



ISLAMIC POLITICAL ETHICS IN THE CONCEPT OF THE STATE MOH. NATSIR AND S.M. KARTOSUWIRYO: PHILOSOPHICAL-COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Aris Munandar¹, Suwendi², Endang Susanti³

^{1,2,3} Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta, Indonesia

E-mail: arism2365@gmail.com, suwendi@uinjkt.ac.id, endangsusanti311@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines Islamic political ethics in the thought of Mohammad Natsir and Sekarmadji Maridjan Kartosuwiryo through a philosophical-comparative approach. The two figures represent opposing poles in the discourse on Islam and the state in Indonesia, Natsir with his inclusive constitutional-democratic approach, and Kartosuwiryo with his exclusive theocratic-revolutionary vision. The study focuses on the construction of political ethics in their views on democracy, power, law, and plurality within the context of the modern state. This research employs a qualitative method based on library research, with thematic analysis of primary and secondary works by both figures. A philosophical approach is used to explore the moral-political dimensions of ethics, including the normative basis of political action, the legitimacy of authority, and the relationship between religion and the state. The findings reveal fundamental differences: Natsir perceives democracy as an ethical and constitutional means to promote Islamic values peacefully, while Kartosuwiryo considers only a theocratic system based on sharia as legitimate, rejecting democratic states entirely. These differences are also reflected in their concepts of power, law, and plurality. Natsir emphasizes inclusivity and public ethics, while Kartosuwiryo adopts an exclusive and confrontational stance. This study not only clarifies the divergent paradigms of postcolonial Islamic political ethics in Indonesia but also offers theoretical contributions to understanding the relevance of constitutional versus revolutionary approaches in contemporary Islamic politics.

Keywords: *Islamic Political Ethics, Mohammad Natsir, Kartosuwiryo, Democracy*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji etika politik Islam dalam pemikiran Mohammad Natsir dan Sekarmadji Maridjan Kartosuwiryo melalui pendekatan filosofis-komparatif. Keduanya merepresentasikan dua kutub dalam wacana hubungan Islam dan negara di Indonesia, Natsir dengan pendekatan konstitusional-demokratis yang inklusif, dan Kartosuwiryo dengan gagasan teokratik-revolusioner yang eksklusif. Fokus kajian diarahkan pada konstruksi etika politik keduanya terkait demokrasi, kekuasaan, hukum, dan pluralitas dalam konteks negara modern. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif berbasis studi pustaka, dengan analisis tematik terhadap karya primer dan sekunder kedua tokoh. Pendekatan filosofis digunakan untuk mengeksplorasi

dimensi etika moral-politik, termasuk dasar normatif tindakan politik, legitimasi kekuasaan, serta relasi antara agama dan negara. Hasil kajian menunjukkan perbedaan mendasar: Natsir memaknai demokrasi sebagai sarana etis dan konstitusional untuk menanamkan nilai-nilai Islam secara damai, sedangkan Kartosuwiryo memandang hanya sistem teokrasi berbasis syariat yang sah, dan menolak total negara demokratis. Perbedaan ini juga tercermin dalam konsep kekuasaan, hukum, dan pluralitas, di mana Natsir mengedepankan inklusivitas dan etika publik, sementara Kartosuwiryo bersikap eksklusif dan konfrontatif. Temuan ini tidak hanya memperjelas divergensi paradigma etika politik Islam pascakolonial di Indonesia, tetapi juga memberikan kontribusi teoretis dalam memahami relevansi pendekatan konstitusional versus revolusioner dalam lanskap politik Islam kontemporer.

Kata kunci: Etika Politik Islam, Mohammad Natsir, Kartosuwiryo, Demokrasi.

INTRODUCTION

In the landscape of Islamic politics, the debate surrounding the relationship between religion and the state is not a new issue. From the classical period to the contemporary era, Muslims have continuously grappled with the fundamental question of how Islamic teachings can be actualized within modern political systems. In the Indonesian context, this issue becomes even more complex, as it not only entails the interaction between religion and the state, but also intersects with the legacy of colonialism, the struggle for independence, ethno-religious diversity, and the development of democracy within the framework of *Pancasila*.

The discourse on Islam and the state in Indonesia has generated a wide spectrum of thought, ranging from inclusive-constitutional perspectives to exclusive-revolutionary ones. Within this spectrum, two prominent figures often positioned as representing two opposing poles are Mohammad Natsir and Sekarmadji Maridjan Kartosuwiryo. Both emerged from a robust modernist Islamic movement, received Western education alongside intensive Islamic training, and were actively involved in nationalist and religious organizations such as Jong Islamieten Bond, Muhammadiyah, and the Masyumi Party. Nevertheless, the trajectories of their political struggles diverged fundamentally.

Mohammad Natsir positioned himself as a Muslim intellectual who believed that Islam and democracy are not inherently contradictory. For him, fundamental Islamic principles such as justice (*'adl*), deliberation (*shūrā*), social responsibility, and the protection of people's rights are compatible with, and can be internalized within, the framework of modern democratic systems.¹ In many of his writings and speeches, Natsir emphasized that the struggle for Islamic politics does not necessarily require the establishment of a formal Islamic state. Instead, it is sufficient to mainstream Islamic values in the public sphere through constitutional, peaceful, and inclusive means. He advocated for the concept of a *madani* state, in which Islamic principles are implemented as public ethics within the framework of democracy and the rule of law.²

In contrast, S.M. Kartosuwiryo viewed any state system not founded upon

¹ Mohammad Natsir, *Agama dan Negara dalam Perspektif Islam* (Jakarta: Media Dakwah, 2001), 21.

² I Iskandar, "Pemikiran Politik Muhammad Natsir Tentang Hubungan Islam Dan Negara.," *Jurnal Transnasional* 6, no. 2 (2015): 1755–1770.

Islamic *shari'ah* as a deviation from the Divine will. He rejected democracy as a secular Western construct and, in 1949, established the Islamic State of Indonesia (*Negara Islam Indonesia*, NII) as a realization of his vision for an authoritative and theocratic Islamic political order.³ From Kartosuwiryo's perspective, Islam should not be positioned merely as a source of moral inspiration, but rather as the sole foundation of legal authority and political legitimacy. He regarded *jihad* as a legitimate political strategy to overthrow what he perceived as a *kufir* system and to replace it with an Islamic government grounded in the literal application of God's law.⁴

One of the most striking points of divergence between the two lies in their interpretation of *shūrā* (deliberation or consultation). In Islamic political ethics, *shūrā* is understood as a moral principle that emphasizes collective participation in decision-making, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad in various state affairs. *Shūrā* serves as a manifestation of the values of justice (*'adl*), social responsibility, and respect for the aspirations of the community (*ummah*).⁵ This principle is embedded within the broader framework of *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* (the higher objectives of Islamic law). Natsir interpreted *shūrā* as both a moral and political principle that aligns with the practices of modern democracy. He viewed popular participation in decision-making as a concrete expression of *maqāṣid al-shari'ah*, particularly in advancing justice, public welfare (*maṣlaḥah 'ammah*), and social responsibility.⁶ In contrast, Kartosuwiryo confined the practice of *shūrā* to a religious elite with authoritative knowledge of *shari'ah*. In his view, absolute sovereignty belongs solely to God and can only be exercised by those who possess legitimate and authoritative understanding of divine revelation.⁷

The concept of justice also serves as a significant point of divergence in their respective frameworks of Islamic political ethics. Natsir emphasized substantive justice rooted in the social and moral values of Islam and translated into inclusive public policies. In contrast, Kartosuwiryo understood justice through a legal-formalist lens, believing that it could only be achieved through the literal implementation of *shari'ah*. He rejected man-made constitutions and laws, viewing them as sources of injustice.⁸

Within the framework of power, Natsir viewed authority as a trust (*amānah*) that must be exercised responsibly and through legitimate legal mechanisms. He rejected the use of violence, instead emphasizing *da'wah* (religious outreach) and constitutional political engagement as the proper means of Islamic struggle.⁹ In contrast, Kartosuwiryo understood political power as a direct mandate from God that

³ Wahid Institut, *Ilusi Negara Islam: Ekspansi Gerakan Islam Transnasional di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Wahid Institut, 2009), 121.

