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Political Polarization and Islamic Identity among Indonesian Muslims: A Socio-Political Analysis of Digital Religious Communities

Article

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between political polarization and the construction of Islamic identity among Indonesian Muslims within the context of digital religious communities. The rapid development of digital communication technologies and social media platforms has significantly transformed patterns of religious interaction, political participation, and identity formation in contemporary Muslim societies. Digital religious communities have emerged as influential spaces where religious interpretations, political narratives, and ideological preferences are continuously negotiated and disseminated. This research aims to analyze how political polarization shapes the formation and expression of Islamic identity in online communities and how digital environments contribute to reinforcing or transforming socio-political attitudes among Indonesian Muslims. Using a socio-political approach, this study explores the interaction between religious discourse, political affiliation, and digital engagement within virtual communities. The analysis suggests that digital religious spaces function not only as platforms for religious expression but also as arenas of political contestation that may intensify ideological divisions and strengthen group-based identities. At the same time, these platforms provide opportunities for dialogue, participation, and the emergence of new forms of religious and political engagement. The study contributes to contemporary discussions on Islam, politics, and digital society by highlighting the evolving relationship between religious identity and political dynamics in Indonesia's increasingly interconnected digital landscape.

Introduction

The development of digital technology has significantly transformed social interaction, communication patterns, and political participation across contemporary societies.[1] The rapid

[1] Bukhari Bukhari et al., "Islam, Religious Moderation, and Digital Political Polarization: Religious Authority and Social Cohesion in the Age of Social Media," *Lentera* 7, no. 2 (December 3, 2026): 201–12, https://doi.org/10.32505/lentera.v7i2.14433; Muhammad Solikhudin et al., "National Fiqh and Maqasid-Based Ijtihad: Reassessing Ahmad

expansion of internet access and social media platforms has created new spaces where individuals interact, construct identities, and engage in ideological discourse beyond conventional physical boundaries. In Muslim-majority societies such as Indonesia, digital platforms have increasingly become important arenas for religious expression and political engagement. The intersection between religion and politics in digital spaces has generated new dynamics that reshape traditional patterns of social and political interaction.[2]

Indonesia presents an important context for studying the relationship between political polarization and Islamic identity due to its unique socio-political landscape. As the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia has experienced significant democratic transformations following the Reformasi period. Political openness after the democratic transition created wider opportunities for the emergence of diverse political movements, religious expressions, and civil society participation. However, this democratization process has also been accompanied by increasing ideological contestation and social fragmentation within public discourse.[3]

Political polarization has emerged as a growing concern in many democratic societies, including Indonesia. Political polarization generally refers to the process through which society becomes increasingly divided into opposing ideological groups characterized by strong in-group loyalty and heightened hostility toward opposing groups. Such polarization extends beyond political preferences and often influences social relationships, cultural identities, and religious affiliations. In contemporary Indonesia, political polarization has increasingly intersected with religious narratives and identity-based mobilization.[4]

The phenomenon became particularly visible during several national political events, including presidential and regional elections, where religious symbols and Islamic identities frequently became significant components of political campaigns and public narratives. Political actors and social groups increasingly employed religious discourses as instruments for mobilizing support and shaping public opinion. Consequently, religious identity has gradually evolved beyond purely theological dimensions and has become intertwined with broader political and ideological affiliations.[5]

Simultaneously, the expansion of digital communication technologies has altered the mechanisms through which political and religious narratives circulate within society. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and online discussion forums facilitate rapid dissemination of information across diverse audiences. These platforms also enable users to create virtual communities based on shared religious beliefs, ideological preferences,

Hasyim Muzadi through Jamal Al-Din 'Atiyyah," *Mawaddah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 3, no. 2 SE-Articles (n.d.): 383–405, https://doi.org/10.52496/mjhki.v3i2.38.

2 Muhamad Najib Aulia Zaman et al., "The Challenges of Internalizing Religious Moderation Values amid the Rise of Socio-Political Polarization," *At Turots: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 1 SE-Articles (January 3, 2026): 625–31, https://doi.org/10.51468/jpi.v6i1.1380.

