

# INDONESIAN ISLAM: HISTORY, CHARACTERISTICS AND GLOBAL CONTRIBUTION

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**Abstract:** Indonesia is the largest democracy in the world, as well as the country with the most followers of Islam. Orientalists consider Islam in Indonesia as Islam that departs from principles that are different from Islam in the Middle East. The persuasive style of Indonesian Islam is due to the process of Islamization that has been carried out. The process of Islamization in the archipelago merged with the local culture. In contrast to the process of Islamization in the Middle East which was dominated by military action. By analyzing various sources, this study concludes that Indonesian Islam is able to contribute to the global world. Indonesian Islam provides an example of the practice of religious pluralism and democracy that go hand in hand. This is because Indonesia made the legality of several religions. In the end, it gave birth to the term Islam Wasatiyah which is the result of the integration of Indonesian Islamic culture. This Islamic movement was initiated by a large Islamic organization in Indonesia. And continue to be introduced in the global realm as a contribution to world civilization.

**Keywords:** Indonesian Islam, Wasatiyah Islam, Global Civilization

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## Introduction

Before Islamization in the archipelago, the people in this region already adhered to two different religious traditions.<sup>1</sup> Before looking at the process of Islamization in Indonesia, of course, we have to look at the operation of the arrival of Islam to the archipelago because Indonesia is part of the archipelago. The forms of expression and characteristics of Indonesian Islam can be analyzed by traversing aspects of its arrival. That is a preventive step so that the meaning of Indonesian Islam is evident at the beginning of its discourse existence. This aspect is relevant considering that one of the functions of studying history is as an educational attitude to know about past events.<sup>2</sup>

Viewed in the context of historicization, Islam originated from the Arabian peninsula at the beginning of the revolution.<sup>3</sup> Arab Islamic revolutionaries preached to spread Islam to the archipelago. The ongoing dynamics of Islamic development have caused Islam to expand and apply to areas outside the Arab domain. The consequence of the expansion of the Islamic territory affects the culturalization of Islam itself.<sup>4</sup> Islam, originally synonymous with the Arabian peninsula, now has to go through a mix-up to deal with various cultural and cultural backgrounds that are different from the Arab cultural context.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The religion adhered to by the people of the Archipelago is local indigenous religions such as dynamism and animism. In addition, there are also imported religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. Look Aksin Wijaya, *Aksin Wijaya, Menatap Wajah Islam Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2020), 33-34.

<sup>2</sup> Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2018), 17.

<sup>3</sup> Sofyan Sauri, "Sejarah Perkembangan Bahasa Arab dan Lembaga Islam di Indonesia," *INSANCITA* 5, no. 1 (August 9, 2020): 73-75, <https://doi.org/10.2121/incita-jisisea.v5i1.1332>.

<sup>4</sup> Ahmad Agis Mubarak and Diaz Gandara Rustam, "Islam Nusantara: Moderasi Islam di Indonesia," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 3, no. 2 (May 29, 2019): 153, <https://doi.org/10.21580/jish.32.3160>.

<sup>5</sup> Amin Farih, "Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) dan Kontribusinya dalam Memperjuangkan Kemerdekaan dan Mempertahankan Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia (NKRI)," *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 24, no. 2 (2016): 280, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.2016.24.2.969>.

The process of Islamization continues to expand to reach the transcontinental arena. Such Islamization is detected in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia.<sup>6</sup> Indonesia is a country in the Southeast Asian region that is crossed by the equator, is between the continents of Asia and Australia, to be precise at the southeastern tip of the continent of Asia, and is between the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. Indonesia is the largest archipelagic country in the world, consisting of 17,504 islands. However, this geographical reason, on the other hand, is an aspect that gives rise to the stigma of fringe Islam for the existence of Nusantara-Indonesian Islam.<sup>7</sup>

The process of Islamization in the Southeast Asian region is not like the process of Islamization in other areas, such as in the Middle East. In the Arab region, Islamization is synonymous with military involvement. The Islamization of Southeast Asia uses peaceful means, or what is known as penetration pacific. The characteristics of its carriers influence the persuasive spread of Islam.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the beginning of Islamization in this region raises many perspectives. However, the beginning of the most logical process of Islamization in this region was spearheaded by those who incidentally were traders, teachers, and travelers.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> M. Afif Anshori, Zaenuddin Hudi Prasajo, and Lailial Muhtifah, "Contribution of Sufism to the Development of Moderate Islam in Nusantara," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 19, no. 1 (June 1, 2021): 41–43, <https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.19.2021.194>.

