

Reconciler Thought: The Unitary State within the Framework of Islamic Ideology from Soekarno's Perspective

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Abstract

This research explores Sukarno's thoughts on reconciliation within the context of the formation of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) from the perspective of Islamic ideology. Sukarno, as the proclaimer and first president of Indonesia, is known for his efforts to build unity among the diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural groups in the formation of the new nation. This study focuses on how Sukarno integrated the concept of a unitary state with Islamic values and principles, as well as his reconciliation efforts to alleviate ideological conflicts related to the concept of an Islamic State. The research method involves analyzing Sukarno's speeches, writings, and thoughts related to the relationship between the unitary state and Islamic ideology, referencing historical context and relevant texts. The findings show that Sukarno developed a reconciliation idea that accommodates ideological and religious diversity in Indonesia while maintaining the unity and integrity of the state. This study makes an important contribution to our understanding of Sukarno's role and views in shaping NKRI as an inclusive state based on Islamic principles, and its relevance in the current social, political, and religious context of Indonesia.

Keyword: Sukarno, Reconciliation, Unitary State, Islamic Ideology

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pemikiran rekonsiliasi Soekarno dalam konteks pembentukan Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia (NKRI) dalam

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kerangka ideologi Islam. Soekarno, sebagai pemimpin proklamator dan presiden pertama Indonesia, dikenal karena upayanya dalam membangun persatuan di antara beragam kelompok etnis, agama, dan budaya dalam pembentukan negara baru. Fokus penelitian ini adalah pada bagaimana Soekarno memadukan konsep negara kesatuan dengan nilai-nilai dan prinsip-prinsip Islam, serta upaya rekonsiliasi untuk meredakan konflik ideologis terkait dengan konsep Negara Islam. Metode penelitian ini melibatkan analisis terhadap pidato, tulisan, dan pemikiran Soekarno yang terkait dengan hubungan antara negara kesatuan dan ideologi Islam, dengan mengacu pada konteks sejarah dan teks-teks relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Soekarno mengembangkan gagasan rekonsiliasi yang mengakomodasi keberagaman ideologi dan agama di Indonesia, sambil mempertahankan kesatuan dan integritas negara. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi penting terhadap pemahaman kita tentang peran dan pandangan Soekarno dalam membentuk NKRI sebagai negara yang inklusif dan berlandaskan prinsip-prinsip Islam, serta relevansinya dalam konteks sosial, politik, dan agama Indonesia saat ini.

Kata Kunci: Soekarno, Rekonsiliasi, Negara Kesatuan, Ideologi Islam.

1. Introduction

The formation of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) was a monumental task requiring not only political acumen and strategy but also the ability to harmonize various ideological perspectives. One of the key figures in this process was Soekarno, the first president and the proclaimer of Indonesia's independence. Soekarno's vision of a united Indonesia was heavily influenced by his thoughts on reconciliation, particularly within the framework of Islamic ideology. He recognized the importance of creating a cohesive national identity that could encompass the vast ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity of Indonesia. His approach to reconciliation was not merely a political strategy but also a deep ideological commitment to inclusivity and unity.² By integrating the principles of a unitary state with Islamic values, Soekarno aimed to mitigate ideological conflicts and foster a sense of national solidarity.

Ideally, considering Indonesia's strong Islamic foundation, the state could be structured based on Islamic principles. This would reflect the majority of the population who adhere to Islam and allow the implementation of Islamic values in state governance. However, in reality, Indonesia adopted a unitary state system based on democracy, where various ideologies and religions are accommodated within an inclusive national framework. For instance, while democracy emphasizes deliberation and consensus or majority rule, Soekarno's decisions often appeared absolute and unchallengeable.³ Despite the fact that many of the heroes and figures

² Robit Nurul Jamil, Sumarjono Sumarjono, and Bambang Soepeno, "Soekarno's Idea About Indonesian Revolution In 1945-1957," *Jurnal Historica* 1, no. 1 (July 21, 2017): 12-28, <https://jurnal.unej.ac.id/index.php/JHIS/article/view/5097>.

³ Justus M. van der Kroef, "Sukarno's Indonesia," *Pacific Affairs* 46, no. 2 (1973): 269-88, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2756173>.

of the proclamation were Muslims and desired Indonesia to be an Islamic state, Soekarno's stance seemed to override this preference. This raises the question of whether Soekarno was averse to the concept of an Islamic state or whether he simply did not find an ideal model of an Islamic state as formulated by the independence drafting committee.

