

Relationship between religion, state, and politics: A study of the dynamics of islamic education in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

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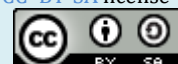
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The purpose of this research is to formulate Islamic education within the Indonesian context as a subsystem of the aspects of religion, state, and politics themselves. Therefore, it is essential to reformulate the position of Islamic education in the context of the nation and state as a representation of the aspects of religion, state, and politics. The background of this research is that Islamic education currently experiences a disorientation of purpose and a marginalized dominance of existence. For example, many Islamic educational institutions do not experience a significant increase in student enrollment, which could be due to a lack of contextual Islamic knowledge or unprofessional institutional management systems. Facing such a situation, it is important to find solutions so that Islamic education becomes more responsive to the fields of religion, state, and politics, so that it can adapt to national and state life. This research uses a qualitative method with a literature review type of research and a grounded theory approach. Data collection techniques use literature and documentation from various sources. Data analysis then uses heuristic analysis, verification, interpretation, and synthesis. The results of this research are that initially, there were three types of relationships between religion, state, and politics: religiously unfriendly secularism, religiously friendly ideology, and theocratic system. In the Indonesian context, which refers to a religiously friendly ideology system, Islamic education within the framework of the relationship between religion, state, and politics in Indonesia means that Islamic education about religion serves as a moral guide, Islamic education about the state serves as a system, constitution, and medium, and Islamic education about politics is about policy and social aspects. The conclusion obtained shows that these three aspects, namely religion, state, and politics, in the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia are formulated in social, governance, and environmental terms. This means that Islamic education as the basis of religion in Indonesia has a social role to shape the noble character of its society, Islamic education viewed from the perspective of the state is to implement a holistic system so that it can function optimally in society (governance), and Islamic education as politics is to be able to create and form a peaceful and prosperous environment.

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1. Introduction

Human life is essentially an effort to achieve well-being so that the order of life becomes more meaningful. The essence of humanity connected with the concept of nature is an inseparable unity. Humans need nature that has been provided by Allah *Subhānahū wa Ta'ālā*

as a form of His love for the creatures He has created. Therefore, in understanding the meaning of a life that is always connected with the concept of nature, humans need a concept of belief, knowledge, and true practice so that worldly and afterlife happiness can be achieved. In balancing life, humans certainly need concrete steps to adapt (Hamidi et al., 2022) and act as caliphs on earth. The existence of religion becomes a belief system that must be used to describe the true and proper meaning of life. In addition, humans also need a good and civilized way of life by forming a concept of state built based on common ideals and life goals. However, among these, as a servant of Allah *Subhānahū wa Ta'ālā*, humans certainly need to act wisely in determining their role and function on earth so that the behavior displayed does not contradict what has been outlined by Allah *Subhānahū wa Ta'ālā*. This is where the concept of politics needs to be presented.

Religion (Islam), the state, and even politics are various things that emerge to support the role and function of humans as caliphs on earth. (Mohamed, 2024) As stated in the word of Allah *Subhānahū wa Ta'ālā* in Surah al-Baqarah, verse 30, which means: And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority. They said, Will You place upon it one who will cause corruption therein and shed blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You? Allah said, Indeed, I know that which you do not know. Therefore, the ideal life is to integrate Islam (religion), the state, and politics. This means that humans can make this life a form of servitude to Allah *Subhānahū wa Ta'ālā* with a strong religious foundation, form a good and noble way of life through the state, and practice all that is believed and known scientifically in the context of religion and the state by prioritizing noble and civilized political behavior (Abidin et al., 2025). Regarding Islam and the state, the Qur'an does not explicitly mention the establishment of a state. As stated by Munawir Sjadzali, quoted by Abdul Azis Thaba, Islam does not have a preference for an established political system but only has a set of ethical values that can be used as a guide for state administration (Thaba, 1996). In the Qur'an, there are ad-hoc concepts related to principles concerning social life such as deliberation, consultation, obedience to leaders, upholding justice, equality, mutual assistance, and freedom/religious tolerance. Therefore, it is common for differences in theoretical thought to emerge; in other words, this issue is an *ijtihadiyyah* issue. Although the Qur'an does not directly address the issue of the state, the spirit, motivation, and guidance of values in the conceptualization of the state are commanded within it. The principles of deliberation and egalitarianism are found extensively in the Qur'an, which is the foundation for state life. Therefore, to achieve the human life goal of happiness in this world and the hereafter, and to fulfill their role and function as caliphs on earth, humans still need a concept of the state based on Islamic values (religion) and manifested in political behavior to sow the seeds of benefit and welfare for the entire world.