<sup>7</sup> This fragmentation arises from orientalist who label Islam in Southeast Asia as peripheral Islam or peripheral Islam. That is, Islam in this region is Islam that is far from the original form that originated and developed in Arabia. Those orientalist consider honest Islam in Arabia, not in Southeast Asia. They reasoned that Islam in the Asian region developed by itself, merging in the context of local culture and belief systems which are often indicated to violate Islamic teachings. Look Azyumardi Azra, *Renaissance Islam Asia Tenggara* (Bandung: Rosdakarya, 1999), 5.

<sup>8</sup> Khabibi Muhammad Luthfi, "Islam Nusantara: Relasi Islam dan Budaya Lokal," *Shabih: Journal of Islamicate Multidisciplinary* 1, no. 1 (June 28, 2016): 2–11, <https://doi.org/10.22515/shabih.v1i1.53>.

<sup>9</sup> Faris Maulana Akbar, "Peranan dan Kontribusi Islam Indonesia pada Peradaban Global," *Jurnal Indo-Islamika* 10, no. 1 (2020): 54–55, <https://doi.org/10.15408/idi.v10i1.17522>.

Islam in Indonesia has its style and differences.<sup>10</sup> In this sense, what is meant by disagreements in Indonesian Islam are the characteristics of Islam in Indonesia that distinguish it from Islam in other regions, for example, Arab Islam, European Islam, and American Islam. Indonesian Islam is known as Islamic Civilization in the Southeast Asian area, which is still a particular discussion in studying the history of global Islamic civilization.<sup>11</sup> Islamic civilization in the region is even separate from the history of Islamic culture, which is still centered in the Middle East. That is understandable because Islamic civilization in Southeast Asia is only indicated when compared with Islam in other regions. However, Indonesian Islam may become the center of culture in this region because the face of Islam in this region has strong potential.<sup>12</sup>

The style of Indonesian Islam has significant differences compared to other Muslim countries. From these characteristics, efforts can be made to become the axis of the global civilization order.<sup>13</sup> The advantages of the state of Indonesia are that it has the largest Muslim population in the world, has a vast and very fertile territory, rich traditional culture, strategic geographical location and far from the center of conflict, has varied and abundant natural resources, and is the third largest democratic country in the world and certainly the first in the Islamic world.<sup>14</sup> The characteristics of Islamic

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<sup>10</sup> Badrus Sholeh, "Peran dan Kontribusi Tokoh Islam Indonesia dalam Proses Resolusi Konflik," *Madania: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman* 17, no. 1 (February 5, 2020): 31, <https://doi.org/10.29300/madania.v17i1.2840>.

<sup>11</sup> Nasitotul Janah, "Nurcholish Madjid dan Pemikirannya (Diantara Kontribusi dan Kontroversi)," *Cakrawala: Jurnal Studi Islam* 12, no. 1 (September 19, 2017): 44, <https://doi.org/10.31603/cakrawala.v12i1.1655>.

<sup>12</sup> Badri Yatim, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo, 2018), 5-8.

<sup>13</sup> Teguh Luhuringbudi, Fitri Liza, and Novian Akbar, "Islam Berkemadjoean Perspektif Globalisasi: Kontribusi Islam Indonesia pada Peradaban Global," *MAWA IZH Jurnal Dakwah Dan Pengembangan Sosial Kemanusiaan* 11, no. 1 (June 4, 2020): 95, <https://doi.org/10.32923/maw.v11i1.1011>.

<sup>14</sup> Nur Hizbullah, "Ahmad Hassan: Kontribusi Ulama dan Pejuang Pemikiran Islam di Nusantara dan Semenanjung Melayu," *Buletin Al-Turas* 20, no. 2 (January 29, 2020): 286, <https://doi.org/10.15408/bat.v20i2.3761>.

civilization in the Southeast Asian region, including in Indonesia, are also known to the outside world for their distinctive character.<sup>15</sup>

## Result and Discussion

### Historical Review of Indonesian Islam

Seeing the existence of Indonesian Islam is indeed inseparable from the history of the arrival of Islam to the Archipelago. Nevertheless, discussions in the context of Islamization in the Archipelago have been going on for a long time. The discussion covered three main issues: the place of origin of Islam, the carriers, and the arrival time.<sup>16</sup> Even among orientalist, the arrival process of Islam to the Archipelago is still ambiguous.<sup>17</sup> However, to see the shape, face, and nature of Islam in the Archipelago, especially in Indonesia, can only be understood by looking back at its historical processes. In addition to understanding better, this knowledge of Indonesian Islamic history is also necessary so that everything is transparent in the meaning of Indonesian Islam as it first appeared.<sup>18</sup>