⁴ Van Dijk, *Darul Islam Sebuah Pemberontakan*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Grafiti Pers, 1983), 74.

⁵ Suparman, "Konsep Syura dalam Politik Islam Menurut Al-Qur'an," *Sophisticated: Jurnal Pemikiran Politik Islam* 2, no. 2 (2024): 226–236.

⁶ Muchid and Habibul Wahyudi, 'Demokrasi dalam Pemikiran Politik Muhammad Natsir (1945-1950)', *Jurnal Online Mahasiswa Ilmu Fakultas Sosial dan Ilmu Politik Universitas Riau* 3, no. 2 (2016): 1–15.

⁷ Akbarudin Am, "Pemikiran S.M. Kartosoewirjo Tentang Negara Republik Indonesia," *Jurnal Agama dan Hak Asasi Manusia* 2, no. 2 (2013): 357–378, <https://doi.org/10.14421/inright.v2i2.1246>.

⁸ St Nur Syahidah Dzatun Nurain, "Prinsip Keadilan Sosial dalam Islam: Studi Teks Al-Qur'an dan Hadis," *Jurnal Interdisiplin Sosiologi Agama (JINSA)* 4, no. 1 (2024): 35–51.

⁹ Septian Prasetyo, "Pemikiran Mohammad Natsir Tentang Ideologisasi Islam di Indonesia Tahun 1949-1959," *AVATARA, e-Journal Pendidikan Sejarah* 3, no. 2 (2015): 199–212.

must be upheld without compromise even if it requires armed *jihad*. This perspective rendered his political ethics exclusive and confrontational, markedly different from Natsir's more ethical and inclusive approach.

The political thought of Moh. Natsir and S.M. Kartosuwiryo represents two major trajectories in Islamic political discourse in Indonesia: one that emphasizes the integration and evolution of Islamic values within the framework of the modern nation-state, and another that insists on the exclusivity and supremacy of Islamic law through a theocratic state model. Natsir's approach allowed space for dialogue and adaptation to Indonesia's plural socio-political realities, whereas Kartosuwiryo's approach was more rigid and sought to impose a singular vision of political Islam.

In terms of political impact, Moh. Natsir's approach proved to be more influential within the context of modern Indonesian politics. The concepts he articulated were later adopted by various Islamic figures and political parties, such as the Prosperous Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*, PKS), which emphasized the importance of democratic participation without advocating for the formal establishment of an Islamic state. In contrast, S.M. Kartosuwiryo's legacy primarily inspired radical groups that reject the nation-state system and call for the establishment of a caliphate, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia.¹⁰

Moh. Natsir's political thought is considered more relevant to Indonesia's pluralistic and democratic context. He recognized the importance of respecting religious and cultural diversity, as well as the urgency of building a just society through peaceful means. In contrast, S.M. Kartosuwiryo's thought is often seen as overly idealistic and rigid, making it difficult to implement within the complex and plural political realities of Indonesia.¹¹

Nevertheless, it is important not to dismiss the historical and ideological significance of S.M. Kartosuwiryo's thought outright. He represented the anxiety of a segment of the Muslim community toward secular systems and the marginalization of religious values in state policies. Although his methods were extreme, Kartosuwiryo embodied an ideological phenomenon that deserves sociological understanding rather than merely political rejection. The contrasting views of Natsir and Kartosuwiryo demonstrate that Islamic political ethics is not a monolithic concept but consists of competing and interacting perspectives. Their differences also reflect the rich and diverse intellectual heritage of Indonesian Islam. This affirms that Islam is not stagnant, but rather possesses the flexibility to respond to different historical and contextual circumstances.

Several studies have explored Islamic political thought, including the work of Bujang Efendi, who examined the political concepts and actions of Moh. Natsir, with a focus on the application of Islamic ethical values in his political practice. Efendi's research found that Natsir viewed politics as an extension of *da'wah* to be carried out through moral conduct, positioning *shari'ah* as a guiding principle for national life without negating the pluralistic nature of Indonesian society.¹² In another study,

¹⁰ Martin van Bruinessen, *Contemporary Development in Indonesian Islam, Explaining the "Conservative Turn"* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013), 24.

¹¹ Rudiandiyah, "Analisis Pemikiran Politik Sekarmadji Maridjan Kartosoewirjo Tentang Negara Islam Indonesia" (Tesis, UIN Sumatra Utara, 2021), 94.

¹² Bujang Efendi, "Etika Politik Islam Indonesia: Studi Atas Konsep dan Aksi Politik M. Natsir (1908-1993)" (Skripsi, UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, 2017), 17.

Khairul Anwar examined Natsir's efforts to confront the challenges of political secularization in Indonesia. This research highlights Natsir's concept of Islamic democratic statehood as an alternative framework for integrating *shari'a* into the structure of the state without disregarding societal diversity.¹³

A more specific study was conducted by Subandi Rianto, who carried out a comparative analysis of Natsir and Kartosuwiryo regarding their concepts of the Islamic state. The study found that the divergence in their methods of struggle reflects a fundamental difference in their understanding of the relationship between Islam and the state Moh. Natsir pursued a parliamentary approach, while Kartosuwiryo opted for a revolutionary and militaristic path.¹⁴

The aforementioned studies provide a strong foundation for understanding the differences and similarities in the Islamic political thought of Mohammad Natsir and Kartosuwiryo. However, a notable research gap remains—namely, the absence of a deep philosophical-comparative analysis of Islamic political ethics within their respective concepts of the state. Such an approach would enrich academic discourse by uncovering the normative and philosophical dimensions underlying their ideas, as well as assessing their relevance within the context of contemporary Indonesian politics.

This study is grounded in an awareness of the existing research gap—namely, the absence of a philosophical-comparative investigation focused on the normative and ethical structures within the political thought of Natsir and Kartosuwiryo, particularly in their conceptualizations of the state, authority, law, and public participation. A philosophical-comparative approach will be employed to explore the ontological, axiological, and epistemological assumptions underlying their thought, while also assessing their relevance in the context of contemporary democratic and pluralistic societies.

This study aims not only to highlight the differences and similarities between two central figures in Indonesian Islamic political thought, but also to contribute a new theoretical framework to the study of contemporary Islamic political ethics. The findings of this research are expected to enrich the discourse of Islamic political philosophy, particularly in developing a model of Islamic politics that is rational, ethical, and context-sensitive—capable of engaging with the challenges of modernity, pluralism, and democracy. Moreover, this study holds significance in responding to the rise of religious extremism and conservatism, which often seek legitimacy from historical models of Islamic politics without sufficient normative critique.

By positioning the thoughts of Natsir and Kartosuwiryo not merely as historical legacies but as representations of two competing paradigms of Islamic political ethics, this study also offers a critical reflection on the future direction of Islamic politics in Indonesia. In a global context increasingly marked by identity crises and religious extremism, the intellectual legacy of Natsir democratic, inclusive, and ethical deserves renewed attention as a source of inspiration for building a humanistic and just Islamic civilization.