2. Method

A study needs to use several specific methods so that the results of the study are effective according to prior planning. Therefore, the research method used is a qualitative research method, choosing the type of literature research. Library research, or more commonly known as literature research, is useful for studying literature descriptively to reveal events as they are. The purpose of this research is for the research results to objectively describe the actual situation (Nawawi, 2013). Various data collected in this study come from books on religion, state, and politics, as well as Islamic education in the Indonesian context, as primary data sources. Furthermore, some data as secondary sources are taken from various journals, papers, articles, magazines, and other relevant research results related to the focus of this research. The perspective of qualitative research. Thus, the approach used for this research is the grounded theory approach, which serves to discover theories (combined theoretical explanations) (Corbin & Strauss, 2007) so that the relationship between religion, state, and politics in the study of the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia can be analyzed. This

research has data sources, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data sources are sources directly related to the main focus of this research concerning the relationship between religion, state, and politics in the study of the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia, as well as all books on the relation of religion, politics, and the state. Secondary sources are all documents, archives, magazines, and research reports, as well as manuscripts and writings related to the relationship between religion, state, and politics in the study of the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia. There are two types of data collection techniques in this research: first, a literature review, where all data sources, both primary and secondary sources, focusing on the relationship between religion, state, and politics, along with Islamic education in Indonesia, are collected into one. Similarly, data relevant to the focus of this research will be selected and collected into one.

Second, documentation is a method of collecting data through written records in the form of archives and also includes books on theoretical opinions, propositions, or other books related to the research problem. The documented data is then selected and classified according to the focus of the study on the relationship between religion, state, and politics. All data that has been classified according to the study focus is then analyzed using, first, the heuristic analysis method, which involves collecting all necessary data sources. These sources can be written, oral, audiovisual, primary, or secondary. (Kuntowijoyo, 2011) The focus of this research is only on collecting data about the relationship between religion, state, and politics in the study of the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia. Second, the verification analysis method involves selecting all data sources that have been found. Data selection and verification are carried out by choosing data that is in accordance with the focus of this research. Third, the interpretation analysis method, which involves providing an interpretation of the data on the relationship between religion, state, and politics in the study of the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia obtained during the research so that it becomes a chronological sequence of events (Kuntowijoyo, 2011); Fourth, the synthesis analysis method, which is the writing process in the form of research results. The final step in data analysis is to create a synthesis of the research results obtained.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Religion, State, and Politics in the Constitutional Dimension

The religion referred to here, Islam, can linguistically be interpreted as salvation. Salvation is intended for the entire universe. In this sense, Islam is also understood as peace, mercy, and much more. In the context of human life, Islam becomes a system of life (Yaqin & Sya'bani, 2025) to be followed so that humans can be safe, prosperous, and happy in this world and the hereafter. However, in its technical sense, Islam is understood as a religion (teaching) brought by the Prophet Muhammad SAW to be taught to humanity for the sake of achieving happiness in this world and the hereafter:

الدين أي الدين الإسلامي الذي جاء به محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم هو ما أنزله الله في القرآن وما جاءت به السنة الصحيحة من الأوامر والنواهي والإرشادات لصالح العباد دنياهم وأخرهم

In another part, Islam is also seen as a teaching and a set of provisions (sharia) that have been determined.

الدين هو ما شرعه الله على لسان أنبيائه من الأوامر والنواهي والإرشادات لصالح العباد دنياهم وأخرهم

The meaning of religion here is Islam, which is a sharia intended for humans, containing commands, prohibitions, and guidance, all for the benefit of a servant in this world and the hereafter. Islamic teachings (Islamic sharia) are a system of life that humans can use for their well-being. This is because Islam contains universal and particular values related to the substance of life. (Mustofa et al., 2024) Among them are worship, aqidah (belief), akhlaq (morality), and many others. All of these are the essence of being human, who has a role to

serve the Creator. The state means an organization within a territory that has legitimate supreme power and is obeyed by the people. The state can also be defined as a social group that has a specific territory or area organized under effective political and governmental institutions, possesses political unity, is sovereign, and thus has the right to determine its national goals. (Tim Penyusunan Kamus Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa Indonesia, 1989). This understanding indicates that the state is formed based on the agreement of a social group consisting of society and having supreme power within that community. (Mu'iz et al., 2024) From this state, the concept of government emerges to regulate the course of life within the state, so that society is optimally organized in its life. However, in another view, as stated by Abu Nashr al-Fārābī, he explains the origin of the formation of a state from the perspective of human substantialism, which begins with the idea that humans are considered rational beings. Everyone who is part of a community certainly interacts within that community, whether small, medium, or large. The combination of differences among nations then results in a unity with a specific direction that is interconnected and intertwined, just as natural objects are intertwined. Members of the community feel connected to each other even if they are not in one place. These gatherings or associations are then called ummah. These large communities eventually become states. (Al-Fārābī, 1993)