Southeast Asian waters are one of the areas for the passage of sailing ships from abroad. In the 5th century, the potential of this water area was increasingly seen from the dominance of foreign traders, even international ones. Several places, such as Lamuri in Aceh, Perlak in East Aceh, Kedah in Malaysia, Martavan and Pegu in Myanmar, and Ayuthia in Thailand, have the potential for many traders. That makes relations between nations cause the influence of significant traditions to enter Southeast Asia, including the Archipelago, starting from Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Bahrul Hayat, "Kontribusi Islam terhadap Masa Depan Peradaban di Asia Tenggara," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 36, no. 1 (2012): 192, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v36i1.115>.

<sup>16</sup> Madadin Mohammed and Magdy A. Kharoshah, "Autopsy in Islam and Current Practice in Arab Muslim Countries," *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine* 23 (March 2014): 80–83, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jflm.2014.02.005>.

<sup>17</sup> Siti Makhmudah, "Dinamika dan Tantangan Masyarakat Islam di Era Modernisasi (Pemikiran dan Kontribusi Menuju Masyarakat Madani)," *Jurnal Lentera: Kajian Keagamaan, Keilmuan dan Teknologi* 13, no. 2 (September 15, 2015): 94.

<sup>18</sup> Akbar, "Peranan Dan Kontribusi Islam Indonesia Pada Peradaban Global."

<sup>19</sup> Hasan Muarif Ambary, *Menemukan Peradaban: Jejak Arkeologis Dan Historis Islam Nusantara* (Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 1998), 53.

The consequence of the Islamization process is that Muslim areas in the Southeast Asian region do not get many touches from Arab countries directly. That is due to the operation of acceptance (response) of the people of Southeast Asia towards Islam in the form of adhesion (gradual acceptance of a new religion or change of religion without abandoning the beliefs and practices of the old religion) and not the practice of conversion (change of religion to religions that are religious in nature revelation and demands total commitment from followers without any other option except through faith with the model of disclosure to achieve salvation).<sup>20</sup>

In this way, it is not surprising that in religious practice, the aspect of localization is more prominent when compared to the element of Arabization. This kind of Islamization process is also carried out by the Walisongos in the Java Island Region. An example of the Islamization carried out by Walisongo is that carried out by Sunan Kalijaga and Sunan Kudus. Sunan Kalijaga uses carving, wayang, gamelan, and mysticism sound art to preach. Meanwhile, Sunan Kudus approached the community using symbols of Hinduism and Buddhism.<sup>21</sup> Walisongo's Islamic teachings are synonymous with moderate, peaceful, tolerant models of Islamic education and anti-violence because that is the model of Islamic teachings that continues to be carried out and inherited by the Prophet Muhammad to his followers.<sup>22</sup>

From the explanation above, Islam came to Southeast Asia in at least two ways: peacefully (conductively) and assimilating with various local Indonesian cultures. After experiencing Islamization, Islam has become a religion of interest to people in the Southeast Asian region. That is evident from Southeast Asia's population, the world's largest Muslim population. In terms of quantity, more than

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<sup>20</sup> Azra, *Renaissance Islam Asia Tenggara*.

<sup>21</sup> Ahmad Baso, *Islam Nusantara: Ijtihad Jenius & Ijma' Ulama Indonesia* (Ciputat: Pustaka Afid, 2015), 16.

<sup>22</sup> Nurul Faiqah and Toni Pransiska, "Radikalisme Islam Vs Moderasi Islam: Upaya Membangun Wajah Islam Indonesia yang Damai," *Al-Fikra: Jurnal Ilmiah Keislaman* 17, no. 1 (July 3, 2018): 48, <https://doi.org/10.24014/af.v17i1.5212>.