This study aims to explore Soekarno's reconciliatory thoughts and their application in the context of the formation of NKRI. It examines how Soekarno's integration of Islamic ideology influenced his political strategies and policies aimed at uniting the nation. Through an analysis of his speeches, writings, and ideological stance, this research provides insights into Soekarno's efforts to build an inclusive state while respecting Islamic principles. The findings indicate that Soekarno developed a reconciliation concept that accommodated the ideological and religious diversity of Indonesia while maintaining national unity and integrity. This approach allowed Indonesia to evolve as a unitary state that remains inclusive of various social and religious groups.

1.1. Literature Review

The study of Soekarno and Islam is not a new discourse; numerous researchers have explored and examined this topic using various methods and approaches. Samingan, in his journal article titled "*Spiritualitas Islam Dalam Kajian Pemikiran Soekarno*," has systematically discussed how Soekarno studied and examined Islamic concepts extensively. One key point is the decline of Islamic countries today, attributed to the lack of role and appreciation for reason, which has led to the discrediting of Islam in the modern era.⁴ Samingan's work shares a commonality with the author, as both explore Soekarno's interest in Islamic concepts. However, while Samingan highlights Soekarno's rational dimension of Islam, the author focuses more on the extent of Soekarno's concern for the idea of an Islamic-based state.

Muhammad Mawangir, in his publication titled "*Soekarno Dan Pemikirannya Tentang Agama, Politik, Dan Pendidikan Islam*," has excellently described how futuristic Soekarno was in understanding Islamic concepts. Soekarno's ideas and actions were far ahead of his contemporaries, one of which was how the sovereignty of a future state would be determined by its Islamic principles and values, rather than merely by the name of Islam while its content remains fragile (far from Islamic implementation).⁵ Mawangir's publication shares similarities with the author's study, particularly in the context of Soekarno's religion and Islamic politics. The difference is that while Mawangir emphasizes the dimension of Islamic education and its urgency, the author is more focused on revitalizing Soekarno's political concepts, which often draw from Islamic ideas.

Anwar Sanusi, in his writing titled "*Sikap dan Kebijakan Soekarno Terhadap Islam Pasca Kemerdekaan*," elaborates extensively on Soekarno's

⁴ Samingan Samingan, "Spiritualitas Islam Dalam Kajian Pemikiran Soekarno," *Nusantara; Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial* 8, no. 7 (December 14, 2021): 2263–72, <https://doi.org/10.31604/jips.v8i7.2021.2263-2272>.

⁵ Muhamad Mawangir, "Soekarno Dan Pemikirannya Tentang Agama, Politik, Dan Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Ilmu Agama: Mengkaji Doktrin, Pemikiran, Dan Fenomena Agama* 17, no. 1 (July 13, 2016): 139–45, <https://doi.org/10.19109/jia.v17i1.643>.

political trajectory and his response to the resistance against Indonesia adopting a unitary state system. This work details Soekarno's struggles and successes in mapping out an ideal concept for the nation, from guided democracy to the integration of nationalism, religion, and social elements.⁶ Sanusi's writing is similar to the author's study, particularly in highlighting Soekarno's wisdom in maintaining the integrity of NKRI against internal ideological threats. The difference is that while Anwar Sanusi explains his research based on a historical approach, the author focuses on narrating it through a descriptive-analytical approach to Soekarno's Islamic thought.

After exploring various existing works, the three writings above are the publications most closely related to the author's discussion. Additionally, the author has analyzed dozens of works with similar variables. However, no work has been found that discusses Soekarno's 'reconciler thought' in the context of his Islamic thinking. This indicates that this article possesses originality and novelty.

1.2. Research Methodology

This article falls under the category of library research with a qualitative approach. The methodology employed is descriptive analysis. The primary sources for this paper are scholarly articles on Soekarno's Islamic thought, particularly those published in the last five years. The secondary sources include writings about Soekarno in non-scholarly media such as newspapers, websites, magazines, and others. The article is organized thematically, meaning the author maps writings related to Soekarno based on smaller themes within the framework of Islamic Thought and the Unitary State. The subheadings are then arranged using a deductive pattern (specific to general) to facilitate readers in grasping the core essence of the writing.