3 Helena Octavianne et al., "Identity Politics and Polarization in Contemporary Muslim Countries: The Impact of Elections, Social Media, and Global Dynamics," *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 3, no. 2 (December 16, 2024): 263–86, https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v3i2.9909.

4 Supandi Supandi and Kurratul Aini, "THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN BUILDING RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE ERA OF SOCIAL POLARIZATION AND DIGITAL POLITICS," *Al-Ulum Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Penelitian Ke Islaman* 12, no. 4 (2025): 333–40.

5 Barzan Faizin, "Polarization of Religious Issues in Indonesia's Social Media Society and Its Impact on Social Conflict," *Journal of Applied Data Sciences* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2024): 426–42, https://doi.org/10.47738/jads.v6i1.447.

and political orientations. Such communities have increasingly become influential in shaping perceptions, attitudes, and collective identities.[6]

Digital religious communities represent a relatively new social phenomenon in which religious activities and interactions are mediated through digital environments. Unlike traditional religious institutions, digital communities often operate through decentralized structures where authority is continuously negotiated among users, religious figures, influencers, and content creators. Consequently, religious knowledge and interpretations are no longer exclusively controlled by formal institutions but are increasingly influenced by digital communication processes and algorithmic mechanisms.[7]

Although digital communities provide opportunities for broader participation and access to religious knowledge, they may also contribute to the intensification of political polarization. Social media algorithms frequently expose users to content that aligns with their existing preferences and beliefs, creating what scholars commonly describe as "echo chambers" or "filter bubbles." Such environments may reinforce ideological homogeneity and reduce exposure to alternative perspectives. As a result, digital religious communities can potentially strengthen group identities while simultaneously deepening social divisions.[8]

The interaction between Islamic identity and political polarization in digital environments requires further academic investigation because identity formation is not a static process but rather a dynamic social construction influenced by changing political and technological conditions. Islamic identity among Indonesian Muslims is increasingly shaped not only by traditional religious institutions, family environments, and local communities but also by online interactions and digital engagement. The emergence of digital religious communities may therefore alter how Muslims perceive themselves and others within broader socio-political contexts.[9]

Several previous studies have examined political polarization, digital activism, and religious identity independently. Existing research has explored the role of social media in political participation, the emergence of religious populism, and identity politics within democratic societies.[10] However, limited attention has been given to understanding how digital religious communities specifically contribute to the relationship between political polarization and Islamic identity formation among Indonesian Muslims. This gap indicates the need for a more integrated socio-political analysis that connects these dimensions within a contemporary Indonesian setting.

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6 ARI GANJAR HERDIANSAH, LUTHFI HAMZAH HUSIN, and HENDRA HENDRA, "Religious Identity Politics on Social Media in Indonesia: A Discursive Analysis on Islamic Civil Societies," *Jurnal Studi Pemerintahan* 9, no. 2 (2018), https://doi.org/10.18196/jgp.2018.0186.187-222.

7 Muhammad Haikal Ramli, "The Paradox of Secularization: The Dynamics of Religious Moderation and Identity Politics in Indonesia," *Social Impact Journal* 4, no. 2 (2025): 296–306; Deniansyah Damanik et al., "Religious Moderation By Organization Of Islamic Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah (Character, Identity, And Attitude)," *Islamadina : Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 24, no. 2 (September 22, 2023): 233, https://doi.org/10.30595/islamadina.v24i2.17089.

8 Nibrosu Rohid et al., "Digital Activism in Contemporary Islamic Politics: A Critical Analysis of Social Media's Impact on Islamic Movements," *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 4, no. 1 (April 2025): 208–33, https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v4i1.10159.

9 M Azmi Alkhosyi Parinduri Parinduri, "Parallel Struggles of Religious Moderation Activists Amid Hindu-Muslim Tensions in India and Political Polarization in Indonesia," *Social Impact Journal* 4, no. 2 (2025): 283–95.