¹³ Khairul Anwar, "Pemikiran Mohammad Natsir dalam Menangkal Sekularisasi Politik di Indonesia," *Komunika: Journal of Communication Science and Islamic Dakwah* 5, no. 2 (2021): 28–37, <https://doi.org/10.32832/komunika.v5i2.5253>.

¹⁴ Subandi Rianto, 'Perbandingan Pemikiran Politik M. Natsir dan SM Kartosuwiryo Mengenai Konsep Negara Berdasarkan Islam 1920–1959' (Tesis, Universitas Gajah Mada, 2020).

To deepen the analysis of Islamic political ethics as articulated by Mohammad Natsir and S.M. Kartosuwiryo, this study adopts a philosophical-comparative approach grounded in both classical and contemporary Islamic political philosophy. This approach enables a more comprehensive exploration of the ontological dimension (views on the state and human nature), epistemological dimension (sources of political legitimacy), and axiological dimension (foundational ethical values) within the thought of both figures. Accordingly, the differences between Natsir and Kartosuwiryo are not merely interpreted as historical divergences in political strategy, but rather as representations of two opposing paradigms in Islamic political philosophy: the inclusive constitutional-ethical paradigm (Natsir) versus the exclusive legalistic-revolutionary paradigm.

METHODS

A. Type and Research Approach

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research design, which is developed conceptually and comparatively. This approach was chosen because the main focus of the research lies on the exploration and comparison of the political thought of two important figures, Moh. Natsir and S.M. Kartosuwiryo, rather than on empirical social phenomena. The purpose of this approach is to analyse, describe and compare in depth the basis of Islamic political ethics in the thinking of both figures, as well as to examine its contemporary relevance in the discourse on the relationship between democracy and sharia.¹⁵

B. Data Collection Technique

Data collection was conducted through a review of primary and secondary sources, using a purposive sampling technique to select works that explicitly represent the political vision of the two figures.

1. Primary Sources

For Moh. Natsir, primary sources include original writings such as *Capita Selecta* (2008), political speeches, articles, and documents that reflect his strategies and ideas about the state and sharia. For S.M. Kartosuwiryo, historical documents, political archives of Darul Islam/Negara Islam Indonesia (NII), and transcripts of his thoughts reviewed by historians are used.

2. Secondary Sources

Relevant scholarly books, journal articles and dissertations were used to strengthen the analysis and provide interpretative context, including contemporary studies on Islamic political ethics and the history of Islamic political movements in Indonesia.

C. Data Analysis Technique

The analysis was conducted in three main stages:

¹⁵ Amir Hamzah, *Metode penelitian kepustakaan (library research) : kajian filosofis, teoretis, aplikasi, proses, dan hasil penelitian* (Literasi Nusantara Abadi, 2020), Malang.

1. Data reduction: Filtering information based on its relevance to the three main thematic categories of the concept of justice, the ontological view of the state and human beings, and the hermeneutical approach to the authority of the nash and ijtihad.
2. Descriptive-Comparative Data Presentation: Arranging the data systematically to reveal the construction of political ethics in the thoughts of the two figures, including common points and differences.
3. Conclusion Drawing: Synthesis is done to produce a comprehensive understanding of the convergence and divergence of their political ethics.

Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, by comparing interpretations from different authors to minimise interpretive bias. In addition, critical content analysis was used to reveal the philosophical assumptions and political implications contained in each figure's views on the state and the implementation of Islamic law.

D. Theoretical Framework

To strengthen the normative reading, this study uses the lens of modern Islamic political philosophy developed by Ismā'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī, particularly regarding the principle of tawḥīd as the moral and ontological foundation of public life. From this principle are derived key values such as 'adl (justice), maṣlaḥah (benefit), and shūrā (deliberation), which form the ethical foundation of governance structures. This perspective is used to critique Kartosuwiryo's theocratic-exclusive approach and assert Natsir's inclusive constitutional orientation as more compatible with modern democratic principles.

E. Research Time and Location

The research was conducted between February and May 2025, utilising sources from university libraries, online academic repositories and national historical archives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Discussion

The Basis of Islamic Political Ethics in the Thought of Moh Natsir and S.M. Kartosuwiryo

Mohammad Natsir and S.M. Kartosuwiryo are two significant figures in the history of Islamic politics in Indonesia, each representing contrasting approaches to Islamic political ethics. Mohammad Natsir was a central figure in Indonesia's Islamic political history. Born in 1908 in Minangkabau, he is recognized as a modernist Muslim thinker who sought to integrate Islamic values with modern democratic systems. As the founder of the Masyumi Party and a former Prime Minister of Indonesia, Natsir articulated his ideas through works such as *Capita Selecta*, where he emphasized that

Islam is not merely a ritualistic religion but a profound source of moral and social ethics, including within the realm of politics.

Natsir's approach to political ethics can be understood within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* the higher objectives of Islamic law which include the protection of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), and lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*). These objectives, according to Natsir, should be internalized within a democratic and pluralistic state system, thereby demonstrating the compatibility between Islamic principles and modern state governance.

In contrast to Moh. Natsir, S.M. Kartosuwiryo is recognized as the leader of the *Darul Islam* movement, which established the Islamic State of Indonesia (*Negara Islam Indonesia*, NII). Born in 1905, Kartosuwiryo received his early education in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) and was actively involved in the Sarekat Islam organization.¹⁶ Kartosuwiryo developed a theocratic political vision, asserting that the state must be entirely subject to the law of God (*ḥākimiyyah*), and firmly rejecting any system of governance not grounded in Islamic *sharī'ah*.¹⁷

Within the framework of *al-siyāsah al-shar'īyyah*, Moh. Natsir viewed political authority as an instrument to achieve the public good (*maṣlaḥah*) of the Muslim community. This perspective aligns with classical Islamic political thought, such as that of al-Māwardī in *al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah*, who emphasized that political power in Islam is intended to preserve religion and administer worldly affairs based on the principles of justice and public interest.¹⁸ For Natsir, values such as *shūrā* (consultation), justice, and social responsibility constitute the ethical foundation for building a state that is not only legitimate under positive law but also meaningful within the framework of Islamic ethics. He rejected the symbolic formalization of *sharī'ah* in the form of an Islamic state, favoring instead a substantive approach that views Islam as a source of public ethics within a democratic system.¹⁹ His view aligns with contemporary thinkers such as Ismā'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī, who emphasized that the principle of *tanẓīd* should give rise to a governance system that is just, inclusive, and dynamic rather than a rigid theocratic state.²⁰

Meanwhile, S.M. Kartosuwiryo believed that only the laws of God have the legitimate authority to govern human life in its entirety. In the foundational texts of the *Darul Islam* movement, he referred to man-made laws as a form of rebellion

¹⁶ Al-Chaidar, *Pemikiran Politik Proklamator Negara Islam Indonesia S.M Kartosuwiryo: Fakta dan Data Sejarah Darul Islam* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Darul Falah, 1999), 515-516.

¹⁷ S. Soebardi, "Kartosuwiryo and the Darul Islam Rebellion in Indonesia," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 14, no. 1 (1983): 109–133, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463400009024>.

¹⁸ Roidatul Fikhriyah, 'Perspektif Al-Mawardi Konsep Negara Dan Kepemimpinan Dalam Islam Periode Klasik', *Rewang Rencang : Jurnal Hukum Lex Generalis* 6, no. 2 (2025): 1–17.

¹⁹ Audrey Kahin, *Islam, Nationalism, and Democracy: Political Biography of Mohammad Natsir* (Singapore: Natonal University of Singapore Press, 2012), 322-324.