40% of the total population of Southeast Asia is Muslim.<sup>23</sup> Countries with an Islamic majority come from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam. Other countries such as the Philippines, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, and Cambodia are countries in the Southeast Asian region with a Muslim minority. The details of the number of Muslims in these countries are the Philippines 6 million, Thailand 4 million, Myanmar 3 million, Singapore 600 thousand, and Cambodia 500 thousand.<sup>24</sup>

### Characteristics of Indonesian Islam

The characteristics of Indonesian Islam are different from Islam in the Middle East-Arabia. In addition, it is also different when compared to systems attached to other religions. Gradually Islam entered Indonesia in an elastic and complex way.<sup>25</sup> The silent witness of the spread of Islam in the Indonesian region was marked by the establishment of the first Islamic empire, namely Samudera Pasai. Malik al-Saleh was the first Muslim king in the Samudera Pasai Kingdom in 1297 AD. The establishment of Samudera Pasai shows a process of integration of Islam, trade, and politics which has become an essential character of Islamic history in the archipelago.<sup>26</sup> Since then, Islam has begun to appear in the archipelago. So that since the 15th century, the process of Islamization has spread throughout the archipelago. At the beginning of its emergence, Islam became a conducive religion in Southeast Asia and flowed to bury Indian ideology and culture.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Syed Serajul Islam, *The Politics of Islamic Identity in Southeast Asia* (Malaysia: Thomson, 2005), 17.

<sup>24</sup> Faizal Amin and Rifki Abror Ananda, "Kedatangan dan Penyebaran Islam di Asia Tenggara: Telaah Teoritik tentang Proses Islamisasi Nusantara," *Analisis: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 18, no. 2 (2018): 68–70, <https://doi.org/10.24042/ajsk.v18i2.3069>.

<sup>25</sup> Kuntowijoyo, *Dinamika Sejarah Umat Islam Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2017), 15-16.

<sup>26</sup> Jajat Burhanudin, *Ulama Dan Kekuasaan* (Jakarta: Mizan Publika, 2012), 17-18.

<sup>27</sup> K. Kiran Kumar and Bhawna Sahu, "Dynamic Linkages Between Macroeconomic Factors and Islamic Stock Indices in a Non-Islamic Country India," *The Journal of Developing Areas* 51, no. 1 (2017): 193.

The dynamics of Islamization in Indonesia certainly could have run smoothly. That means that there are various indicated problems.<sup>28</sup> This problem is caused by the characteristics of the Indonesian people, who are rich in culture. Ultimately, this causes Islam that develops in this region to have various colors and distinctions.<sup>29</sup> In this context, what is meant by the difference of Indonesian Islam is the uniqueness of Islam in Indonesia, which is a distinctive aspect compared to the style of Islam that exists in other regions, for example, Arab Islam, European Islam, American Islam, and so on.<sup>30</sup>

Geographically, Indonesia is included in the Southeast Asia region, a peripheral region. However, that does not mean that Southeast Asian Islamic teachings are fringe Islamic teachings or far from the actual teachings. It is proven that the intellectual tradition developed in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, must be integrated with the excellent practice in Arabia. In the 17th century AD, the scholars in this region established religious and intellectual interactions with the Middle East. That is done as interpersonal communication to bring local Islamic traditions in Southeast Asia closer to the excellent practices and normative and idealistic rituals.<sup>31</sup> In this way, Islam in the Southeast Asian region is, in reality, part of the collaboration of Islamic civilizations in general. For this reason, the Islamic territory in Southeast Asia is one of the seven areas of Islamic culture or society with its characteristics.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Taufik Abdullah and Anjat Djaenuderadjat, *Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Kebudayaan-Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2015), 230.

<sup>29</sup> Yance Zadrak Rumahuru, "Kontekstualisasi dalam Penyebaran Islam: Analisis Pola Pembentukan Islam di Nusantara," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 14, no. 1 (December 1, 2018): 123, <https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.14.2018.011>.

<sup>30</sup> Indi Aunullah and Rini Nurul Badriah, *Sejarah Islam Di Nusantara* (Yogyakarta: Bentang Pustaka, 2015), 27. Terjemahan dari buku karya Michael Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*, (Princeton University Press, 2011). Michael Laffan merupakan Profesor Sejarah di Universitas Princeton.

<sup>31</sup> Wasisto Raharjo Jati, "Radicalism in The Perspective of Islamic-Populism: Trajectory of Political Islam in Indonesia," *Journal Of Indonesian Islam* 7, no. 2 (December 1, 2013): 269, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2013.7.2.268-287>.

<sup>32</sup> Azra, *Renaissans Islam Asia Tenggara*, 8-10.