10 Asmara Juana Suhardi, "The Impact of Identity Politics in Elections on Social Polarization in Urban Indonesian Communities," *Journal of the American Institute* 2, no. 8 (July 29, 2025): 1105–14, https://doi.org/10.71364/zwezgj35; Muhammad Solikhudin et al., "Political-Legal Strategies in Regulating Interfaith Marriage: An Analysis of Supreme Court Circular Letter in Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Syir'ah* 22, no. 2 (December 31, 2024): 262, https://doi.org/10.30984/jis.v22i2.3237.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the relationship between political polarization and the construction of Islamic identity among Indonesian Muslims within digital religious communities. Specifically, this research seeks to investigate how digital environments shape religious discourse, influence political affiliation, and contribute to the formation of socio-political identities. By examining these interactions, the study is expected to contribute to broader discussions concerning Islam, politics, digital society, and the changing nature of religious identity in contemporary Indonesia.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research design using a socio-political approach to examine the relationship between political polarization and the construction of Islamic identity among Indonesian Muslims within digital religious communities.[11] A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the study aims to understand social meanings, patterns of interaction, and the dynamics of identity formation that emerge within digital environments. The research adopts a descriptive-analytical method to explore how religious and political discourses are constructed, interpreted, and reproduced through online communities. Data sources consist of both primary and secondary materials. Primary data are derived from digital content and interactions within selected religious communities on social media platforms, including public discussions, posts, comments, and religious-political narratives circulating on platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, X, and other online forums. Secondary data are collected from scholarly books, journal articles, official reports, and previous studies relevant to political polarization, Islamic identity, and digital religious engagement. The data collection process is conducted through digital observation and document analysis of selected online religious communities that actively engage in socio-political discussions. The selection of digital communities is based on relevance, level of interaction, and the presence of political and religious discourse within their communication activities. Data analysis follows an interactive qualitative model consisting of data reduction, data categorization, data interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis particularly focuses on identifying recurring themes related to political affiliation, religious narratives, identity construction, and patterns of ideological polarization. To enhance the credibility and reliability of the findings, this study applies source triangulation by comparing data from multiple digital platforms and supporting academic literature. Through this methodological framework, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the socio-political dynamics shaping Islamic identity within Indonesia's contemporary digital landscape.

Result and Discussion

Digital Religious Communities and the Transformation of Islamic Authority

The rapid expansion of information and communication technologies has fundamentally transformed the social landscape of contemporary societies.[12] Digital technology no longer

[11] John W Creswell and J David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Sage publications, 2017).

[12] Rüdiger Lohlker and Soleh Hasan Wahid, "The Transformation of Islamic Religious Authority," *Religions* 17, no. 4 (2026): 493.

functions merely as a tool for communication but has increasingly become a social environment where individuals construct meanings, establish networks, and negotiate identities. Within religious contexts, technological developments have generated new forms of interaction that extend religious engagement beyond conventional institutional settings. Consequently, religious life has experienced significant transformation as digital spaces increasingly mediate the relationship between religious actors and their audiences.

The emergence of digital religious communities represents one of the most visible manifestations of the intersection between religion and technological advancement. Digital religious communities generally refer to online groups or networks where individuals engage in religious communication, exchange religious knowledge, discuss theological issues, and participate in collective religious practices through digital platforms. Unlike traditional communities that are usually limited by geographical boundaries, digital communities operate within virtual environments that allow broader and more flexible participation across different social and cultural contexts.[13]

Digital religious communities possess several distinctive characteristics that differentiate them from traditional religious institutions and physical communities. First, these communities tend to exhibit decentralized structures in which participation is relatively open and less dependent on formal organizational hierarchy. Second, communication within digital communities is highly interactive and multidirectional, allowing members to actively contribute to discussions rather than merely receiving information passively. Third, digital communities often rely on technological algorithms that influence the visibility and circulation of particular religious narratives and content.[14]

The development of social media platforms has accelerated the growth and influence of digital religious communities. Platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and online discussion forums provide accessible spaces where religious messages can be rapidly produced, distributed, and consumed by large audiences. Through these platforms, religious content reaches users continuously and instantly, enabling religious communication to occur without temporal and spatial limitations. Consequently, digital media increasingly functions as an important arena for religious engagement among contemporary Muslims.[15]

The increasing prominence of digital religious communities has also transformed the traditional understanding of religious authority. Conventionally, religious authority was often concentrated within established institutions such as Islamic boarding schools, religious organizations, scholars, and formal educational institutions. Religious legitimacy was largely determined by educational background, scholarly credentials, and institutional recognition.