2. A Glimpse of Soekarno

Soekarno, born as Koesno Sosrodihardjo on June 6, 1901, in Surabaya, was the son of Raden Soekemi Sosrodihardjo, a primary school teacher, and Ida Ayu Nyoman Rai, a woman of Balinese descent. His family background blended Javanese and Balinese cultures, providing Soekarno with a rich and diverse cultural upbringing. As a child, his health was fragile, and he often fell ill. Due to his poor health, his name was changed to Soekarno, believing that a name change would bring about a change in fate. Soekarno grew up in an educational and nationalist environment. His father held deep respect for Javanese culture and had strong nationalist views, while his mother instilled Balinese spiritual values.⁷

Soekarno received his elementary education in Mojokerto and continued his secondary education at HBS (Hoogere Burger School) in Surabaya. At HBS, Soekarno lived with HOS Tjokroaminoto, an influential figure in the nationalist

⁶ Anwar Sanusi, "Sikap Dan Kebijaksanaan Soekarno Terhadap Islam Pasca Kemerdekaan," *Jurnal Tamaddun: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 6, no. 2 (November 16, 2018): 31–60, <https://doi.org/10.24235/tamaddun.v6i2.3520>.

⁷ Ahmad Ali Nurdin, "Revisiting Discourse on Islam and State Relation in Indonesia: The View of Soekarno, Natsir and Nurcholish Madjid," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 6, no. 1 (June 1, 2016): 63–92, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v6i1.63-92>.

movement. It was here that Soekarno began to take an interest in politics and nationalism. After completing his secondary education, Soekarno pursued studies at Technische Hoogeschool te Bandoeng (now Bandung Institute of Technology) in 1921, where he studied civil engineering. During his college years, Soekarno became increasingly active in the nationalist movement. He founded a study group called Algemene Studie Club in 1926, which later became one of the precursors to the Indonesian National Party (PNI).

In 1927, Soekarno and several of his colleagues established the PNI, a party focused on Indonesia's struggle for independence from Dutch colonial rule. The PNI grew rapidly and soon became one of the most influential political organizations in Indonesia. Soekarno's political activities drew the attention of the Dutch colonial government. In 1929, Soekarno was arrested and tried for inciting the people to revolt. He was sentenced to four years in prison but was released in 1931 after serving two years. However, Soekarno's struggle did not end there. After his release, he resumed his active involvement in politics and was arrested and exiled by the Dutch several times, including exile in Ende, Flores, and Bengkulu.⁸

Soekarno's struggle reached its peak during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia in World War II. Japan, which occupied Indonesia in 1942, granted limited political freedom to Indonesian nationalist leaders as part of their strategy. During this time, Soekarno and Mohammad Hatta utilized the situation to prepare for Indonesia's independence. On August 17, 1945, Soekarno and Hatta proclaimed Indonesia's independence. This event marked the birth of the Republic of Indonesia, with Soekarno as its first president and Hatta as vice president. However, this independence was not immediately recognized by the Netherlands, leading to years of diplomatic and military struggle to maintain Indonesia's independence.

As president, Soekarno played a crucial role in shaping Indonesia's national identity. He introduced the concept of "Nasakom" (Nationalism, Religion, and Communism) as the ideological basis of the state to unite various elements in Indonesia's highly diverse society. Soekarno was also known for his revolutionary ideas and his vision of a strong and independent Indonesia. In his famous speech, 'Indonesia Menggugat' (Indonesia Accuses), Soekarno denounced colonialism and imperialism, urging Indonesian unity against oppression.⁹

During his presidency, Soekarno implemented policies aimed at building Indonesia's economic and political independence. He initiated various large-scale development projects such as the National Monument (Monas), Gelora Bung Karno Sports Complex, and Hotel Indonesia. However, these ambitious economic policies often lacked strong economic foundations, leading to various challenges. Soekarno was also known as a charismatic leader who often used powerful rhetoric in his speeches. He sought to position Indonesia as a significant player on the

⁸ Setia Budhi Wilardjo, "Sukarno: Suatu Tinjauan Perspektif Sejarah Dan Perilaku Organisasi," *Value Added: Majalah Ekonomi Dan Bisnis* 9, no. 1 (2012): 1-12, <https://doi.org/10.26714/vameb.v9i1.731>.