Other Islamic countries gave positive responses regarding Islamic civilization in Southeast Asia. They believe that the Islamic Renaissance will continue to develop in this area. This optimism sees that the characteristics of Islam in Southeast Asia are different from Islam in the Middle East-Arabia. Among the aspects of Southeast, Asian Islam is that it is more peaceful, friendly, and tolerant. The characteristics of moderate Islam inherent in the Southeast Asian region have arisen from the model of the entry of Islam into this region. Islam exists in the area through trade routes without any military truce coloring it.<sup>33</sup>

Penetrating Islam in the Indonesian context, of course, the term *Ummatan Wasatan* becomes, in fact, Indonesian Islam. These ideas and concepts have been known for a long time in Indonesia. Minister of Religion Tarmizi Taher (1992-1997) introduced Indonesian Islam as the actualization of *Ummatan Wasatan*. It can be seen in Tarmizi Taher's work on these concepts and ideas.<sup>34</sup> In the discourse of contemporary Islamic thought, the image of *Ummatan Wasatan* is often relevant to the term *Islam Wasatiyah*. This term means the Ummah or Islam, which is in a middle position, balanced, and does not stand for extreme ideologies in understanding and practicing religion.<sup>35</sup>

Indonesian Islam has its distinction and characteristics. Of course, this Islamic pattern is influenced by various cultures in Indonesia due to the entry of Islam into Indonesia without a ceasefire. The resurgence of Islam in Indonesia is unique and different from the Islamic region in the Middle East.<sup>36</sup> If the Islamic

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<sup>33</sup> Carol Kersten, *Islam in Indonesia: The Contest for Society, Ideas and Values* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>34</sup> Tarmizi Taher, *Aspiring for the Middle Path Islam: Religious Harmony in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Center for the Study of Islam and Society IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 1997).

<sup>35</sup> Azyumardi Azra, "Islam Indonesia: Kontribusi pada Peradaban Global," *adoc.pub*, 8, accessed December 15, 2022, <https://adoc.pub/islam-indonesia-kontribusi-pada-peradaban-global-oleh-azyuma.html>.

<sup>36</sup> Muhammad Abdul Karim, "Islam In Indonesia | Indonesian Journal of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies" 1, no. 2 (October 5, 2020): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.20885/ijius.vol1.iss2.art1>.

revival in the Middle East was characterized by increased piety and conservatism and even militancy and radicalism, then the Islamic resurgence in Indonesia departed from increased tolerance and the basic idea of religious pluralism.<sup>37</sup>

One proof of the actualization of *Islam Wasatiyah* is the characteristics of the Indonesian state itself. Uniquely, the Indonesian state does not stand on secular principles; conversely, it is not a country based on Islam. It means that ideologically, the state of Indonesia is in the middle. The concept and idea of *Islam Wasatiyah* attached to the Indonesian order is a strength.<sup>38</sup> Ultimately, this made major Islamic organizations such as Nahdhatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Al-Washliyah, Perti, and Nahdlatul Wathan adhere to *Wasatiyah Islamic* ideology. These organizations take a middle path in the context of understanding and practice in carrying out religious practices, social attitudes, culture, and politics. That is done to maintain the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia.<sup>39</sup>

### Indonesian Islam: A Global Contribution

A great hope for the existence of Islam in Indonesia can contribute to global Islamic civilization, given the high potential of Islam in Indonesia for this progress. The concepts and principles of Indonesian Islamic civilization are still being discussed in the study of Islamic history. Islamic civilization in the Indonesian region is even separate from the history of Islamic civilization, which is still centered in the Middle East.<sup>40</sup> This distinction makes Indonesian Islam also recognize differences from one nation to another. It includes

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<sup>37</sup> Siti Asiah et al., "The Dynamics of Islam in Indonesia in the Perspective of Education," 2022, <https://eudl.eu/doi/10.4108/eai.20-10-2021.2316321>.

<sup>38</sup> Khairan M. Arif, "Moderasi Islam (Wasathiyah Islam) Perspektif Al-Qur'an, As-Sunnah serta Pandangan para Ulama dan Fuqaha," *Al-Risalah: Jurnal Studi Agama dan Pemikiran Islam* 11, no. 1 (January 8, 2020): 22–43, <https://doi.org/10.34005/alrisalah.v11i1.592>.

<sup>39</sup> Mohd. Zariat Rani, "The History of Hinduism and Islam In Indonesia: A Review on Western Perspective," *Makara Human Behavior Studies in Asia* 14, no. 1 (July 1, 2010): 51–55, <https://doi.org/10.7454/mssh.v14i1.571>.