²⁰ Ismā'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī, *AL TAWHĪD: Its Implications for Thought and Life* (the United States of America, 1992).

against divine sovereignty (*ṭāghūṭ*). Consequently, for Kartosuwiryo, the only legitimate form of state is an Islamic state that fully implements *shari‘ah* without compromise or accommodation of secular legal systems.²¹ Kartosuwiryo dismissed the *maqāṣid al-shari‘ah* approach, instead emphasizing a formalistic and legalistic interpretation of Islamic law. In his view, the state must be established entirely upon God’s law (*ḥukm Allāh*), without compromise. This perspective aligns with the doctrine of *ḥākimiyyah* promoted by revivalist scholars, yet stands in contrast to the thought of Ibn Taymiyyah, who underscored the centrality of justice as the core of Islamic governance. As Ibn Taymiyyah famously stated, “God will uphold a just state even if it is non-Muslim, and will destroy an unjust state even if it is Muslim”.²² In this context, Kartosuwiryo’s political ethics can be critiqued for neglecting justice as the core essence of Islamic governance.

Mohammad Natsir regarded the Qur’an and the Sunnah as foundational sources of moral values that guide political action, but not as texts to be codified into formal legislation.²³ He emphasized moral education and political ethics as priorities, rather than the symbolic formalization of religion within the state. This commitment to substantive Islamic ethics is clearly articulated in his various speeches and writings. In contrast, S.M. Kartosuwiryo understood Islamic political ethics as a form of direct obedience to the laws of God, which must be realized within the structure of the state. For Kartosuwiryo, the implementation of Islamic *shari‘ah* must encompass all aspects of governance, law, and social life, and cannot be substituted by democratic systems or human-made laws.²⁴ S.M. Kartosuwiryo rejected the existence of human-made laws, considering them a violation of divine principles and a form of misguidance (*ṭāghūṭ*). Within his framework, a state not founded upon Islamic *shari‘ah* is religiously illegitimate. This view illustrates that, for Kartosuwiryo, Islamic political ethics is not a matter of compromise between values and political realities but rather an uncompromising obligation demanding the full and concrete implementation of *shari‘ah*.

Mohammad Natsir demonstrated a more inclusive and dialogical attitude toward modern democratic systems. He argued that the principle of *shūrā* (consultation) in Islam aligns closely with modern democratic practices, particularly regarding popular participation and collective decision-making. For Natsir, democracy can serve as an effective means to implement Islamic values, provided it is guided by

²¹ Dijk, *Darul Islam Sebuah Pemberontakan*, 11.

²² Cep Gilang Fikri Ash-Shufi et al., “Konsep Pemimpin Adil Ibnu Taimiyah dan Relevansinya dengan Demokrasi Indonesia,” *Jurnal Tapis: Jurnal Teropong Aspirasi Politik Islam* 17, No. 1 (2021): 52–68, <https://doi.org/10.24042/Tps.V17i1.8601>.

²³ Mohamad Muzammil Noor, ‘Muhammad Natsir: Sumbangannya Terhadap Perjuangan Agama Dan Bangsa Di Indonesia’, *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 17, no. 1 (2022): 15–29, <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol17no1.2>.

²⁴ Aga Itbah Baiahaki, “Peran Kartosuwiryo Dalam Pembentukan Negara Islam Indonesia 1947-1962” (Skripsi, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, 2019), 4.

ethics and integrity.²⁵ Democracy is not antagonistic to Islam; rather, it provides a space that can be utilized to advance Islamic values peacefully, constitutionally, and civilly. Indirectly, Natsir's perspective can be regarded as a manifestation of *al-siyāsah al-shar'īyyah* within the context of contemporary state governance.

In contrast, Kartosuwiryo rejected democracy because he viewed it as granting sovereignty to humans rather than to God. He dismissed the principle of *shūrā* as a space for public participation, restricting political legitimacy solely to an elite group of religious scholars who comprehend *sharī'ah*. His rejection of the Republic of Indonesia's state system reflects an exclusive and confrontational political ethics approach, which contradicts the principle of *dar' al-mafāsīd muqaddam 'alā jalb al-maṣāliḥ* (the prevention of harm takes precedence over the pursuit of benefit).

Mohammad Natsir viewed political parties such as Masyumi as instruments of *dakwah* (Islamic propagation) to promote Islamic values within a constitutional framework. While he did not separate religion from politics, he firmly rejected the manipulation of religion for the sake of political power.²⁶ In this regard, he prioritized morality as the guiding principle in performing political roles, including within the parliamentary system.

S.M. Kartosuwiryo's political approach can be categorized as revolutionary and radical because he fundamentally rejected the legitimacy of the Republic of Indonesia's political system, which was established through national consensus. His revolutionary stance is evident in his choice to completely replace the existing state structure with a new system based on Islamic *sharī'ah*, rather than pursuing reform from within. The establishment of the Islamic State of Indonesia (NII) under his leadership not only signified a rejection of the secular system but also promoted the doctrine of *jihad* as both an ideological and military resistance against a state he deemed to have deviated from Islamic teachings. Within his political ethics framework, *jihad* was not merely a spiritual obligation but a strategic political tool to establish a pure Islamic government.²⁷ However, this strategy not only failed to achieve its objectives but also triggered prolonged conflicts, reinforced stigmatization of Islamic movements, and created tensions between militant Islamic groups and the state. Consequently, this approach resulted in social fragmentation and political violence that undermined national stability and weakened Islam's position within democratic public discourse.

In contrast, Mohammad Natsir offered a more moderate, constitutional, and peaceful approach to advocating for Islam in the political sphere. He believed that

²⁵ Tomi Agustian, 'Demokrasi Islam Dalam Pandangan Muhammad Natsir Dan Muhammad Abid Al-Jabiri', *EL-Ghiroh* 18, no. 01 (2020): 7–24, <https://doi.org/10.37092/el-ghiroh.v18i01.158>.

²⁶ Hafnita Sari Dewi Lubis and Muhammad Ihsan Syahaf Nasution, "Pengaruh Partai Politik Terhadap Konstruksi Pemikiran M. Natsir," *MUKADIMAH: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sejarah, Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 6, no. 1 (2022), 45, <https://doi.org/10.30743/mkd.v6i1.5027>.

²⁷ Endang Susanti, 'The Political Relevance of Kartosuwiryo's Hijrah in the Global Context: Inspiration for Struggle in the Modern Era', *Journal of Islamic History and Manuscript* 4, no. 1 (2025): 43–60, <https://doi.org/10.24090/jihm.v4i1.13073>.

Islamic values need not be pursued through violence but could instead be integrated into the state system through democratic mechanisms that are open to participation and consultation (*shūrā*).²⁸ Mohammad Natsir's approach reflects an adaptive capacity to Indonesia's pluralistic national context while upholding moral ethics in politics. His advocacy through the Masyumi Party signifies a conviction that political *dakwah* can be legitimately and peacefully conducted without compromising the fundamental principles of Islam.²⁹ Mohammad Natsir also demonstrated that Islam is not inherently opposed to democracy, provided that the democratic system operates within ethical boundaries and aims to realize social justice for all people.

The differing approaches of Moh Natsir and S.M. Kartosuwiryo have had significant impacts on the development of Islamic politics in Indonesia. Moh Natsir successfully constructed a narrative that Islam can play a constructive role in national politics without rejecting the existing system; indeed, it can even strengthen it through positive contributions. His constitutional and inclusive approach demonstrated that Islam and democracy can coexist harmoniously within a pluralistic state framework. In contrast, Kartosuwiryo's exclusive and confrontational approach closed off spaces for dialogue, marginalized the Islamic movement from the mainstream national discourse, and triggered horizontal conflicts that negatively affected social cohesion and national resilience.