⁹ Dadan Adi Kurniawan and Nasta Ayundra Oktavian Mahardi, "Jejak Gelar Doctor Honoris Causa Soekarno Dan Pembelajaran Sejarah," *Fajar Historia: Jurnal Ilmu Sejarah Dan Pendidikan* 8, no. 1 (April 30, 2024): 145-59, <https://doi.org/10.29408/fhs.v8i1.24702>.

international stage through the Asian-African Conference in 1955 in Bandung, which resulted in the Bandung Declaration as a foundation for solidarity and cooperation among Asian and African countries.

Soekarno's leadership began to face serious challenges in the early 1960s. Economic instability, internal conflicts, and tensions with the military escalated. In 1965, the G30S/PKI event occurred, where several military generals were killed. Although Soekarno's involvement in this event remains debated, it was used by General Suharto to seize power. In 1967, Soekarno was officially removed from office as president by the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly (MPRS) and replaced by Suharto. Soekarno then lived under house arrest in Jakarta until his death on June 21, 1970.¹⁰

Soekarno's legacy remains strong in Indonesian history and culture. He is revered as the Father of Proclamation and a National Hero who led the nation's struggle for independence. Soekarno is also celebrated for his vision of Indonesian unity and diversity, epitomized in the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). Furthermore, Soekarno's ideas on anti-colonialism and national independence continue to inspire young generations in Indonesia and nationalist movements worldwide. Statues and monuments of Soekarno, including Monas and Gelora Bung Karno, stand as symbols of his fight for freedom and national unity. Soekarno was not only a skilled politician and orator but also a visionary thinker with grand aspirations for Indonesia and the world. His tumultuous life and invaluable contributions make Soekarno one of the most influential figures in Indonesian history and the global struggle for independence.

3. Communist Claims and Secularization

Soekarno, a charismatic and revolutionary leader, often became the target of various accusations and controversies throughout his leadership. Two prominent accusations were his alleged leanings towards communism and secularization. These accusations stemmed from his policies, political stances, and the complex global and domestic political dynamics of the time. Soekarno was frequently accused of being a communist due to his close ties with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and friendly relations with communist countries like the Soviet Union and China. During his leadership, Soekarno developed the concept of "Nasakom," which stood for Nationalism, Religion, and Communism. This concept aimed to unite various ideological elements in Indonesia and prevent division among them. Soekarno believed that this unity was crucial for maintaining the stability of the newly independent nation and facing threats both domestically and internationally.¹¹

However, this approach raised suspicions among anti-communist groups, both domestically and from Western countries, particularly the United States

¹⁰ Elisabeth Ermuliana Kembaren Kembaren, "Soekarno and Javanese Sovereignty Concept Case Study: Guided Democracy Era," *PARAPOLITIKA: Journal of Politics and Democracy Studies* 2, no. 2 (July 28, 2021): 67–79, <https://doi.org/10.33822/jpds.v2i2.5904>.

¹¹ Yudi Latif, "The Religiosity, Nationality, and Sociality of Pancasila: Toward Pancasila through Soekarno's Way," *Studia Islamika* 25, no. 2 (August 31, 2018): 207–45, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v25i2.7502>.

during the height of the Cold War. Soekarno's proximity to the PKI, which was one of the largest communist parties in the world at the time, led many to believe that he had communist tendencies. In reality, Soekarno was not a communist but rather a pragmatic nationalist who viewed the PKI as a political force he could use to strengthen his position and maintain a balance of power in Indonesia. Moreover, Soekarno's relations with communist countries were also driven by a desire to seek international support amid pressures from Western nations. After Indonesia's independence, Soekarno felt the need to establish diplomatic relations with various countries to obtain economic and military assistance. The Soviet Union and China, as major communist states, offered significant aid to Indonesia, which was crucial for national development.

Accusations of secularization against Soekarno also stemmed from his policies and political views. As a leader striving to promote national unity, Soekarno often adopted an inclusive approach towards various religious groups in Indonesia. He sought to balance the role of religion in political and social life with national values and modernity. However, this approach was sometimes misunderstood as an attempt to reduce the role of religion in public life. One example of Soekarno's policy that sparked accusations of secularization was the Presidential Decree of July 5, 1959, which reinstated the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia, replacing the Provisional Constitution of 1950. Although this decree aimed to end political instability and provide a stronger legal basis for governance, many Islamic groups viewed it as a step to diminish the influence of Islam in politics. They felt that the decree disregarded the Jakarta Charter, which contained clauses about the obligation of Muslims to uphold Islamic law.¹²

