elements used to attract voters' sympathy, and two other things discussed above. From the perspective of *fiqh al-siyāsah*, religious elements as part of the mission of political candidates in the campaigns are ideal in the politics of Islam. All regulatory measures of the state that intend to bring benefits and enforce justice according to sharia or the principles of sharia serve as *fiqh al-siyāsah* or *siyāsah shar' iyyah*. In other words, the ideology of *siyāsah shar' iyyah* indicates the enforcement of sharia or sharia values in the society through political struggle.

Nonetheless, if religious issues were used to manipulate voters to attract their sympathy, they would have deviated from the purposes of political struggle. It means benefiting religion as a political medium, arguably called religious commercialization, as mentioned in Alquran (Q.S. 9:9). Non-sympathetic campaign involves using religious issues merely to gain favor or raise one's electability, and could be classified as religious politicization or commercialization, which is not in line with *siyāsah shar' iyyah* purposes.

### **Motives for the Involvement of Religious Elements**

The involvement of religious elements in politics consists of several motives. The first motive is pragmatic politics. Religious elements are ornamented by identity-related political elements, which have existed since 1955. Religious elements were more apparent during and after the Jakarta election and extended further to the concurrent election in 2018. Several studies admitted that the politics of identity held solid electoral power. Identity-related politics is a global phenomenon

in several countries. Religious elements represent practical political issues. Supporters of candidate pairs added some religious touch to the campaigns for their political interest; recall that both equally represented the nationalist pole. In the first stage, these issues were used to gain votes, and later in the following stages, they were used to gain power (Samad, at.al., 2019).

As seen in the presidential election campaigns held in Gelora Bung Karno, it is not easy to get a massive crowd of people involved without any prior plan. They *ṣalah* (prayed), *dhikr* (repeatedly pronounced the names of God), recited *ṣalawāt* (salutation to the Prophet of Muhammad), and religious preaching was given as part of the campaigns. The campaigns were heavily laden with "religious ornaments". This would not have taken place without a lengthy process of highlighting the political identity embedded in the religious awareness of the people. This awareness was taken as a chance for the model of political identity, an awareness that is not at all a political product but utilized as a political instrument (Danu, personal communication, 15 August 2019).

Based on observation, both presidential candidates did not seem determined to uphold Islamic values in government. However, for Ma'ruf Amin, who was born and raised within Islamic circles with a firm religious commitment, his mission to fight for the religious values of the state was quite apparent. Therefore, the two candidates for president and their supporters intentionally accommodated religious elements only on the grounds of electability, not ideological interest. Their accommodation of religious elements could be used by their followers representing religious organizations to influence the policy of the president-elect (Zulfikar, personal communication, 15 August 2019).

The existence of religious elements in the presidential election of 2019 was more vivid, and religious vigor escalated since people profoundly believe that religious touch is the best way to draw sympathy. Joko Widodo was aware of his weakness in terms of religious appeal. Reading this situation, he decided to strengthen his chances in the election by drawing Ma'ruf Amin into the candidacy as vice president. Ma'ruf Amin is a relevant religious symbol in Islam. With his participation in the election, it was expected that considerable votes from the constituents close to Ma'ruf Amin would go to Jokowi-Ma'ruf, even more than those obtained by Jokowi's opponent. Prabowo has



received the support of Islamic groups, like those attending the 212 reunions, and also used religious attributes to boost his electability. Ijtima Ulama is one of the Islamic groups that supported Prabowo. Religious elements were used to draw the sympathy of people whose religious attitude is quite pronounced. Religious vigor is found to be much stronger than it was before (Zulfikar, personal communication, 15 August 2019).

Religious elements could attract constituents for each candidate. If Jokowi had not drawn Ma'ruf Amin into the election, he would not have been the president. If Prabowo had not associated with Ijtima Ulama, the 212 reunions would not have stood for him. Religious elements expressed in the campaigns involved Fajr prayer at a mosque together, *dhikr*, *ṣalah*, religious preaching, and many more. The mass campaigns did not invite any legal experts, economists, sociologists, or cultural practitioners but invited religious leaders to preach (Zulfikar, personal communication, 15 August 2019).

The religious attributes brought into the campaigns were also meant to counter-balance the allegations against Jokowi. Jokowi was accused of being a member of a communist party (PKI), a Chinese minion, non-muslim, targeting religious leaders for a criminal prosecution, accommodating radical Islamic groups, being religiously disobedient, having a non-muslim family, and so forth. For BPN, religious elements would also reinforce the accusations against Jokowi in 2014 did not bring religious attributes to the fore. In the Jakarta election, members of NU in Jakarta voted for Anis Baswedan since he was a Muslim figure. Regarding the election of Joko Widodo, he brought Ma'ruf Amin into the candidacy to boost the votes from members of NU. This indicates that religious elements are quite effective, and this involvement gave Joko Widodo a better chance of victory in Jakarta. In Java, with the presence of Ma'ruf Amin, Joko Widodo also increased his chance of victory due to the massive support by members of NU. In 2019, Joko Widodo got more votes than in 2014 (Zulfikar, personal communication, 15 August 2019). Also, before Ma'ruf Amin came into the candidacy, members of an organization called al-Khairat, which is part of NU in Southeast Sulawesi, were doubtful of voting for Joko Widodo. However, Joko Widodo won the election in Southeast Sulawesi. The involvement of Ma'ruf Amin was part of the religious



elements used in the campaigns, and his presence was significantly influential (Adrianto, personal communication, 15 August 2019).