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[13] Muhdi Ali et al., "Transforming Religious Authority: Islamic Epistemology in the Digital Age," *RUSYDIAH: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 SE-Articles (August 19, 2025): 19–37, https://doi.org/10.35961/rsd.v6i1.2079.

[14] Asif Mohiuddin, "Islamism in the Digital Age: The Role of Cyberspace in Transforming Religious Authority," in *Navigating Religious Authority in Muslim Societies* (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2023), 203–36, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-44825-6_6.

[15] H R Wijaya, Ahmet Demir, and Eva Janssen, "REIMAGINING ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE: TECHNOLOGY, AUTHORITY, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF RELIGIOUS MEANING," *International Jornal of Noesantara Islamic Studies* 3, no. 2 SE-Articles (April 23, 2026): 98–111, https://doi.org/10.70177/ijonis.v3i2.3416.

Traditional structures generally created relatively stable mechanisms for determining who possessed authority to interpret and disseminate religious teachings.[16]

However, digital environments have introduced new patterns of authority that challenge conventional religious structures. Access to digital platforms allows individuals to disseminate religious interpretations regardless of their formal educational backgrounds or institutional affiliations. As a result, religious authority increasingly becomes dependent upon visibility, audience engagement, popularity, and digital influence rather than exclusively on traditional scholarly qualifications. Authority within digital spaces thus becomes more fluid and continuously negotiated among multiple actors.[17]

The shift from traditional religious institutions toward digital environments reflects broader social transformations occurring within contemporary societies. Technological development has contributed to the democratization of information by reducing barriers to knowledge production and dissemination. Religious knowledge that was previously controlled by specific institutions can now be accessed and interpreted by broader audiences. This transformation creates opportunities for wider participation while simultaneously challenging established structures of religious legitimacy.[18]

Within this changing environment, digital religious figures increasingly occupy influential positions in shaping public religious discourse. The emergence of digital preachers, Islamic content creators, and religious influencers demonstrates how authority is being reconstructed through digital communication processes. Unlike conventional religious leaders who generally rely on formal institutional authority, digital actors frequently build their influence through audience engagement, media strategies, communication skills, and online visibility.[19]

Digital Islamic influencers play significant roles in constructing and disseminating religious narratives among contemporary Muslim audiences. Through visual content, short videos, live streaming, podcasts, and online discussions, these actors are able to communicate religious ideas in ways that are accessible and appealing to younger generations. The use of contemporary language and digital aesthetics often enables religious messages to reach wider audiences and create stronger emotional connections between content creators and followers.[20]

At the same time, social media platforms significantly shape the circulation of religious narratives through algorithmic mechanisms. Algorithms determine which content appears more frequently within users' digital environments based on previous interactions and preferences. Consequently, users may become increasingly exposed to particular religious perspectives while encountering fewer alternative viewpoints. Such mechanisms can influence not only the

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16 Khadiq, "Transformation of Islamic Religious Practices in the Digital Era," *Jurnal Dakwah* 24, no. 2 (December 30, 2023), https://doi.org/10.14421/jd.2023.24205.

17 Sahar Khamis, "The Paradoxes of Modern Islamic Discourses and Socio-Religious Transformation in the Digital Age," *Religions* 15, no. 2 (2024): 207.

18 Soleh Hasan Wahid and Syahid Abdulloh, "Digital Islamic Authority: A Revolutionary Shift or Mere Hype? A Systematic Review," *SN Social Sciences* 6, no. 2 (February 4, 2026): 62, https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-026-01328-5.

19 Arief Rachman, Theguh Saumantri, and Taufik Hidayatulloh, "Transformation of Religious Authority in the Digital Era: A Post-Normal Times Analysis by Ziauddin Sardar on the Phenomenon of Social Media Da'wah," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 45, no. 1 (July 6, 2025): 107–22, https://doi.org/10.21580/jid.v45.1.25644.