Further criticism of Soekarno regarding secularization arose from his efforts to promote a national culture that was inclusive and non-sectarian. He supported various cultural initiatives that reflected Indonesia's diversity, including arts, literature, and traditions from different ethnic and religious groups. Soekarno believed that national culture should reflect all Indonesian people, not just a specific group. However, conservative religious groups perceived this approach as a form of blurring religious identity and an effort to promote secularism. Both accusations, whether about communism or secularization, were also influenced by the global political dynamics of the time. The Cold War created tensions between the Western bloc led by the United States and the Eastern bloc led by the Soviet Union. In this context, any leader who showed even slight proximity to communism was immediately suspected and labeled as a communist. Similarly, regarding secularization, countries with Muslim majorities faced pressures to balance modernity and religious tradition.

Domestically, these accusations were used by Soekarno's political opponents to undermine his position. Military groups and conservative Islamic factions, feeling threatened by Soekarno's inclusive policies, mobilized support against him using these issues. Dissatisfaction with Soekarno's economic and political policies also strengthened these accusations. However, it is important to note that Soekarno never officially identified himself as a communist or secular. He

¹² Abdul Fadhil, "Pemikiran Keislaman Tokoh Sosialis: Studi Kasus Soekarno Dan Gamal Abdul Nasser," *Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an* 10, no. 1 (2014): 20-39, <https://journal.unj.ac.id/unj/index.php/jsq/article/view/4415>.

always emphasized that he was a nationalist fighting for the unity and independence of Indonesia. He saw himself as a leader who had to accommodate various ideologies and interests to maintain the stability and progress of the nation.¹³

Ultimately, accusations of communism and secularization against Soekarno reflect the complexity and political dynamics of his time. They also reflect the challenges faced by Soekarno in his efforts to lead a highly diverse nation and build its national identity. These accusations may not have been entirely fair or accurate, but they provide insights into the challenges and dilemmas faced by Soekarno as a revolutionary leader and nationalist striving to lead his people towards independence and progress.

4. Pros and Cons of Soekarno's Ideology

In the early years of Indonesia's independence, the relationship between Soekarno and Islamic intellectuals became a crucial dynamic in the political and social journey of this new nation. Soekarno, as a central figure in the struggle for independence, had a broad vision to build a united and independent nation, while Islamic intellectuals represented the voice of the religious community concerned about the role of Islam in the new state structure. On one hand, Soekarno, with a strong nationalist background, prioritized national unity above all else. His vision was embodied in Pancasila, which he regarded as an inclusive foundation to unite Indonesia's multi-ethnic and multicultural society.¹⁴ Soekarno believed that Pancasila reflected universal values acceptable to all Indonesians, including Muslims, and served as the basis for building a just and prosperous nation.

On the other hand, Islamic intellectuals such as Ki Bagus Hadikusumo, Wahid Hasyim, and Mohammad Natsir held different views. They argued that Pancasila did not adequately represent the Islamic principles that should form the basis of the state. They supported the implementation of Islamic Sharia in the formulation of laws and state policies as a means to ensure social justice and public morality in accordance with Islamic teachings. These differing views often sparked intense conflicts and debates between the Soekarno government and Islamic intellectuals. Despite their shared commitment to advancing Indonesia, differences in interpreting the role of Islam in the state frequently posed significant challenges in formulating national policies.

No	Supporting Intellectuals	Intellectual Critics
1	Haji Agus Salim: Supporting the vision of Indonesian unity under Pancasila	Ki Bagus Hadikusumo: Holds critical views on Pancasila as the basis of a secular state

¹³ Samingan Samingan, "Pembunuhan Karakter Di Balik Sejarah: Soekarno Dan Komunis," *Historis : Jurnal Kajian, Penelitian Dan Pengembangan Pendidikan Sejarah* 7, no. 1 (July 30, 2022): 74–80, <https://doi.org/10.31764/historis.v7i1.8937>.

¹⁴ Ilyas Ilyas, "Islam dan Kebangsaan: Pergumulan dalam BPUPKI, PPKI, dan Piagam Jakarta," *Buletin Al-Turas* 26, no. 1 (February 10, 2020): 19–35, <https://doi.org/10.15408/bat.v26i1.13921>.