Both figures have left a significant intellectual legacy within the discourse of Islamic politics in Indonesia. Mohammad Natsir, with his moral-substantive political ethics, and S.M. Kartosuwiryo, with his formalistic *shari'ah*-based approach, represent two opposing extremes. In today's national and democratic context—where pluralism, tolerance, and constitutional supremacy serve as fundamental pillars—Natsir's approach appears more relevant, as it upholds Islamic values while respecting diversity and constitutional order. From the normative perspective of Islamic political ethics, Natsir's approach aligns more closely with the ideals of *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* and *al-siyāsah al-shar'iyyah*, which hold that the state must ensure justice, public welfare, and social stability within an Islamic ethical framework. Conversely, Kartosuwiryo's emphasis on rigid legalism and rejection of contextual *ijtihād* render his political ethics difficult to apply in the pluralistic and democratic sociological realities of Indonesian society.

Within the framework of strengthening the political thought of Moh. Natsir and S.M. Kartosuwiryo, the Islamic political philosophy developed by Ismā'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī provides a relevant philosophical foundation for understanding how these two figures interpret justice, the state, human nature, and their approaches to *nash* (scriptural texts) and *ijtihād* (independent reasoning). Al-Fārūqī emphasizes that Islamic politics is not merely the literal application of revealed texts but an ethical process that

²⁸ Abdullah Firdaus et al., 'Pemikiran Politik Dan Kenegaraan Mohammad Natsir', *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 7, no. 1 (2015): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.07.2015.001>.

²⁹ Lubis and Nasution, 'Pengaruh Partai Politik Terhadap Konstruksi Pemikiran M. Natsir'. 45-52.

integrates transcendental values into social reality in a contextual and rational manner. In this context, the concept of justice (*'adālah*) is understood not only as formal obedience to divine law but as the embodiment of moral values that ensure a balance between individual rights, collective responsibilities, and the public welfare.³⁰

Mohammad Natsir interprets justice in line with al-Fārūqī's concept, viewing it as an ethical-spiritual principle that must be realized through a just, rational, and inclusive political mechanism. For Natsir, democracy and *shūrā* (consultation) are not adversaries of Islam but means to achieve participation and accountability in fulfilling the objectives of *sharī'ah*, such as the protection of religion, life, intellect, property, and lineage. In contrast, S.M. Kartosuwiryo adopts a legalistic understanding of justice, emphasizing absolute obedience to God's law without consideration for social context or societal plurality. According to al-Fārūqī, this approach contradicts the essence of Islamic justice because it disregards the flexibility of *ijtihād* and excludes the community's participation in formulating laws relevant to their lived realities.³¹

The fundamental difference between Natsir and Kartosuwiryo can also be observed in their ontological views of the state and human nature. In al-Fārūqī's political philosophy, humans are regarded as *khalīfah* moral agents endowed with reason, responsibility, and freedom to realize divine values within socio-political life. The state, from this perspective, is not an end (*ghāyah*) but an ethical instrument (*wasīlah*) designed to establish justice and public welfare (*maṣlahah*). Mohammad Natsir aligns closely with this view, perceiving the state as a means rather than a goal, and positioning humans as rational and moral actors in political decision-making.³² In contrast, Kartosuwiryo conceives the state as a theological entity that must submit entirely to divine law, minimizing the role of humans as rational agents. This political ontology tends to position humans passively and suppresses the dialogical dynamics between scriptural texts and social reality.

Their differing orientations toward *nash* (scriptural texts) and *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) further clarify their political divergence. Natsir adopts a contextual *ijtihād* approach, allowing for dynamic interpretation of revealed texts in response to contemporary needs. This aligns with al-Fārūqī's emphasis on *ijtihād* as a rational mechanism for creatively and responsibly Islamizing knowledge and social order. For Natsir, Islam is not merely a legal system but also a living public ethics that operates within a pluralistic social space.³³ Meanwhile, Kartosuwiryo tends to close off the space for *ijtihād* and adheres strictly to a literal reading of *nash*, equating Islamic

³⁰ Fārūqī, AL TAWHĪD: Its Implications for Thought and Life, 46.

³¹ Muhammad Taufiki and Gilang Rizki Aji Putra, 'Konsep Ijtihad Imam Asy-Syaukani', *ADALAH* 6, no. 1 (2022): 35–42, <https://doi.org/10.15408/adalah.v6i1.26568>.

³² Rodliyah Khuza'i et al., "Study of Muhammad Natsir Thoughts About Dakwah Harakah," paper presented at 2nd Social and Humaniora Research Symposium (SoRes 2019), Bandung, Indonesia, *Proceedings of the 2nd Social and Humaniora Research Symposium (SoRes 2019)*, Atlantis Press, 2020, 557–561, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200225.121>.

³³ Firdaus et al., "Pemikiran Politik dan Kenegaraan Mohammad Natsir," 2015, 9.

politics with the total and formal enforcement of *shari'ah*. From al-Fārūqī's perspective, such an approach leads to ahistoricism and freezes Islamic ethics into rigid political dogma, ultimately becoming counterproductive to the aspirations of Islamic civilization itself.

Thus, through the perspective of Ismā'il Rājī al-Fārūqī, it can be asserted that Mohammad Natsir's political approach better reflects a rational, contextual, and functional Islamic political ethics. He integrates revelation and reason within the framework of *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* and progressive *al-siyāsah al-shar'iyyah*. In contrast, S.M. Kartosuwiryo's legalistic and exclusive approach contradicts the spirit of Islamic political philosophy, which emphasizes substantive justice, ethical participation, and social responsibility within the framework of human *ḵhalīfah*.

Mohammad Natsir and S.M. Kartosuwiryo's Perspectives on the Relationship Between Islam, the State, and Power

Mohammad Natsir's view on the relationship between Islam and the state is grounded in a mature understanding of Indonesia's pluralistic and diverse socio-political reality. He starts from the conviction that the state is essentially a neutral space a vessel that can accommodate various values, including Islamic values as long as it upholds the principles of justice, popular participation, and the supremacy of law.³⁴ For Mohammad Natsir, Islam does not need to be realized in the form of a formal Islamic state. Rather, what is more important is how the core values of Islamic teachings such as justice, equality, honesty, and social responsibility can be internalized within the structures and practices of modern governance. Thus, in his view, Islam and the state are not two opposing entities but can synergize through moral, ethical, and constitutional approaches.

To gain a deeper understanding of the divergent paradigms of Islamic political ethics between Mohammad Natsir and S.M. Kartosuwiryo, a systematic approach grounded in key thematic categories within Islamic political discourse is necessary. Both figures emerged from the modernist Islamic movement but evolved to represent two contrasting poles of thought: constitutionalism and revolutionary activism. Their differences are not merely methodological but extend to fundamental aspects such as concepts of democracy, power, law, and plurality.

1. Views on Democracy and Sovereignty

Mohammad Natsir views the democratic system not as a threat to the existence of Islam, but rather as an opportunity to channel Islamic aspirations and values legally and peacefully. He argues that democracy, particularly in the form of *musyawarah* (consultation), aligns closely with Islamic principles.³⁵ Therefore, he actively employed

³⁴ Irwan Iskandar, "Pemikiran Politik Muhammad Natsir Tentang Hubungan Islam dan Negara," *Jurnal Transnasional* 6, no. 2 (2015): 1755–1770.