Furthermore, al-Fārābī formulates that the purpose of state life is similar to the purpose of human life. The purpose of human life is to serve God, meaning that everything humans do becomes connected to the Almighty. Thus, in the context of the state, humans should direct the concept of statehood to realize divine values in all aspects of human life. Plato, in his writing titled *The Republic* of Plato, provides his view on the concept of the state, commonly known and referred to as the ideal state. In his statement, Plato revealed that every state has subjects and rulers (Plato, 1925) (in a state, there must always be the concept of the people and also the ruler or government). Between the people and the ruler (government), there should be an inseparable social connectivity driven by common interests. This is because the basic concept of a state must be based on the foundation of the people or the public, so that the state is a fundamentalization of individual and social aspects for all humans who reside within it. Plato also stated that the greatest good of a state is unity (Plato, 1925), meaning that the essence of a state is unity. So here, Plato tries to emphasize that in addition to bureaucratic and social agreement between the people and the ruler, what is no less important is unity among the people within a state. This means that the level of unity becomes an important spirit for the existence of a state. Because if a state is only defined as an aspect of the people and the government, then without unity, it is possible for a state to experience disintegration, conflict, and even division. The definition of politics can be explained as politics originating from the Greek word Polis, which means city or state. It then developed into polites, meaning citizen, and politikos, meaning citizenship (Haryatmoko, 2004). Politics is something that relates citizens within a state. On the other hand, politics is also often interpreted as power. Sometimes a ruler must have the ability to compel and control others because humans sometimes do not understand the true limits of personal interests. Therefore, the actions of a leader must regulate society to prevent chaos.

Inu Kencana Syafi'i's view of politics is defined as a special relationship between people living together, in which rules of authority and power arise for the actors. Therefore, political actors must be clever and wise in determining and implementing their goals (Syafi'i, 1997). So the essence of politics developed by Inu Kencana is in the wisdom of the actors to control and manage the lives of their citizens. Not to cause damage and even harm the people and their state. So it can be broadly understood that politics is a process and system for determining and implementing policies related to citizens within a state. Policy is certainly the result of wise people formulating a certain object of study so that its implementation is for the good and welfare of its citizens. The relationship between religion in this matter, meaning religion (*al-dīn*) and the state (*al-daulah*) or politics (*al-siyasah*), is certainly an important issue among

scholars, Muslim thinkers, and even the Islamic movement itself. In the current modern-contemporary era, the position and relationship between religion and the state consist of at least three forms.

- First, the separation of religion and politics, even accompanied by a religiously unfriendly secular political ideology, such as that of the state of Turkey (Ongaro & Tantardini, 2024).
- Second, the separation of religion and politics accompanied by a religiously friendly ideology, such as that of the state of Indonesia. This second form can also be called an accommodation between the state and religion. This second form affirms that the state acts as a protector and guarantor for the more perfect continuation of religious practice for its citizens. The state also acts as a constitution in guaranteeing the practice and knowledge of religion, so that it can be hoped that the people can govern with a religious foundation.
- Third, the unification of religion with the state (theocratic system), such as the state of Saudi Arabia. The third form states that religion and state, and even politics, are integrated and become an implemented part of the foundations of state life. However, the difference here is that religion plays a more institutional and constitutional role than the state itself. Thus, sometimes it is religion that becomes the concept of the state. (Azra, 2015) But this differs from al-Fārābī's opinion, who introduced the concept of the virtuous city (al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah). The concept of al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah contains the concept of Islam as al-dīn, the state as al-daulah, and politics as al-siyasah.