2	Muhammad Hatta: Believes Pancasila as the foundation of an inclusive state.	Wahid Hasyim: Withdraws support for Pancasila due to its perceived lack of reflection of Islamic values.
3	Mas Mansur: Supports the struggle for Indonesian independence.	Mohammad Natsir: Opposes Pancasila and advocates for the explicit implementation of Islamic law.

Table 01: Pros and Cons of Soekarno

However, within this dynamic, efforts to reach agreements and compromises that serve common interests are also evident. Soekarno, while not explicitly adopting a formal Islamic state, still recognized the significant role of Islam in society and sought to build cooperation with the Muslim community. Conversely, Islamic scholars also endeavored to contribute to national development by articulating their critical views on state policies. In this context, the debate between Soekarno and Islamic scholars not only reflects the challenges of building a pluralistic new nation but also mirrors the rich and complex dynamics in Indonesia's historical journey. Through dialogue and interaction among various groups of thinkers and leaders, Indonesia managed to find a middle ground that accommodates the interests of all parties, albeit not always without friction and significant differences of opinion.

In the modern era, the dynamics of pros and cons regarding Soekarno's thoughts on Islam continue involving political parties and influential figures shaping Indonesia's ideological currents. Soekarno, with his inclusive vision of the state, was positively embraced by the Indonesian National Party (PNI), which he founded. The PNI supported Pancasila as the foundation of the state uniting all elements of Indonesian society regardless of religion. Similarly, the United Development Party (PPP), inheriting the spirit of traditional Islamic parties, supported the principles of religious freedom and inclusivity within the state. However, not all parties agreed with Soekarno's approach. The Masyumi Party, dominated by Islamic scholars, opposed secular ideology and viewed Pancasila as an impediment to the more explicit implementation of Islamic law in state affairs. They emphasized that the state should be based on more stringent Islamic principles across various aspects of life.¹⁵

Today, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), as a representation of the modern Islamic political movement, advocates for a stricter Islamic vision influencing state policies. They promote strong Islamic values in public law and policy as a moral foundation that the state should adhere to. This dynamic reflects the diverse spectrum of opinions in Indonesian society regarding the role of

¹⁵ Abdul Halim Mat Diah and Muqoddam Cholil, "Perjuangan Umat Islam Melalui Politik Di Indonesia," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 3, no. 1 (June 30, 2008): 31–47, <https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/JAT/article/view/7843>.

religion in public life.¹⁶ While many still appreciate Soekarno's legacy in laying the foundation for an inclusive state, debates on the role of Islam in the state remain a sensitive topic. Compromise and dialogue remain essential to achieve adequate agreements in maintaining interfaith harmony and advancing Indonesia as a sovereign and just nation.

5. Soekarno's Thought on Islam

Soekarno possessed a deep and comprehensive understanding of Islam, shaped by a life filled with intellectual and spiritual experiences, as well as his observations of Indonesia's socio-political dynamics and global affairs. His views on Islam went beyond personal religiosity; they were integral to his vision of building Indonesia as a unified, independent, and just nation. From a young age, Soekarno showed interest in Islamic thought, studying works by figures like Jamaluddin Al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, who advocated progressive thinking and reform within Islam. Influenced significantly by Al-Afghani and Abduh, Soekarno believed Islam should be a dynamic and progressive force in society, embracing modern knowledge and values while maintaining its fundamental principles.¹⁷

Soekarno viewed Islam as highly relevant and possessing great potential for nation-building. He believed Islamic values such as social justice, brotherhood, and communal prosperity aligned with Indonesia's aspirations for independence. According to him, Islam emphasized social solidarity and collective welfare, crucial for developing a newly independent nation. Therefore, he emphasized Islam's role as a moral force driving positive social and political change. However, Soekarno also recognized the need for a contextual understanding of Islam, rejecting narrow and conservative interpretations that focused solely on formalistic legal aspects without considering humanitarian values and social justice.

In his speeches, Soekarno often stressed that Islam should drive fair social and political reforms. He opposed the view that Islam was confined to ritualistic matters and dogma, asserting instead that it should actively pursue social justice and resist oppression in all forms. This perspective was reflected in his concept of "Progressive Islam," emphasizing social and political reforms rooted in Islamic values. Soekarno also acknowledged the diversity within Islam and valued differing viewpoints among Muslims. He underscored the importance of Muslim unity in facing common challenges, particularly during Indonesia's struggle for independence.¹⁸

Politically, Soekarno rejected the idea of a formalistic Islamic state based strictly on Sharia law. He argued that Indonesia should be founded on inclusive

¹⁶ Galang Geraldy, "Ideologi Dan Partai Politik: Menakar Ideologi Politik Marhaenisme Di PDIP, Sosialisme Demokrasi Di PSI Dan Islam Fundamentalisme Di PKS," *Politicon: Jurnal Ilmu Politik* 1, no. 2 (December 9, 2019): 135–57, <https://doi.org/10.15575/politicon.v1i2.6268>.