³⁵ Kahin, *Islam, Nationalism, and Democracy: Political Biography of Mohammad Natsir*.

democracy as a means of *dakwah* and political struggle through parties such as Masyumi. He demonstrated that political participation is not a form of ideological compromise but rather a strategic approach to expanding Islamic influence in the public sphere without violating the constitution or causing national disintegration.³⁶

In contrast, S.M. Kartosuwiryo regarded democracy as a system theologically incompatible with Islamic teachings because it places sovereignty in the hands of humans rather than God. He believed that democratic mechanisms, particularly legislative processes, have the potential to produce laws deviating from divine revelation. Consequently, he rejected the democratic system and advocated for the *imāmah* system a singular government based entirely on Islamic *shari'ah*.³⁷

The divergent views of Natsir and Kartosuwiryo reflect the tension between integrative and exclusive approaches within Islamic politics. Natsir presents a dialogical model that is adaptive to the modern political context, whereas Kartosuwiryo advocates for a rigid and doctrinaire system. Within the framework of a pluralistic democratic state, Natsir's model is more applicable and compatible for integrating Islamic ethics into the political system without causing social disintegration. For Mohammad Natsir, power or sovereignty is a trust (*amanah*) from God that must be responsibly accounted for, both morally and socially.³⁸ Power is not the ultimate goal but a means to realize justice and the public good. Therefore, Natsir emphasized principles such as consultation (*musyawarah*), accountability, and transparency in governance. This perspective positions politics as a form of worship (*'ibadah*) that must be conducted with the highest integrity.

Meanwhile, S.M. Kartosuwiryo believed that power does not originate from the people but solely from God. Within this framework, popular sovereignty in a democratic system is viewed as contradictory to true Islamic principles. Authority is legitimate only if exercised in accordance with *shari'ah* law, and obedience to leaders is valid only when they uphold God's law. This belief justifies the authoritarian approach he established within the Negara Islam Indonesia (NII) system.³⁹

Natsir's perspective provides a foundation for a political ethic grounded in moral and participatory principles, which is highly relevant for building a clean and civilized system of governance. In contrast, Kartosuwiryo's approach carries the risk of leading to an authoritarian theocratic system with limited space for criticism. In the

³⁶ Lubis and Nasution, "Pengaruh Partai Politik Terhadap Konstruksi Pemikiran M. Natsir," 46.

³⁷ Carissa Almaasah Budita, "Dinamika Politik dalam Pembentukan Negara Islam Indonesia Tahun 1949-1962," *JEJAK : Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah & Sejarah* 3, no. 1 (2023): 97–110, <https://doi.org/10.22437/jejak.v3i1.24833>.

³⁸ Prasetyo, "Pemikiran Mohammad Natsir Tentang Ideologisasi Islam Di Indonesia Tahun 1949-1959," 199–212.

³⁹ Baiahaki, "Peran Kartosuwiryo dalam Pembentukan Negara Islam Indonesia 1947-1962."

context of a democratic and pluralistic Indonesia, Natsir's approach offers greater potential for consolidating religious values with modern political practices.

2. Perspectives on Legal Justice

In the field of law, Mohammad Natsir demonstrated a moderate, adaptive, and contextual stance. He did not reject national law *a priori*, as long as its substance did not contradict the core principles of Islamic teachings. For Natsir, national law could serve as a medium to integrate Islamic values through constitutional and persuasive means. He emphasized the importance of reforming the existing legal system from within, rather than replacing it through revolutionary measures. This approach reflected Natsir's deep understanding of Indonesia's pluralistic and multicultural society, in which the Islamic struggle must align with values of harmony and openness. Through a dialogical and ethical approach, Natsir sought to strengthen the moral foundations of the law without clashing with the state ideology and existing constitution.⁴⁰

In contrast, S.M. Kartosuwiryo adopted a far more exclusive and radical perspective regarding national law. For him, any form of law not directly derived from Islamic sharia was considered *hukm taghut* man-made law deemed to deviate from the will of God and therefore lacking legitimacy. Within this framework of legal and political reform, there was no room for compromise or gradual implementation. Kartosuwiryo outrightly rejected the existence of national law, viewing it as an instrument of secular power that must be completely replaced by the Islamic legal system.⁴¹ This perspective led him to reject the principle of legal pluralism and disregard the sociological reality of Indonesian society, which is diverse in terms of cultural and religious backgrounds.

Natsir's legal approach demonstrates methodological flexibility, allowing Islam to adapt within the framework of a modern rule-of-law state. In contrast, Kartosuwiryo promotes a rigid and confrontational legalistic approach. Within the context of contemporary Islamic legal development, Natsir's approach proves more compatible with efforts to formalize Islamic values in a democratic and pluralistic manner, effectively bridging the discourse between *fiqh* and public policy.

3. Perspective on Pluralism

In terms of pluralism, Mohammad Natsir exhibited an inclusive and visionary outlook. He recognized that the diversity of religions, ethnicities, and cultures is part of *sunnatullah* God's will and decree in creating human beings with differences. Therefore, pluralism is not a threat but a potential strength that must be approached

⁴⁰ Nurul Cahyani, 'Implementasi Pemikiran Mohammad Natsir', *Jurnal Civicus* 17, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/DOI:https://doi.org/10.17509/civicus.v17i2.5226>.

⁴¹ Anwar Sanusi et al., 'Hijrah and Islamic Movement in Indonesia: Sekarmaji Marijan Kartosuwiryo's Perspective', *Buletin Al-Turas* 28, no. 1 (2022): 19–30, <https://doi.org/10.15408/bat.v28i1.21486>.

with wisdom through tolerance, mutual respect, and interfaith dialogue. Natsir did not use Islam as a tool to divide the nation, but rather as a moral foundation for national life. Consequently, he never advocated for the formalization of religion as the sole identity of the state, but emphasized the importance of promoting Islam's universal values within the framework of Pancasila.⁴²

In contrast, S.M. Kartosuwiryo viewed pluralism as an obstacle to the establishment of an ideal Islamic society. He believed that only Islamic *sharia* is legitimate and worthy of serving as the foundation of the state, while other political and legal systems including democracy and pluralism were seen as deviations from divine sovereignty. In his political vision, the ideal state is ideologically homogeneous, in which *sharia* constitutes the sole source of law, leaving no space for differing perspectives or beliefs.⁴³ This perspective led him to reject all forms of political thought and legal systems that differed from his own even resorting to violence when deemed necessary. Such an approach ultimately provoked prolonged horizontal conflicts within society.

Natsir's inclusive attitude toward pluralism reflects the maturity of Islamic political thought that aligns with national principles and the constitution. His approach opens space for Islam to serve as a moral force within a multicultural society. In contrast, Kartosuwiryo's vision tends to foster political exclusivism, which is difficult to implement in the context of a modern, pluralistic state. From the perspective of contemporary Islamic political ethics, Natsir's approach offers a more adaptive foundation for addressing the challenges of diversity in the era of globalization.

From the above discussion, it is evident that Natsir and Kartosuwiryo represent two fundamentally different poles in the discourse of Islamic political thought in Indonesia. Natsir advocated for an ethical-constitutional approach that was inclusive and moderate, while Kartosuwiryo promoted a theocratic vision that was exclusive and revolutionary. In the context of a democratic and pluralistic state, Natsir's approach has proven to be more compatible and relevant, as it upholds national unity while peacefully and legally internalizing Islamic values. Meanwhile, Kartosuwiryo's thought is important to study as a historical expression of the ideological anxiety felt by segments of the Muslim community toward the secular system, although his approach ultimately provoked conflict and lacked adaptability to Indonesia's diverse society.