20 Ibrahim N. Abusharif, "Religious Authority, Digitality, and Islam: The Stakes and Background," *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies* 8, no. 1 (May 2023): 109–19, https://doi.org/10.2979/jims.00010.

consumption of religious information but also the formation of ideological preferences and collective identities.[21]

The relationship between technology and religion therefore extends beyond simple communication processes and increasingly influences the construction of contemporary Muslim identities. Identity formation within digital environments occurs through continuous interactions involving religious discourse, social networks, political narratives, and media consumption patterns. Contemporary Muslims increasingly construct aspects of their religious identity through engagement with online communities and digital religious content. Consequently, religious identity becomes a dynamic process shaped by both social interaction and technological mediation.

The transformation of Islamic authority within digital religious communities illustrates the complex interaction between technological change and religious life in contemporary society. Digital environments create new opportunities for religious participation and broader access to religious knowledge while simultaneously generating challenges related to authority, legitimacy, and ideological fragmentation. Understanding these transformations is essential for analyzing broader socio-political developments, particularly concerning how Islamic identities and political attitudes are increasingly constructed within contemporary digital landscapes.

Political Polarization and the Dynamics of Identity Construction among Indonesian Muslims

Political polarization has become an increasingly significant phenomenon within contemporary democratic societies.[22] In general terms, political polarization refers to a process in which individuals and social groups become increasingly divided into distinct ideological positions characterized by stronger internal cohesion and deeper opposition toward alternative viewpoints. Political polarization does not merely involve differences in political preferences but also reflects broader social and cultural divisions that shape collective behavior and public discourse. As political identities become more entrenched, societal interactions often become characterized by greater social distance and reduced mutual understanding.

The phenomenon of political polarization has gained considerable academic attention due to its implications for democratic stability and social cohesion.[23] Scholars frequently distinguish between ideological polarization and affective polarization. Ideological polarization refers to increasing differences in policy preferences and political beliefs among individuals or groups, while affective polarization concerns emotional attachment to one's own group and negative attitudes toward opposing groups. Both forms of polarization may reinforce one another and create persistent divisions within society.

Political polarization is closely related to the concept of identity politics, which refers to political mobilization based on shared social identities such as ethnicity, religion, culture, race,

[21] Mustaqim Pabbajah, "Religious Disorientation in the Digital Transformation: An Islamic Review," in *Advances in Digital Transformation-Rise of Ultra-Smart Fully Automated Cyberspace* (IntechOpen, 2024).

[22] Helena Octavianne et al., "Identity Politics and Polarization in Contemporary Muslim Countries: The Impact of Elections, Social Media, and Global Dynamics."

[23] AHMAD HASAN UBAID and H.B HABIBI SUBANDI, "Political Polarization Based on Religious Identities: Empirical Evidence from the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial," *Jurnal Studi Pemerintahan* 8, no. 4 (2017), https://doi.org/10.18196/jgp.2017.0054.411-441.

or social class. Identity politics emerges when particular identities become central elements in political competition and public discourse. Within such contexts, political actors often utilize collective identities as strategic instruments for gaining legitimacy and mobilizing support among specific communities. Consequently, political competition frequently extends beyond policy issues and becomes intertwined with symbolic and emotional dimensions of social identity.[24]

Within Indonesia, political polarization has increasingly become intertwined with religious identity, particularly among Muslim communities. As the largest Muslim-majority country in the world, Indonesia possesses a complex socio-political landscape characterized by cultural diversity and multiple religious expressions. Following the democratic transition after the Reformasi era, greater political openness created opportunities for broader participation in political processes. However, democratization has also facilitated the emergence of stronger identity-based political mobilization.[25]

Several factors contribute to the development of political polarization within Indonesian society. One important factor involves increasing political competition among parties and political elites seeking electoral support. Political actors frequently employ symbolic narratives and emotional appeals that resonate strongly with particular social groups. Religious narratives often become effective tools for political mobilization because they possess significant emotional and moral influence within Muslim-majority communities.[26]