<sup>40</sup> Yuangga Kurnia Yahya, "Pengaruh Penyebaran Islam di Timur Tengah dan Afrika Utara: Studi Geobudaya dan Geopolitik," *Al-Tsaqafa: Jurnal Ilmiah Peradaban Islam* 16, no. 1 (June 26, 2019): 53, <https://doi.org/10.15575/al-tsaqafa.v16i1.4272>.

different countries, languages, ethnicities, tribes, and cultures, and some of these aspects have been included in the Koran.<sup>41</sup>

Indonesia is known as a democratic country that is rich in culture and culture. It can be seen from the state slogan of Indonesia, namely "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*."<sup>42</sup> With the values embedded in Pancasila, the Indonesian people live in harmony, peace, and tolerance. One thing that makes Indonesia eyed by the world is regarding tolerance between religious communities which are very dominant<sup>43</sup> —Indonesian Islam with a peaceful Islamic face, an appreciative Islam, an Islam that does not discriminate.<sup>44</sup> Moderate Muslim figures in Indonesia often utter this statement. They strive to spread social, peaceful, and peaceful Islamic values. That is how they actualize Islamic teachings in Indonesia. Therefore, it can be proven that outside civilizations should emulate the life of religious communities in Indonesia.<sup>45</sup>

After the Old Order, Indonesia became increasingly known as a country with the largest Muslim population and the third-largest democracy after India and the United States.<sup>46</sup> This position makes the Islamic world hope Indonesia can contribute to global civilization. At least the essence of Islam realized in Indonesia can be an example of international culture, especially in countries experiencing conflict.

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<sup>41</sup> Muhammad Sholikhin, *Islam Rahmatan Lil Alamin* (Jakarta: Alex Media Komputindo, 2013), 237-238.

<sup>42</sup> Gina Lestari, "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika: Khasanah Multikultural Indonesia di Tengah Kehidupan Sara," *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan* 28, no. 1 (June 27, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.17977/jppkn.v28i1.5437>.

<sup>43</sup> Ricky Ronaldo and Dwi Wahyuni, "Keniscayaan Inklusivisme dan Kedewasaan Beragama untuk Indonesia Damai," *Jurnal Ilmu Agama: Mengkaji Doktrin, Pemikiran, Dan Fenomena Agama* 23, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 96, <https://doi.org/10.19109/jia.v23i1.13024>.

<sup>44</sup> Masykuri Abdillah, "Moderasi Beragama untuk Indonesia yang Damai: Perspektif Islam," *Prosiding Seminar Nasional LAHN-TP Palangka Raya*, no. 2 (September 25, 2019): 38, <https://doi.org/10.33363/sn.v0i2.13>.

<sup>45</sup> Said Aqil Siradj and Mamang Muhammad Haerudin, *Berkah Islam Indonesia: Jalan Dakwah Rahmatan Lil'alamin* (Jakarta: Elex Media Komputindo, 2015), 14.

<sup>46</sup> Steven Drakeley, *The History of Indonesia* (ABC-CLIO, 2005).

The face of *Islam Wasatiyyah* is integrated into Indonesian society as a reference to playing a role in the international arena.<sup>47</sup>

Given the essence of the word *wasatiyah*, there are several mentions in the Qur'an (Al-Baqarah: 143, Al-Baqarah: 238, Al-Qalam: 28, Al-'Adiyat: 5). Scholars and jurists also view *Islam Wasatiyyah* as having a very elastic and contributive position in the interaction of global civilizations. As in a book of interpretations, it is explained that the meaning of the word *wasatan* means the best and highest position; quoted from Ibn Abbas r.a, Mujahid and 'Atha when interpreting surah Al-Baqarah verse 143 says: *Ummatan Wasatan* is justice, so the meaning of this verse is people Islam as a just people.<sup>48</sup>

*Islam Wasatiyyah* is also known as moderate Islam for some scholars.<sup>49</sup> This Islamic principle is, of course, very contextual after being implemented in Indonesia. However, many problems must be faced, such as the many phenomena of the emergence of new Islamic authorities, which erode the essence of Indonesian Islam which has a tolerant character. Indonesian Islam can also be realized to empower democracy in the Muslim world. For this reason, it is necessary to strengthen regional and international networks to strengthen the roots of Indonesia's Islamization toward global civilization.<sup>50</sup>

The essence of peace promoted by the concept of *Islam Wasatiyyah* is expected to play a role in realizing world peace. Because today, the global world faces threats from radicalism, intolerance, racism, and even terrorism.<sup>51</sup> In various parts of the world, these ideas

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<sup>47</sup> Dicky Sofjan, "Minoritization & Criminalization of Shia Islam in Indonesia," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 2 (2016): 29–44, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jsa.2016.0002>.