Ethical Consequences for the Concept of State and Democracy

Mohammad Natsir's view of the modern state is rooted in his conviction that Islam is a source of ethical values that can be integrated into political life without necessarily taking the form of a formal Islamic state. For Natsir, the state does not

⁴² Andar Nubowo, "Islam dan Pancasila di Era Reformasi: Sebuah Reorientasi Aksi," *Jurnal Keamanan Nasional* 1, no. 1 (2015): 61–78.

⁴³ Chiara Formichi, *Islam and The Making of The Nation: Kartosuwiryo and Political Islam in 20th Century Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012), 538.

have to be theocratic; rather, it should remain open to Islamic values through democratic and constitutional channels. This perspective aligns with Indonesia's ideals as a pluralistic nation that acknowledges the existence of diverse religions and cultures. Natsir's concept of the state is oriented toward social justice, equal citizenship, and the rule of law principles grounded in religious morality.⁴⁴

Conversely, S.M. Kartosuwiryo completely rejected the concept of a nation-state that is not founded upon Islamic law (sharia). He advocated for an Islamic state in which sharia serves as the sole source of law. Within this framework, the state is viewed as an extension of God's will rather than a product of social consensus. Democracy and pluralism are perceived as deviations from the principle of *hakimiyyah*, the absolute sovereignty of God in political life.⁴⁵ The consequence of Natsir's view is the emergence of an inclusive model of the Islamic state that respects diversity. Moh Natsir supported religious freedom, minority rights, and popular participation in governance.⁴⁶ He believed that Islam could coexist with democracy, as long as the substance of its values was preserved. This approach aligns closely with the multicultural and pluralistic character of Indonesia.

On the other hand, the consequence of S.M. Kartosuwiryo's thought is the emergence of an exclusive state that leaves no room for differences. He considered the existence of any legal system other than sharia as a form of rebellion against God. Therefore, the state must be governed solely by devout Muslims who are committed to enforcing God's law.⁴⁷ This approach tends to close the door to political compromise and generates conflict with both non-Muslim groups and Muslims who hold different views.

Moh Natsir realizes that the democratic system is a strategic way to fight for Islamic values constitutionally.⁴⁸ He did not reject democracy, but rather adapted it into the context of Islamic ethics. For him, deliberation is a form of Islamization of democracy that is in accordance with the participatory spirit. In this framework, democracy is not just a political mechanism, but also a moral vehicle to realize justice and benefits. On the contrary, Kartosuwiryo considers democracy as a deviant system because it places humans as the source of law. In his various writings and statements, he rejected the legitimacy of the majority vote in determining the law. For him, only

⁴⁴ Ris'an Rusli, "The State Concept: The Political Thinking of Mohammad Natsir," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 13, no. 1 (2018): 105-117, <https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.06.2018.010>.

⁴⁵ Am, "Pemikiran S.M. Kartosoewiryo Tentang Negara Republik Indonesia," 357-378.

⁴⁶ Agustian, "Demokrasi Islam dalam Pandangan Muhammad Natsir dan Muhammad Abid Al-Jabiri," 7-24.

⁴⁷ Miftakhur Ridlo, "Negara Islam Indonesia dan Kartosuwiryo (Konsepsi Gerakan Politik, Militer dan Agama)," *Humanistika: Jurnal Keislaman* 5, no. 2 (2019): 13-34.

⁴⁸ Wisly Wahab, "Muhammad Natsir's Thought on Correlation of Religion and State," *JURNAL AL-AQIDAH* 14, no. 2 (2022): 174-182, <https://doi.org/10.15548/ja.v14i2.4944>.

revelation that is worthy of being used as a source of law and a democratic system will only lead people away from divine truth.⁴⁹

The ethical consequences of Moh Natsir's view show how Islam can play an active role in shaping the modern state without having to impose the formalization of religion. Natsir promotes an inclusive and substantive approach, in which Islamic values are integrated into the state system through constitutional and dialogical channels. He does not question the form of the state based on the principles of justice, participation, and freedom of religion guaranteed within the framework of national law. His support for Pancasila as the basis of the state shows a moderate and realistic attitude as long as Pancasila is not used as an instrument to erode the faith of Muslims, then it can become a common forum that unites all components of the nation. In addition, Natsir in his speech said that the basis of the state must be something that is alive, carried out every day, and easy to understand so that the country also becomes solid with the foundation and is not swayed and fragile.⁵⁰ This approach opens up space for Muslims to coexist harmoniously with other groups in the spirit of unity and equality of citizenship rights⁵¹. Such political ethics emphasizes morality and social responsibility as the main foundation, not the imposition of a single identity that can actually divide the nation.

Conversely, the ethical consequences of S.M. Kartosuwiryo's political approach created a far more confrontational and exclusionary dynamic. By rejecting the concept of a state not founded upon Islamic law, Kartosuwiryo chose the path of armed resistance by proclaiming the Islamic State of Indonesia (NII). He viewed the Republic of Indonesia as a secular entity in opposition to divine law, and therefore illegitimate from a theological perspective. This stance led to the emergence of a separatist movement that not only challenged the legitimacy of the national government but also triggered horizontal conflicts and social disintegration across several regions particularly in West Java, Central Java, and parts of Sulawesi. His radical approach sacrificed numerous lives and caused widespread suffering among civilians, while simultaneously tarnishing the image of the Islamic movement itself.⁵² In the context of political ethics, Kartosuwiryo's attitude not only undermines national stability, but also closes the door to dialogue and compromise, which is actually the core of Islamic ethics in building a peaceful social order.

In political practice, Moh Natsir demonstrated a mature understanding of democratic ethics. He was active in parliament, maintained dialogue with non-Muslim groups, and upheld a moderate stance in articulating Islamic aspirations. His vision of

⁴⁹ Am, "Pemikiran S.M. Kartosoewirjo Tentang Negara Republik Indonesia," 357–78.

⁵⁰ Mohammad Natsir, *Islam as the Basis of the State: Speech at the Constituent Plenary Session on November 12, 1957* (Bandung: Segi Arsyi, 2004).

⁵¹ Nubowo, "Islam and Pancasila in the Reform Era: A Reorientation of Action."

⁵² Budita, "Dinamika Politik dalam Pembentukan Negara Islam Indonesia Tahun 1949-1962," 97–110.

the state was that of a civil entity open to the contributions of diverse religious and ideological communities, as long as they operated within the framework of law. This reflects Natsir's conception of the state as an ethical space, not as an instrument for the domination of any particular religion.⁵³ On the contrary, S.M. Kartosuwiryo rejected the parliamentary and constitutional path. He sees armed struggle as the only way to establish an Islamic state. His political ideas separated Islam from the concept of a national state and knew no compromise. As a result, the idea of the state in his view is difficult to apply in a pluralistic society and tends to have the potential for conflict.

Theoretically, Moh Natsir's thinking provides a more adaptive model of political Islam and oriented towards morality, not power. He points out that in a democratic country, Islam does not have to be structurally dominant to be substantially influential. This approach opens up space for Islam to develop in society without causing structural conflicts. On the contrary, the consequences of Kartosuwiryo's thinking are difficult to implement in the modern state order. The country he dreams of is theocratic, authoritarian, and leaves no room for opposition. This concept not only contradicts the reality of the plurality of Indonesian society, but also makes it difficult for national integration. Therefore, ethically, Natsir's approach is more compatible for the context of a pluralistic and democratic Indonesia.