Some analysts assume that BPN intended to embrace the representatives of Islamic groups who are more rational and modern. The people of 212 were considered modern and represented city life instead of the traditional one. Most of the members of Muhammadiyah, Persis, Preaching Council of PII, and HMI belong to this group, and the religious characteristics of Sandiaga Uno seem relevant. Unfortunately, in elections, more emphasis is placed on quantity instead of quality; thus, Prabowo lost (Zulfikar, personal communication, 15 August 2019).

The second motive is culturalism politics. Two political motives gave color to the presidential election of 2019: Islamic and religious life and Islamic government. These motives seem to be the goals of all Muslim people, and the increasing events of *majelis ta'lim* and other religious programs in some venues mark this likelihood. Replacing the existing government system with an Islamic system is not a concept Prabowo agreed to since he is a true nationalist, and he believes that Pancasila as the fundamental principles of the state and the status of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia are absolute and final (Lubis, personal communication, 14 August 2019). However, suppose religious elements are to be set forth in the legislation. In that case, that can be done without having to change the government system of the state, unlike the religious symbols in Sharia Local Regulation. According Zada and Irfan (2021) perspectives, the politics of negotiation are practised by the Muslim community in secular states.

In terms of the religious perspective post-reform, there has been a significant leap in the religious awareness of the people. This is apparent in some Muslim organizations and communities willing to participate in politics and voice their aspirations for particular candidates.

Some communities have grown culturally, especially those in the millennial category, with their distinguishing characteristics of religious tendency. Those in these communities tend to be apolitical. However, they still make some attempts to build their own Islamic cultures represented by what they wear, the way they mingle and interact, and their lifestyle, all of which reflect religious awareness. According to Dekmejian, the phenomenon heightens the Islamic consciousness in its teachings, leading to Islamic resurgence or revivalism, rebirth,

puritanism, and so forth (Dekmejian, 1995). A resurgence occurred in a number of Muslim countries like Malaysia, Egypt, Pakistan, Kirgistan, Bangladesh, and Nigeria (McGlinchey, 2009; Adesoji, 2010; Islam and Islam, 2018; Demichelis, 2019; Ebrahimi & Yusoff, 2020).

The religious vigor of the Muslim people did not start immediately, but it has been through a lengthy process. Such vigor has penetrated the political domain, which commonly serves as the basis for electing a leader that fights for the aspiration of Muslims. When religious elements are set into the candidacy, there is a likelihood that people will vote for the candidates. People used to be apathetic in defending things according to religious elements, but in the presidential election of 2019, people laid their hope on these religious elements. The paradigm representing the people has shifted from spiritual to ritual movement in the form of culture, such as unity, brotherhood, peace, justice, and so forth. This has caused religion to be more institutionalized and part of the responsibilities of all people and the state (Lubis, personal communication, 14 August 2019).

These days, religious awareness is rising. Women with hijab are commonly seen almost everywhere. Religious symbols like this were not so common in the past, especially in the office. Today, mosques are full of people praying, Quran recitals are everywhere, *qurbān* (animal offerings) has been the trend in mosques, DPR offices, tax offices, and more. This tendency indicates that religious vigor is again getting stronger than ever. Thus, candidates tend to use those religious attributes to convince the public that religion is also part of a political movement (Zulfikar, personal communication, 15 August 2019).

Modern religious elements have distinguishing characteristics that mainstream groups do not possess. Consequently, some members of Muhammadiyah are reluctant to mobilize the organization, and so are the members of NU. This is obvious in West Sumatra in a large organization called Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (Perti), where the members are unwilling to mobilize Perti (Maizan, personal communication, 13 September 2019). This tendency can be seen as a new religious model, and these groups are usually called millennial Groups of *Hijrah* (migration). These groups constitute the secular middle class, demonstrating a new model of religious awareness. Some are not from NU and Muhammadiyah, but they intend to optimize

their religious performance. People in these groups also actively interact with information technology and use social media and YouTube. They have many viewers and followers that most traditional Islamic religious leaders and communities do not. Women wearing a veil covering their faces are commonly seen in public places when they drive a car, ride a horse, go shopping, do sports activities, go on a tour, ride a bike, and pray at fajr time at mosques (Danu, personal communication, 15 August 2019). This is a new model of expressing religion in public. The 212 movement is another example of a new model of expressing religion, as it is no longer involved in the conventional way of preaching but has come up with sports activities, recreation, and other religious programs (Anshar, personal communication, 15 August 2019).

Within the platform of PKS, an Islamic-based party, the above religious design is predictable. Some people came up with the term sharia *NKRI* (sharia-based Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia), although it has become a polemic (Zulfikar, personal communication, 15 August 2019). Debates regarding Islam and Indonesia were conducted after it was agreed that the name of the country should be the "State of Pancasila", but the problem is how to implement more values of Islam into the state government.