Another contributing factor relates to the increasing role of media and communication technologies in shaping political discourse. The expansion of digital platforms and social media has altered how political information is produced, distributed, and consumed. Political narratives can now spread rapidly through online networks and reach large audiences within relatively short periods. While this development increases public access to information, it also creates opportunities for misinformation, selective exposure, and ideological reinforcement.[27]

Socio-economic inequalities may also contribute to political polarization by creating perceptions of exclusion and injustice among certain social groups. Economic disparities, social dissatisfaction, and concerns regarding political representation often encourage individuals to seek stronger identification with particular communities or ideological movements. Under such circumstances, religious identity may function as an important source of social solidarity and collective belonging.[28]

The interaction between political affiliation and Islamic identity has become increasingly visible within Indonesian political dynamics. Religious identity no longer functions solely as a theological or spiritual framework but increasingly intersects with political orientations and ideological preferences. Political affiliation may influence how individuals interpret religious values, while religious beliefs may simultaneously shape political attitudes and decisions.

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24 Suhardi, "The Impact of Identity Politics in Elections on Social Polarization in Urban Indonesian Communities."

25 Ramli, "The Paradox of Secularization: The Dynamics of Religious Moderation and Identity Politics in Indonesia."

26 Firdaus Arifin et al., "Indonesia's Identity Politics and Populism: Disruption to National Cohesion," *Jurnal Civics: Media Kajian Kewarganegaraan* 22, no. 1 (March 13, 2025), https://doi.org/10.21831/jc.v22i1.1291.

27 huwaidatul izza Hudianto, "The Dynamics of Identity Politics Polarization in the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election," *Journal of Political Islam* 1, no. 2 SE-Articles (September 30, 2025), https://journal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/jopi/article/view/41085.

28 Muhamad Najib Aulia Zaman et al., "The Challenges of Internalizing Religious Moderation Values amid the Rise of Socio-Political Polarization."

This interaction demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between religion and politics within contemporary Muslim societies.[29]

Political events in Indonesia have frequently demonstrated the influence of religious identity in shaping political behavior. Public discourse surrounding elections and political campaigns often incorporates religious narratives and symbols that seek to establish moral legitimacy or strengthen collective support. Consequently, political preferences increasingly become associated with particular understandings of Islamic identity, creating stronger links between religion and political affiliation.[30]

As political and religious identities become increasingly interconnected, group-based identity construction also becomes more prominent. Social identity theory suggests that individuals tend to categorize themselves and others into specific social groups in order to establish a sense of belonging and self-definition. Individuals generally develop stronger emotional attachment to groups with which they identify while simultaneously distinguishing themselves from groups perceived as different or opposing.

This process frequently results in the strengthening of in-group identities, where individuals emphasize shared values, beliefs, and collective characteristics within their own communities.[31] Strong in-group identification often contributes to solidarity, cooperation, and social cohesion among members. However, such identification may also generate boundaries that separate one group from another. Within politically polarized environments, these boundaries can become increasingly rigid and emotionally charged.

Simultaneously, stronger in-group attachment may contribute to the exclusion or marginalization of out-groups. Out-group exclusion occurs when individuals perceive members outside their own communities as fundamentally different, less trustworthy, or ideologically threatening. In digital environments where individuals are frequently exposed to homogeneous perspectives, such tendencies may become more pronounced. Consequently, political polarization among Indonesian Muslims represents not only a matter of political disagreement but also a dynamic process of identity construction that continuously shapes social relationships, religious interpretation, and broader socio-political interactions.

Socio-Political Implications of Digital Religious Communities in Contemporary Indonesian Society

The rapid development of digital religious communities has generated significant socio-political implications for contemporary Indonesian society.[32] The integration of digital technology into religious life has transformed not only patterns of communication and religious engagement

[29] Gatot Repli Handoko and Swastiningsih Swastiningsih, "The Role of Political Communication in Addressing Polarization and Identity Politics in Indonesian Democracy," *Journal of Law and Humanity Studies* 2, no. 2 (2025): 62–67.

[30] L Karmila et al., "The Role of Social Media in the Political Construction of Identity: Implications for Political Dynamics and Democracy in Indonesia," *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development* 8, no. 14 (2024): 9171.