The Relevance of Moh Natsir and S.M. Kartosuwiryo's Thought in Contemporary Islamic Politics

Moh Natsir's Islamic political thought continues to exert a strong influence on contemporary Islamic political dynamics in Indonesia. His moderate, constitutional, and non-confrontational approach has provided a solid foundation for modern Islamic political parties such as the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and the United Development Party (PPP). These parties do not pursue the formal establishment of an Islamic state; instead, they strive to embed Islamic values as an ethical foundation within the functioning democratic system.⁵⁴ This shows that Natsir's da'wah and political strategies remain relevant and have been successfully adopted widely.

In practice, many modern Islamic political strategies follow the pattern of Moh Natsir's struggle. He never separated religion from the state, yet consistently upheld pluralism and constitutionalism. This approach is reflected in the da'wah style of Islamic political parties that focus on community empowerment, education, anti-corruption efforts, and family strengthening rather than on the formalization of sharia. Natsir viewed democracy not as a foreign system, but as a legitimate platform to promote Islamic values through deliberation (*musyawarah*) and political representation.⁵⁵

⁵³ Rusli, 'The State Concept'.

⁵⁴ Lubis and Nasution, 'Pengaruh Partai Politik Terhadap Konstruksi Pemikiran M. Natsir'.

⁵⁵ Bruinessen, *Contemporary Development in Indonesian Islam, Explaining the "Conservative Turn"*.

Conversely, S.M. Kartosuwiryo's conception of an Islamic state and his rejection of democracy have found limited resonance within the mainstream political discourse in contemporary Indonesia. His theocratic vision, which asserts that the state must be governed solely by divine law, has been more prominently adopted by transnational Islamist groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). This group explicitly rejects democratic principles, viewing them as incompatible with the doctrine of *hakimiyyah* (sovereignty of God), and instead advocates for the establishment of a global *caliphate* as the only legitimate form of governance in Islam. Within the framework of Indonesia's pluralistic and constitutional democracy, such ideologies remain marginalized and are widely perceived as a threat to national unity and the foundational values of Pancasila.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, S.M. Kartosuwiryo's confrontational and exclusivist approach failed to gain broad political legitimacy. In the context of a pluralistic society like Indonesia, the idea of replacing the democratic system with a *caliphate* is widely perceived as a threat to national diversity and stability. The Indonesian government officially banned Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) in 2017, citing its incompatibility with *Pancasila* and the national constitution. This development underscores that Kartosuwiryo's political vision was largely utopian and unresponsive to the socio-political realities of the Indonesian nation-state.⁵⁷

Mohammad Natsir's approach to Islamic politics was more substantive than symbolic. Rather than advocating for the formal establishment of an Islamic state, he emphasized the internalization of Islamic values within the existing national framework. In his view, *Pancasila* and democracy were not inherently contradictory to Islamic teachings, as long as core principles such as justice, honesty, and deliberation (*musyawarah*) were upheld. This approach gained broad public acceptance as it offered a middle path between Islamic ideals and national identity.⁵⁸

Natsir's thoughts are also the main inspiration for large Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah, which chose the path of da'wah and socio-politics within the framework of democracy. These organizations do not demand the formal implementation of sharia, but continue to contribute to strengthening the quality of life of the community through education, health services, and social advocacy. This reflects the spirit of Islamic politics that is grounded and applicative, as initiated by Moh Natsir.

Meanwhile, the influence of S.M. Kartosuwiryo is more evident among marginal groups or underground movements with an exclusive orientation. His approach, which did not accommodate pluralism or political participation, failed to gain traction within Indonesia's democratic political system. Kartosuwiryo emphasized

⁵⁶ Irfan S. Awwas, *Jejak Jihad Kartosuwiryo: Mengungkap Fakta yang Didustakan* (Yogyakarta: Uswah, 2008).

⁵⁷ Am, "Pemikiran S.M. Kartosoewirjo Tentang Negara Republik Indonesia," 357–378.

⁵⁸ Kahin, *Islam, Nationalism, and Democracy: Political Biography of Mohammad Natsir*.

absolute loyalty to *sharia* while rejecting the concept of popular sovereignty. In the long term, this stance contributed to the emergence of radical movements that stand in opposition to the foundational principles of a democratic state.⁵⁹

Moh Natsir's political thinking is actually a balance between Islamic values and modern political reality. It provides a theoretical framework for the integration of Islam into democracy without sacrificing religious principles. Contemporary Islamic parties operating in an electoral democratic system have made Natsir's thought a model of struggle that is legal, rational, and in accordance with the constitution.⁶⁰

In contemporary reality, the success of Islamic political parties in Indonesia largely depends on their ability to interpret the prevailing socio-political context. An inclusive and accommodative approach, as exemplified by Moh. Natsir, has proven resilient and significantly contributive to national development. Natsir demonstrated that Islamic politics need not be equated with the pursuit of power but can function as a form of public ethics that guides policymaking. In contrast, the totalistic Islamic state vision promoted by S.M. Kartosuwiryo has failed to adapt to Indonesia's diverse social landscape. His outright rejection of democracy and constitutionalism has rendered his ideas less relevant in the context of modern political systems. Even when revived by extremist groups, this approach tends to incite horizontal conflict and social fragmentation.

Therefore, in the context of contemporary Islamic politics in Indonesia, Moh. Natsir's approach has gained broader acceptance and legitimacy. He succeeded in harmonizing Islamic values with the modern nation-state system without compromising the core teachings of the religion. His moderate and inclusive stance has proven effective in accommodating diversity and preserving social cohesion within a pluralistic society. As a result, Natsir's thought remains highly relevant as a primary reference in the discourse on Islamic politics in the democratic era.

Conversely, S.M. Kartosuwiryo remains a significant symbol in the historical narrative of political Islamic resistance. However, his ideas are not easily accommodated within Indonesia's contemporary political system, which upholds pluralism, constitutionalism, and tolerance. Consequently, research and scholarly assessments indicate that an Islamic political ethic grounded in constitutionalism and inclusivity as exemplified by Moh. Natsir proves to be more adaptive and sustainable within Indonesia's democratic society.

CLOSING

The Islamic political thought of Moh. Natsir and S.M. Kartosuwiryo represents two divergent approaches in interpreting the relationship between Islam and the state.

⁵⁹ Budita, "Dinamika Politik dalam Pembentukan Negara Islam Indonesia Tahun 1949-1962," 97-110.

⁶⁰ Firdaus et al., "Pemikiran Politik dan Kenegaraan Mohammad Natsir," 2015.

Natsir views democracy as an ethical and constitutional means to peacefully promote Islamic values, while also recognizing pluralism as a social reality that must be respected within the framework of Islamic principles. In contrast, Kartosuwiryo emphasizes the implementation of a theocratic system based on sharia as the ideal model of Islamic governance and considers modern democracy incompatible with the absolute submission to divine law. This fundamental difference is also reflected in their respective views on power, law, and justice: Natsir advocates for popular participation and inclusive public ethics, whereas Kartosuwiryo leans toward an exclusive and confrontational approach against the prevailing political system. These findings make a significant contribution to clarifying the paradigm of postcolonial Islamic political ethics in Indonesia. Theoretically, this study enriches the understanding of the diverse orientations in interpreting the interplay between sharia, the state, and society. In the context of a democratic and pluralistic nation-state, Natsir's thought is more compatible and relevant for constructing a just and inclusive political order. Meanwhile, Kartosuwiryo's ideas challenge the mainstream by offering an alternative framework for considering the nexus between Islam and statehood. Looking ahead, future research may be expanded by comparing the ideas of Natsir and Kartosuwiryo with other figures such as Abdurrahman Wahid or Hasan al-Turabi. Such comparisons would deepen the discourse on the synthesis of Islam, democracy, and nationalism, and provide broader perspectives for the development of contemporary Islamic political ethics in Indonesia

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