أهل المدينة الفاضلة فهي أشياء أولها معرفة السبب الأول وجميع ما يوصف به ثم الأشياء المفارقة للمادة وما يوصف به كل واحد منها بما خص من الصفات والمرتبة إلى أن تنتهي من المفارقة إلى العقل الفعّال ، وفعل كل واحد منها؛ ثم الجواهر السماوية وما يوصف به كل واحد منها؛ ثم الأجسام الطبيعية التي تحتها ، كيف تتكون وتفسد

(Al-Fārābī, 1996)

The realization of the virtuous city is a state where every citizen has an understanding of the first cause and all its attributes, all forms of matter that hinder the connection with the active intellect, celestial bodies and all their attributes, physical bodies and what is beneath them, and how these things emerge and then perish. Furthermore, there are three models for the religious political scenario in connecting Islam (*al-dīn*), the state (*al-daulah*), and politics (*al-siyāsah*) in Indonesia.

- First, religion and state are separate from each other. Religious doctrine only serves as a guide for human life, limited to family and community within organizational frameworks such as mosques, churches, temples, and so on. Everything related to religion is resolved within these religious institutions. The main principle is that religion is religion. In reality, it is very difficult in this global age to find a religious institution that is completely untainted by worldly struggles outside of religion itself.
- Second, religion and state are bound to each other (integralistic) in the sense that religion gives a dominant character to the state. In this context, religion plays a full role as an instrument, namely the actualization of religion in most state institutions, such as political, economic, legal, and other institutions, see Fig. 1.
- Third, religion is placed within a state system that prioritizes harmony and balance. Religion is reduced to just one element of a system that is seen as interdependent with other elements. Policies that are the concretization of this systemic approach clearly emphasize strict control over their elements, including the religious element, to always achieve harmonious order without disruption.

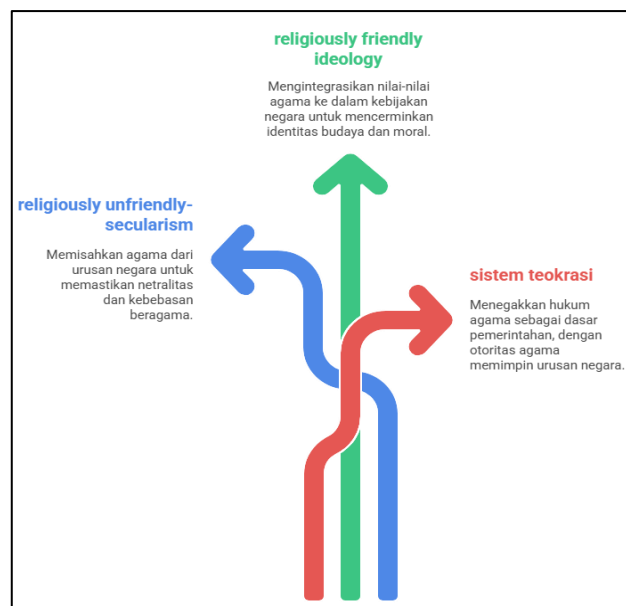


Fig. 1. Relationship of Religion, State, and Politic

Whenever there is even the slightest upheaval, it is immediately suppressed by the state (government) so that balance is restored. This approach directly places the state (government) in a central position, which gradually seems to detach itself from the system and even control the system. This situation makes the state (government) stronger because the system's position declines to become subordinate, losing the power to control the state. The state tends to be authoritarian because the accumulation of power is in its hands. Ultimately, what is most important here is the ability to integrate Islam, the state, and politics, as exemplified by *Rasulullāh Ṣallaallāhu 'Alaihi Wasallām* when leading the city of Madinah as the most advanced civilization in the world by introducing the Charter of Madinah or The Constitution of Medina, some of which states the following: This is a writing of Muhammad the Prophet between the believers and Muslims of Quraisyh and Yathrib, and those who follow them and are attached to them and who crusade along with them. They are a single community (*Ummah*) distinct from others. People. The emigrants of Quraisyh, according to their former condition, "pay jointly the blood-money between them, and they (as a group) ransom their captive, (doing so) with uprightness and justice between the believers. Until 47 clause. (Watt, 1956) This is the form of Islam, statehood, and politics that has long been exemplified by *Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam* and proven very successful in making Muslims leaders of world civilization until subsequent generations. Therefore, it is very urgent for Muslims to emulate what *Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam* did in leading Medina, which successfully united Muslims, Jews, Christians, and other religions who agreed to serve the city of Medina, making it a very prosperous and religious city.