<sup>48</sup> Ibnu Jarir Ath-Thabari, *Tafsir Ath-Thabari*, vol. 2 (Kairo: Maktabah At-Taufiqah, 2004), 7-8.

<sup>49</sup> M. Basir Syam, "Islam Wasathiyah dalam Perspektif Sosiologi," *Aqidab-Ta: Jurnal Ilmu Aqidah* 4, no. 2 (December 31, 2018): 198-200, <https://doi.org/10.24252/aqidahta.v4i2.7302>.

<sup>50</sup> Azra, *Renaissance Islam Asia Tenggara*, 10-18.

<sup>51</sup> Abd Malik Usman, "Islam Rahmah dan Wasathiyah (Paradigma Keberislaman Inklusif, Toleran dan Damai)," *Humanika: Kajian Ilmiah Mata Kuliah Umum* 15, no. 1 (2015): 18136, <https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v15i1.7637>.

have created conflicts that have led to divisions.<sup>52</sup> This incident also happened to countries with a Muslim majority population, such as the conflict between Palestine and Israel, Afghanistan, and Iran. An armed conflict involving indigenous Muslims has killed millions of people.<sup>53</sup> In this case, Indonesia appeared at the forefront, acting as a mediator or as a mediator between the two disputing camps (*mediating and bridging*).<sup>54</sup>

Since long ago, Indonesia has been a peaceful mediator of several conflicts worldwide. For example, from 2005-2009, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked closely with the Islamic alliance and Indonesian Islamic figures to participate in various interfaith and civilizational conferences in Asia-Pacific and Europe. Indonesia's contribution is also seen in international relations, especially in Islamic countries. One of them is establishing diplomacy for peace in the Afghanistan conflict.<sup>55</sup> The principle of harmony follows Indonesia's principles in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, namely participating in upholding world peace.<sup>56</sup>

Indonesian Muslim intellectual figures have been invited several times by several Islamic countries in the Middle East to share stories about Indonesia's experiences in developing *Islam Wasatiyah*, democracy, and civil society. Some of them are also involved in

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<sup>52</sup> Ahmad Asroni, "Islam dan Bina Damai: Ikhtiar Membumikan Doktrin Islam yang Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin," *Titian: Jurnal Ilmu Humaniora* 3, no. 2 (December 5, 2019): 223–25, <https://doi.org/10.22437/titian.v3i2.8178>.

<sup>53</sup> Laili Nur Indah Sari and Anna Yulia Hartati, "Kepentingan Indonesia untuk Membantu Proses Perdamaian dalam Konflik di Afghanistan di Era Joko Widodo Tahun 2014-2019," *Jurnal Kajian Hubungan Internasional* 2, no. 1 (2022): 497.

<sup>54</sup> Zakiya Darajat and Abd Chair, "Islam Berkemajuan and Islam Nusantara: The Face of Moderate Islam in Indonesia" (2nd Internasional Conference on Culture and Language in Southeast Asia (ICCLAS 2018), Atlantis Press, 2019), 61–63, <https://doi.org/10.2991/icclas-18.2019.16>.

<sup>55</sup> Arief Rachman Md et al., "Diplomasi Indonesia dalam Memperkuat Komitmen Pemberdayaan Perempuan untuk Mendukung Proses Perdamaian Afghanistan," *Jurnal Ilmiah Hubungan Internasional* 16, no. 2 (December 11, 2020): 259–76, <https://doi.org/10.26593/jihi.v16i2.4422.259-276>.

<sup>56</sup> Aria Nakissa, "Security, Islam, and Indonesia: An Anthropological Analysis of Indonesia's National Counterterrorism Agency," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde/Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 176, no. 2–3 (June 11, 2020): 203, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-bja10004>.

international Islamic organizations. They have served in the ranks of organizational leaders, such as Mohammad Natsir was once *President of the World Muslim League*, Hasyim Muzadi sat on the presidium of the *World Conference on Religion for Peace*,<sup>57</sup> and Din Syamsuddin as *Chair of the World Peace Forum*, also as *President of the Asian Committee on Religions for Peace*.<sup>58</sup> That proves that the Middle East must adopt the experiences of practicing Islam from non-Arab Muslim countries.<sup>59</sup>