¹⁷ Yusni Biliu, "Pemikiran Soekarno Tentang Islamisme Dan Pemahaman Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Ilmiah AL-Jauhari: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Interdisipliner* 2, no. 2 (December 1, 2017): 159–77, <https://doi.org/10.30603/jiaj.v2i2.678>.

¹⁸ Haryo Ksatrio Utomo, "Genealogi Pemikiran Islam Liberal Dan Pemikiran Soekarno: Nasionalisme, Demokrasi, Dan Pluralisme.," *Communitarian: Jurnal Prodi Ilmu Politik* 4, no. 1 (August 29, 2022): 625–31, <https://doi.org/10.56985/jc.v4i1.232>.

principles acceptable to all segments of society, including Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and others. This viewpoint was embodied in Pancasila, the foundational philosophy he proposed for Indonesia. Pancasila encapsulated universal values acceptable to all, including the principle of belief in the One Almighty God, which accommodated the role of religions in the state without privileging any specific faith. Soekarno viewed Pancasila not as secularism but as an effort to ensure religious freedom and respect for all faiths within an inclusive national framework.

Soekarno believed that by anchoring the state on Pancasila, Indonesia could become a just and prosperous nation where all citizens, including Muslims, could peacefully coexist. He also emphasized the role of education in promoting a progressive understanding of Islam. He supported Islamic education that emphasized not only ritual and dogma but also scientific knowledge and humanitarian values. Soekarno encouraged Muslims to be active agents of change in various fields of life, including politics, economics, and social development, guided by Islamic principles.¹⁹

Soekarno's thoughts on Islam reflected his broad and inclusive vision of religion's role in national life. He saw Islam as a dynamic and progressive force capable of driving positive social and political change. By grounding the nation in inclusive principles like Pancasila, Soekarno aimed to create a fair and prosperous Indonesia where all citizens, including Muslims, could live harmoniously. Through this approach, Soekarno successfully united diverse groups in society and ensured Islam played an active role in nation-building without causing division or conflict.

6. The Concept of Islam and Reconciliation in Soekarno's Thought

In the journey towards Indonesia's independence, formulating the basic concept of the state became one of the greatest challenges faced by the nation's leaders. Soekarno, as one of the main figures in the struggle for independence, was keenly aware of the importance of having a strong and inclusive foundation for the nation to maintain unity in this highly diverse country. Therefore, he asked a preparatory team consisting of various intellectuals and political leaders to formulate the concept of the state that would serve as the basis for Indonesia.²⁰

However, in this formulation process, there were various debates and disagreements, especially among Islamic intellectuals. These groups, despite sharing the same goal of Indonesian independence, had differing views on the appropriate basis and form of the state for this newly independent nation. These differences often led to deadlock and an inability to reach consensus. Islamic figures such as Ki Bagus Hadikusumo from Muhammadiyah, Wahid Hasyim from Nahdlatul Ulama, and several others believed that Indonesia's state foundation should reflect Islamic values. They believed that Islam was not only a religion but also a system that regulated social, political, and economic life. Therefore, they

¹⁹ Muhammad Soleh Aminullah, "Agama Dan Politik: Studi Pemikiran Soekarno Tentang Relasi Agama Dan Negara," *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama* 14, no. 1 (June 1, 2020): 35–50, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jsa.2020.141-03>.

²⁰ Sanusi, "Sikap Dan Kebijakan Soekarno."

argued that this newly independent state should be based on Islamic law (sharia) to ensure justice and welfare for all citizens.

However, despite their shared goal, differences in interpretation and views on how Islam should be implemented in governance led to heated debates among them. For example, Ki Bagus Hadikusumo emphasized the importance of implementing Islamic law in the state constitution, while Wahid Hasyim was more flexible and open to compromise with a more inclusive view. These debates often failed to find common ground because each party held strong beliefs in their own interpretation of Islam's role in the state. A critical moment in these debates occurred during the sessions of the Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence (BPUPKI).²¹ Here, Islamic figures sought to formulate a state foundation that reflected their aspirations. One outcome of these efforts was the Jakarta Charter, which included the clause "with the obligation to implement Islamic law for its adherents." This clause was intended to provide a special place for Islam in the Indonesian constitution.