3.2. The Relationship Between Religion, State, and Politics in the Study of the Dynamics of Islamic Education in Indonesia

Religion, state, and politics, from the perspective of Islamic Education in Indonesia, are integrative and interconnected, see Fig. 2. Thus, Islamic Education in Indonesia is characterized by the existence of Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren (Hanif et al., 2024) schools, madrasahs, boarding schools, and many more, which are aspirations of religious communities (in this case, Islam) that have become institutionalized in a dimension and field of education. This means that education and the religious aspect in the structure of state life have become closely integrated. Religion here is interpreted as a representation of a person's

spirituality that has long existed, and ultimately, to maintain the existence of their religiosity, a vessel is needed to produce successors in the future through the aspect of Islamic education.

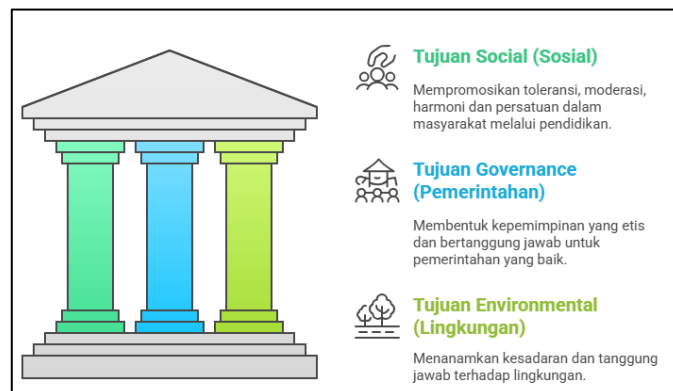


Fig. 2. Three Pillars of Islamic Education Goals in Indonesia

Similarly, the state and politics in the study of the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia affirm that the dominance of the state as a state system becomes the control, governance, and policymaker for the sustainability of Islamic education in Indonesia. On many occasions, the state, with its political system, provides legitimacy for educational institutions as a whole. This includes aspects of material, system, governance, finance, teacher careers, and even applicable rules, all connecting the function of education with the state and politics, including Islamic education. Given that Indonesia, as a system that adheres to a religiously friendly ideology, prioritizes no conflict between state and religious issues, but rather a balanced and complementary integration, the Islamic education system also holds an important position. Islamic education is considered an accumulation of religious practice implemented in the world of education (Mustafayeva et al., 2023), accommodated by the state through its political system, including rules regarding governance, materials, and curriculum. This is exemplified by one of the state regulations, Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which also regulates religious education, including Islamic education. Not only that, culturally, Islamic education in Indonesia also symbolizes the integration of the supremacy of religion, state, and politics into a complete unity.

- First, in terms of religion, Islamic education plays a central role in shaping the quality of noble religious human beings through a learning system directed at forming faithful and moral individuals. Without Islamic education, religious communities, especially Muslims, will not have future generations equipped with strong religious convictions and responsiveness to state interests. Moreover, in its relationship with state and political dominance, Islamic education, as a religious representation in the life of the nation, should be conceptualized and directed to accommodate existing cultural differences, creating an inclusive and harmonious environment. (Sirojuddin et al., 2025) Based on this goal, Islamic education directly touches upon state affairs by participating in realizing a harmonious and inclusive national life, starting from a supportive school environment.
- Second, in terms of the state and politics, Islamic education is aimed at being able to overcome social and constitutional matters, where all forms of education regulation have been accommodated by the state through its political system. In addition to being a religious representation, Islamic education is also a representation of the state and politics, where its mechanisms and learning systems contain state and national aspects by participating in educating the Indonesian people in line with the mandate of the Constitution. Islamic education within it, concerning matters of state and politics, is not only about regulatory aspects and administrative accommodation but also about cultural and social aspects. For example, the implementation of learning in schools or madrasahs,

even Islamic boarding schools, continues to refer to and use their distinctive educational policies in each educational institution. The cultural aspect, for instance, Islamic education and the state, is implemented in the spirit of nationalism of students and santri in pursuing education that has been formulated through national regulations so that graduates from schools, madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools, and universities can maintain a spirit of nationalism through learning materials such as religious education and civic education.

Other disciplinary frameworks view the interaction of religion, state, and politics as similar to the interconnectedness between environmental, social, and governance. Religion here can be interpreted as the social sphere because the outcome of a religious person is none other than being able to solve social problems and impact their environment. Meanwhile, environmental and governance are the meanings of the state's position and the structures within it, including politics, which also prioritize the environmental aspect (Mohd Zain et al., 2024). These three things, namely environmental, social, and governance, can be said to be the main goals of the reality of the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia, which previously had a relational role with religion, state, and politics. Indonesia considered a country capable of uniting aspects of religion, state, and politics (religiously friendly ideology), makes Islamic education capable of transforming in the aspects of religion, state, and politics, which ultimately means Islamic education must be able to solve all social problems, be able to integrate with state interests and be able to help create a civilized climate and environment (environmental, social, and governance).