[31] Eve Warburton, "DEEPENING POLARIZATION AND DEMOCRATIC DECLINE IN INDONESIA," *Political Polarization in South and Southeast Asia*, Old Divisions, New Dangers (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 27, 2020), http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep26920.8.

[32] Sindung Haryanto, "The Sociological Context of Religion in Indonesia," in *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion, Volume 30* (BRILL, 2019), 67–102, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004416987_006.

but also broader social and political interactions among Indonesian Muslims. Digital environments increasingly function as spaces where individuals construct identities, exchange ideas, and participate in discussions regarding religious and political issues. Consequently, the influence of digital religious communities extends beyond theological dimensions and increasingly shapes social and political realities.

Within contemporary Indonesia, digital religious communities have become important platforms for the dissemination of information and public discourse. Individuals are no longer limited to traditional forms of religious interaction through mosques, educational institutions, or formal religious organizations. Through social media platforms and online forums, Muslims can access diverse religious content and engage with broader communities that transcend geographical boundaries. This transformation has expanded opportunities for participation while simultaneously altering the structure of social relationships within society.[33]

The socio-political impact of digital religious communities can be observed in changing patterns of political engagement among Indonesian Muslims. Digital environments provide individuals with greater access to political information, public discussions, and ideological perspectives. Political narratives increasingly circulate alongside religious discourse, creating intersections between religious beliefs and political attitudes. Consequently, religious communities within digital spaces often become involved in broader socio-political discussions that influence public opinion and political participation.[34]

Digital religious communities also contribute to the increasing visibility of identity-based political narratives. Religious values and symbols are frequently integrated into political communication and public campaigns within online environments. Political actors, religious figures, and digital influencers may strategically utilize religious narratives to mobilize support and strengthen collective identification among specific audiences. Such practices may increase emotional engagement while simultaneously reinforcing ideological boundaries among different groups.[35]

Despite the broader opportunities created by digital communication, digital religious communities may also contribute to challenges associated with information consumption and social interaction. One significant issue frequently discussed in contemporary scholarship involves the emergence of echo chambers within digital environments. Echo chambers refer to situations in which individuals are predominantly exposed to opinions and information that confirm their existing beliefs while limiting interaction with alternative perspectives.[36]

Echo chambers often emerge due to users' selective behavior and platform algorithms that prioritize personalized content. Individuals generally prefer information that aligns with their beliefs and values because such information reinforces psychological comfort and social identity.

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33 HERDIANSAH, HUSIN, and HENDRA, "Religious Identity Politics on Social Media in Indonesia: A Discursive Analysis on Islamic Civil Societies."

34 Lalu Rifki Rahman Rifki, "Political of Religion in Digital Era," *JURNAL PENELITIAN KEISLAMAN* 21, no. 1 (July 14, 2025): 66–80, https://doi.org/10.20414/jpk.v21i1.12691.

35 Natalya Seitakhmetova and Sholpan Zhandossova, "THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITALIZATION ON RELIGIOUS IDENTITY: SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT," *Eurasian Research Journal* 7, no. 1 (2025): 61–71, https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/erj/article/1631058.

36 Bukhari et al., "Islam, Religious Moderation, and Digital Political Polarization: Religious Authority and Social Cohesion in the Age of Social Media."

Consequently, users may become increasingly isolated within homogeneous informational environments where similar ideas are continuously repeated and strengthened.[37]

Closely related to echo chambers is the phenomenon commonly referred to as filter bubbles. Filter bubbles occur when digital algorithms selectively determine the content users encounter based on their previous interactions, preferences, and browsing behavior. As algorithms continuously personalize information, users may gradually receive narrower perspectives on social and political issues. This mechanism potentially limits exposure to diverse viewpoints and contributes to greater ideological segmentation within society.[38]

The combination of echo chambers and filter bubbles may contribute to social fragmentation among communities. Social fragmentation refers to the process through which social cohesion weakens due to increasing divisions among different groups within society. Within digitally mediated environments, fragmentation may become more visible as individuals increasingly associate themselves with communities sharing similar beliefs, values, and ideological orientations. Such conditions may reduce opportunities for constructive dialogue and mutual understanding among different social groups.[39]