Challenges kept coming up after the elements of sharia came into politics because the concept was not quite marketable. Still, legislation and policies with Islamic touch are more acceptable, such as the Law concerning halal Product Guarantee, Law concerning Sharia Banking, Law concerning Zakat Management, and many more. MUI, an Islamic institution responsible for issuing *fatwā*, is recognized by the state, and its *fatwās* are reflected in day-to-day life. That is, the values of Islam have been internalized into laws, recognized, and enforced. Debates, if any, are no longer within the scope of Islam and Pancasila, but in the implementation. This is the aspect targeted by politicians who use religious elements in political campaigns, and such use is growing stronger to reinforce support for implementing Islamic values in the state. Elections are mainly intended to elect a leader that would put in place policies for state governance and religious aspects (Sabar, personal communication, 14 September 2019).

An example of how religious considerations influence governance is the rejection of the bill concerning gender equality by the national



legislature since it seemed secular. Its rejection is linked to Article 28J Paragraph (2) of the 1945 Indonesian Constitution:

In exercising his rights and liberties, each person has the duty to accept the limitations determined by law for the sole purposes of guaranteeing the recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of other people and of satisfying a democratic society's just demands based on considerations of morality, religious values, security, and public order.

Thus, human rights in Indonesia are restricted by moral considerations and religious values. Secular and liberal groups argued that religion and culture impeded human rights when this bill was submitted. However, the bill was rejected because it was deemed to contravene the 1945 Indonesian Constitution, religion, and culture. The above facts imply that certain rules accommodate those intending to fight for Islam and the state as long as they do not highlight religious symbols (Zulfikar, personal communication, 15 August 2019). It is named cultural Islam, which is referred to by Nurcholis Madjid as "Islam Yes, Partai Islam No" (Hamidah, 2011).

The third motive is ideology. The ideological motive in the context of the Sunni, Shi'a, and Wahabi Islamic groups did not surface during the 2019 election. There was concern about the revival of the caliphate of Sunni, voiced by HTI when the people of that group approached Prabowo. There was also a rumor indicating that the people of Shi'a in Indonesia approached Jokowi through PDIP. It was also true for Wahabi through the cultural movement of Sunnah Neutralization. However, these rumors were not strengthened by convincing factual evidence to warrant the involvement of ideology in the presidential election of 2019. Preachers often exhibited this ideological motive through their preaching during political campaigns. The preachers had their ways of expressing their ideological mission; some looked too strict, and some were moderate (Sabri, personal communication, 13 September 2019).

Islam Nusantara, introduced by NU (Luthfi, 2016) and Advanced Islam by Muhammadiyah (Kahfi, 2020) is two models of Islamic approaches. If these two models are taken as an ideology of Islam in the country, they are traceable through the political affiliation of their followers.

Nahdatul Ulama with its concept of Islam Nusantara could have

entered the government. On the other hand, sharia NKRI could have also joined if Prabowo had won. The same applies to supporting groups with different missions, such as HTI with its caliphate concept. In this context, an ideology exists but is performed in various ways. This ideology has no issues, but this steps in through both formal and constitutional pathways (Danu, personal communication, 15 August 2019).

For each group, the supporting parties have their ideological motives based on those motives, and they have fought to influence the policies and decisions taken. Gradually, the ideological mission could be inserted by including Islamic values into policies and legislation or by opening access to allow religious programs to take place (Zulfikar, personal communication, 15 August 2019). For example, the Law concerning National Education System states that the objective of education is to produce pious individuals, and the term sharia no longer sounds as threatening as it used to since this word is often heard in day-to-day life, such as in sharia banking, sharia insurance, sharia tourism, sharia hotel, and so forth, but not sharia state, as it is not yet acceptable. Edi Gunawan et al. (2018) said that the reception of Islamic law in Indonesia denotes a sociological dialogue between the ideal law and the sociocultural reality. However, the term sharia state seems too far-fetched and unnecessary since sharia has been widely integrated into several activities, as mentioned in the state of Pancasila, but not in criminal law. However, from the perspective of *fiqh al-jināyāt*, it is applied in the form of *ta'zīr* criminal law, which is more extensive.

## **Conclusion**

In the presidential election of 2019, there was rising tension due to the introduction of religion into politics. On the one hand, religious elements were used to gain sympathy and support from voters. On the other hand, religion was also used to justify certain socio-political conduct and to attack the irresponsible socio-political conduct of opponents. The politicization of religion in the presidential election campaign of 2019 became stronger amidst weakening polarization among presidential and vice presidential candidates. Religious issues in the campaign resulted in public sympathy and antipathy, thereby affecting the electability of presidential and vice presidential candidates. Also, the opposing parties sought to neutralize the disadvantageous

depiction of their candidates. The motives for politicization of religion were identified as "political pragmatism" and "culturalism politics". The issue of ideology remained an important motive, but it did not arise in the 2019 presidential election due to constitutional obstruction. According to *siyāsah shar'iyah*, politicization of religion could be similar to the Quranic commodification confronting the sharia objective itself.

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