An example of the reality that occurs regarding Islamic education in the context of the relationship between religion, state, and politics in Indonesia is in terms of social aspects, considering that Islamic education is also a representation of the religious field in the scheme of state life. Thus, like Islamic educational institutions in general, they are born from elements of society, although the state in this case also plays an important role in establishing madrasahs or schools. In addition, Islamic educational institutions are oriented not only to educational and academic matters; certainly, based on their origin, Islamic educational institutions are also oriented to community and social issues. Examples include school activities that synergize with the community to manage the economy together by establishing cooperatives or shops, and the like. Still related to this, a social goal that has been carried out is charity or donation activities widely conducted by student organizations in schools. Furthermore, regarding the governance objective, Islamic education represents the state's domain to create a national Islamic education system to prepare a religious and civilized generation of Indonesian society.

The governance-oriented goal in the study of the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia is a representation of the state aspect; besides the above, it can include adding learning materials that evoke a spirit of nationalism, such as religious moderation, civic education, and others. As for the learning material aspects as described, there are also other governance goals, namely in the aspect of system formation and the main goal of national Islamic education related to the process of culturalizing Islamic education in families, community environments, and institutions or organizations. The last objective, the environmental objective, represents the political aspect, with efforts to create national policies and institutions whose aim is to establish a conducive, well-organized Islamic educational climate and environment, with the primary goal of shaping noble character. The environmental objective must be preceded by concrete efforts based on strategic policies to regulate and manage the pace of Islamic education so that it is effective and beneficial to all parties. Politics means providing welfare guarantees through good managerial patterns, so the ultimate goal is to realize environmental objectives for the common good. Creating a conducive culture and environment for learning is the political responsibility of Islamic education, especially in the study of its dynamics in Indonesia. Politics does not have to be about the orientation of power to regulate the wheels of the Islamic education system in Indonesia, but rather about synergy

and integration among parties to form an organized circle with a clear direction. For example, the existence of politics in Islamic education that regulates the systematization of religious learning for certain groups makes Islamic education acceptable to everyone.

4. Conclusion

Integrating and interconnecting religion, state, and politics is a solution to make a country prosperous, blessed, and favored by Allah *Subhānahū wa Ta'ālā*, especially in the context of Islamic education in Indonesia. Religion, state, and politics certainly cannot be separated because all three influence each other. Therefore, the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia are also inseparable from these three things as the main foundation in national and state life. Religion as the spirit and primary fundamentalization in beliefs practiced in the context of the state, the state as the result of the knowledge of a community and group of people, and politics as a form of practice of religion and state implemented in national and state life. The current postmodern and contemporary era makes the formulation of religion, state, and politics very important to be applied without separation. Therefore, this formulation should be applied to national and state life today so that the people and rulers, even the ulama, can synergize to build a just, prosperous, and blessed country favored by Allah *Subhānahū wa Ta'ālā*. Looking at the dynamics and conditions of Indonesia as a large country and nation with diverse cultures, Islamic education within the framework of the relationship between religion, state, and politics contains and gives rise to three main pillars of Islamic education goals in Indonesia, namely social goals, governance goals, and environmental goals. Social goals in the study of the dynamics of Islamic education, for example, Islamic educational institutions are oriented not only to educational and academic issues. Of course, based on their origin, Islamic educational institutions are also oriented to community and social issues such as school activities that synergize with the community to manage the economy together by establishing cooperatives or shops and the like. Still related to this, social goals that have been carried out include charity or donation activities widely carried out by student organizations in schools. Governance goals, for example, include adding learning materials that arouse the spirit of nationalism such as religious moderation, civic education, and others. Environmental goals, such as efforts to create national policies and institutions whose purpose is to create a conducive, well-ordered climate and environment, preserve nature, and have the main goal of forming noble character.

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Declarations

- Author contribution** : MAYS was responsible for the entire research project. He also led the writing of the manuscript and the collaboration with the second author. MAYS participated in the data collection, transcription and analysis. He also revised the manuscript. Both authors approved the final manuscript
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