Nevertheless, digital religious communities also provide important positive contributions to contemporary Indonesian society. One significant contribution involves expanding opportunities for political participation among citizens. Digital platforms enable individuals to express opinions, discuss public issues, and engage in political processes more actively than in traditional communication environments. Such developments can strengthen democratic participation and encourage broader civic engagement among Muslim communities.[40]

In addition to political participation, digital religious communities contribute to the development of religious literacy within society. Access to digital resources allows individuals to obtain religious knowledge from diverse sources and engage with various perspectives on Islamic teachings. Educational content distributed through digital platforms may increase public understanding of religious issues and encourage broader engagement with contemporary Islamic thought. Such accessibility may help individuals develop more informed religious perspectives and strengthen intellectual engagement with religious discourse.

Digital environments also create opportunities for strengthening democratic values through increased public dialogue and participation.[41] Digital democracy emphasizes broader citizen involvement in political communication and decision-making processes through technological platforms. Through digital communities, individuals may engage in discussions regarding social justice, public policy, and collective concerns. Consequently, digital spaces possess the potential to function as platforms for inclusive participation and democratic interaction.

Despite these positive developments, significant challenges remain regarding the future relationship between Islam, politics, and digital environments. Issues involving misinformation,

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37 Sindung Sindung Haryanto, "The Sociological Context of Religion in Indonesia," *KONINKLIJKE BRILL NV, LEIDIN, 2020*, n.d.

38 Luthfiyah Ramadhani, "The Role of Social Media in Strengthening Religious Moderation Amidst Digital Politics in Indonesia," *Social Impact Journal* 4, no. 2 (2025): 251–59, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.61391/sij.v4i2.214.

39 Agussalaim Burhanuddin et al., "Socio-Religious Preferences of the Indonesian Youths in Digital and Everyday Life," *Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University*, 2021.

40 Ramli, "The Paradox of Secularization: The Dynamics of Religious Moderation and Identity Politics in Indonesia."

41 Faizin, "Polarization of Religious Issues in Indonesia's Social Media Society and Its Impact on Social Conflict."

ideological radicalization, identity-based polarization, and declining social cohesion continue to pose important concerns for contemporary society. The future of digital religious communities will largely depend upon the ability of governments, educational institutions, religious organizations, and digital users to promote critical literacy, ethical communication, and inclusive public discourse. Therefore, understanding the evolving relationship between religion, politics, and technology remains essential for ensuring that digital environments contribute positively to social stability and democratic development within Indonesia.

Conlusion

This study demonstrates that the emergence of digital religious communities has fundamentally transformed the relationship between Islam, politics, and identity construction among Indonesian Muslims. The development of digital communication technologies has shifted religious engagement from conventional institutional settings toward more decentralized and interactive digital environments. Consequently, religious authority is no longer exclusively determined by formal institutions and traditional scholars but is increasingly shaped by digital actors, online platforms, and patterns of audience engagement. Simultaneously, digital spaces have become important arenas where political narratives and religious discourses intersect, contributing to the reconstruction of Islamic identity within contemporary Indonesian society. Political polarization within these environments extends beyond differences in political preferences and increasingly influences social relationships, ideological orientations, and collective identities among Muslim communities. Furthermore, this study finds that digital religious communities possess both constructive and problematic socio-political implications. On the one hand, they create broader opportunities for political participation, increased access to religious knowledge, and the strengthening of democratic engagement through digital communication. On the other hand, the existence of echo chambers, filter bubbles, and identity-based group formations may reinforce ideological divisions and contribute to social fragmentation. The interaction between political affiliation and Islamic identity increasingly shapes the dynamics of in-group solidarity and out-group exclusion, thereby influencing broader patterns of social cohesion. Therefore, the future relationship between Islam, politics, and digital space requires the development of stronger digital literacy, critical engagement with information, and inclusive religious discourse in order to ensure that technological transformation contributes positively to democratic values and social harmony within contemporary Indonesian society.

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