Then, in particular, Azyumardi Azra, a Professor at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, presented a paper at a conference in Alexandria, Egypt, which discussed the theme "*Human Rights and Renewal of the Religious Discourse: How Would the Arab World Benefits from the 14th Non -Arabic Islamic Experience*." According to him, this shows the Middle East's interest in gaining the experience of Indonesian Islam in religious, socio-cultural, and political life. That is progress because previously, the Middle East was reluctant to see Islam in a non-Arab region.<sup>60</sup>

The life of religious people in Indonesia, which is plural, should be emulated by other Muslim countries still full of conflict. Various religious civilizations in Indonesia live peacefully with the values of harmony, tolerance, and mutual understanding. Regardless of identity, they often help each other solve everyday problems. This down-to-earth inter-religious tolerance in a complex, pluralistic society has received recognition from Germany. The actualization of the concept of progressive Islam and the middle-way Islam lived by

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<sup>57</sup> Siti Mutholingah, "Islamic Education Institution Based on Islam Rahmatan Lil Alamin: The Contribution of Kh. A. Hasyim Muzadi in Realizing Religion Peace and Harmony," *Proceedings of Annual Conference for Muslim Scholars* 6, no. 1 (April 15, 2022): 111–20, <https://doi.org/10.36835/ancoms.v6i1.403>.

<sup>58</sup> Din Syamsuddin merupakan salah satu Guru Besar di Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta dan merupakan tokoh besar Muhammadiyah yang pernah menduduki organisasi Islam tersebut selama dua periode (2005-2015). Lihat Muhammad Najib Azca et al., *Dunia Menyemai Damai: Peran dan Kontribusi Muhammadiyah dan Nahdlatul Ulama dalam Perdamaian dan Demokrasi* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada Univertisy Press, 2023).

<sup>59</sup> Hendar Riyadi, "Koeksistensi Damai dalam Masyarakat Muslim Modernis," *Wawasan: Jurnal Ilmiah Agama Dan Sosial Budaya* 1, no. 1 (February 1, 2016): 19, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jw.v1i1.575>.

<sup>60</sup> Azra, "Islam Indonesia."

Indonesian Muslim communities is considered to play a role in reviving the value of tolerance.<sup>61</sup>

Even so, it is still difficult for Indonesia to disseminate *Islam Wasatiyah* internationally. Even before it can carry out dissemination at the international level, *Islam Wasatiyah* in this country needs to be consolidated and more empowered first. Some criticize that Wasatiyah Islamic leaders and communities need to respond to various developments concerning Islam at the national and international levels.<sup>62</sup> It is because Indonesian society is a plural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic society. In a plural society, friction between streams with various dimensions often becomes complex.<sup>63</sup>

## Conclusion

Studying Islamic history is very important, especially to avoid mistakes in analyzing Islamic history in a region. The process of the arrival of Islam in the archipelago was carried out persuasively, marked by several theories about it. This peaceful process of Islamization influences the characteristics of Islam in the archipelago. In the context of Islam in Indonesia, Islam in the Indonesian region has its distinction and features compared to other Islamic countries. Some of the main characteristics of Indonesian Islam are persuasive/peaceful Islam, moderate Islam, and tolerant Islam. With these characteristics, Indonesian Islam can make a real contribution to global civilization as a peacemaker, a model for Islamic democracy, and a promoter of religious tolerance.

Through some of these contributions, Indonesia participates in the context of realizing world peace. Indonesian Islam also has heritage, wealth, and great potential to make a more significant contribution to strengthening democracy globally, especially in the Muslim World, and at the same time to world civilization. Therefore,

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<sup>61</sup> "Indonesia Jadi Inspirasi Toleransi Beragama dan Multikulturalisme bagi Jerman," accessed December 15, 2022, <https://kemlu.go.id/berlin/id/news/256/indonesia-jadiinspirasi-toleransi-beragama-dan-multikulturalisme-bagi-jerma>.

<sup>62</sup> Abdul Rahmat, "Islam dan Bina Damai," *Islamic Review: Jurnal Riset dan Kajian Keislaman* 4, no. 1 (2015): 53, <https://doi.org/10.35878/islamicreview.v4i1.89>.

<sup>63</sup> Kuntowijoyo, *Paradigma Islam Interpretasi Untuk Aksi* (Bandung: Mizan, 1998), 337.

Indonesian Islam can be more focused on being able to build Indonesian Islam which can be a model for other Muslim societies in realizing better local, regional, and international life today and in the future.

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