However, despite the initial agreement on the Jakarta Charter, the debates continued. Some Islamic figures felt that the implementation of Islamic law should be stronger and clearer, while others prioritized inclusivity and diversity. This disagreement reflected fundamental differences in their views on how an Islamic state should be shaped and operated. The failure to achieve unanimous agreement among Islamic figures led to a deadlock in the process of formulating the state foundation. Although they all desired a state based on Islamic values, differences in interpretation and approach made it difficult for them to find a solution acceptable to all parties. Recognizing this situation, Soekarno realized that if these debates continued indefinitely, Indonesia's independence could be jeopardized.²²

To prevent deadlock and prolonged discussion, Soekarno made a decisive decision to propose a state concept that could be accepted by all parties. Through an approach known as "Reconciler Thought," Soekarno sought to mediate conflicting views and find a solution that could maintain national unity. On June 1, 1945, he delivered his famous speech, "The Birth of Pancasila," proposing five basic principles as the foundation of the state. By proposing Pancasila, Soekarno aimed to create a state foundation that could be accepted by all groups, including Islamic groups. The first principle, "Belief in the One Supreme God," gave significant importance to religion in national life but did not specifically mention Islam, thus encompassing all religions in Indonesia.

Soekarno's decision to propose Pancasila as the state foundation was not because he disregarded Islam or did not value Islamic values. On the contrary, Soekarno had great respect for Islam and its teachings. However, he also understood that Indonesia was a highly diverse country with various religious and cultural groups. He believed that an inclusive state foundation, not based on any

²¹ Ali Usman, "Tafsir Kebudayaan Terhadap Ide Sukarno Tentang Sila Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa: Dari Sosio-Antropologi Ke Pandangan Sufistik," *Religi: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 17, no. 2 (December 29, 2021): 43–60, <https://doi.org/10.14421/rejusta.2021.1702-04>.

²² Anwar Sanusi, "Pemikiran Transformatif Soekarno Dalam Politik Islam (Pendekatan Transformatif Bill Gould, Karl Stenbrink, Dan Kontowijoyo)," *Empower: Jurnal Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam* 3, no. 2 (November 1, 2018): 57–76, <https://doi.org/10.24235/empower.v3i2.3510>.

specific religion, was key to maintaining national unity and achieving true independence. This decision was accepted by many, although some were less satisfied. However, in the end, Pancasila was accepted as the basis of the Indonesian state, and the clause "with the obligation to implement Islamic law for its adherents" in the Jakarta Charter was removed and replaced with "Belief in the One Supreme God" during the sessions of the Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence (PPKI) on August 18, 1945. This decision demonstrated Soekarno's wisdom and vision in seeking a solution that could maintain unity and justice for all Indonesian people.²³

Thus, the debate among Islamic figures regarding the ideal concept of the state demonstrates how complex and challenging the process of formulating the state's foundation was. Soekarno, with his wisdom, was able to navigate these differences and propose the concept of Pancasila, which could be accepted by all parties. This decision reflected his commitment to inclusivity and diversity, as well as his belief that only through unity could Indonesia achieve independence and progress. Through this decisive decision, Soekarno prevented deadlock and ensured that Indonesia could be independent with a strong and inclusive state foundation.

Conclusion

Soekarno's reconciliation thinking towards the concept of national unity was an accelerated alternative due to the failure of Muslim intellectuals to agree on a definitive form of an Islamic state. Soekarno had given time to the authorized committee at that time (BPUPKI), but endless debates ensued among the Muslims themselves. Even the session to formulate the state structure continued to reach a deadlock as Indonesian Muslim intellectuals wanted to maintain their respective schools of Islamic jurisprudence and streams. At that time, Indonesia was in a conditional vacuum from colonial rule (not having won the war), and postponing the proclamation would have fatal consequences for the entry of new colonizers. Therefore, Soekarno ultimately took a middle path by formulating Pancasila, where Islamic values were respected, even incorporated into the first principle (Sila-1).

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²³ Ilyas, "Islam dan Kebangsaan."

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