

BEYOND SHARIA AND SECULARISM Political Pluralism and Multiculturalism in the Concept of *Dār al-Mīthāq*

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Abstract: The relationship between religion and the state in Indonesia remains a perennial hot topic, never growing stale over time. This study examines the nexus between religion and the state through the lens of political pluralism and multiculturalism, focusing on the *dār al-Mīthāq* concept put forward by Ma'ruf Amin. The urgency of this research arises from Indonesia's diverse socio-political dynamics and the threat of extremist ideologies endangering national unity. Employing a qualitative method with a normative-analytical approach, the study draws on library research and the analysis of both historical and contemporary documents. The findings demonstrate that *dār al-mīthāq* constructs a covenant-based constitutional framework that redefines the state as a religiously grounded consensus, integrating faith, justice, and tolerance within a plural society while simultaneously revealing its limitation as a form of normative multiculturalism that insufficiently addresses structural inequality and recognition gaps. These results underscore that applying the principles of political pluralism can serve as a strategic solution to ideological conflicts, while requiring a shift toward critical multiculturalism to ensure substantive equality and inclusive participation.

Keywords: Critical multiculturalism, *dār al-mīthāq*, national consensus, political pluralism, religious moderation.

Introduction

The post-World War II era initiated a global wave of decolonization, compelling nascent sovereign entities to navigate the complex synthesis of Western governance frameworks and indigenous traditional legacies. In the Indonesian context, the ontological tension between religious conviction and political administration remains the

pivotal challenge in state-building, characterized by a persistent intellectual negotiation regarding the locus of Islam within a modern nation-state structure.¹ Founding fathers of the nation debated the issues a lot in the early days of the republic.² While modernization has intensified the friction between Sharia and contemporary institutional forms, the Indonesian constitutional landscape operates on a unique premise where the state serves as a functional human construct, yet remains spiritually anchored in religious values.³ This intricate symbiosis has gained heightened significance in the *Reformasi* era, as diverse political actors continuously recalibrate the boundaries between transcendental faith and civil governance within a democratic pluralistic framework.⁴

Furthermore, the intersection of Islam and the state serves as a fundamental analytical site for understanding the non-secularized nature of Indonesian social phenomena, where religious morality and executive power are functionally integrated to pursue collective societal objectives.⁵ In the contemporary millennial landscape, however, this

¹ Kunawi Basyir, "Ideologi Gerakan Politik Islam di Indonesia," *Al-Tabrir* 16 (2016): 1–24. See also Ravico, "Dinamika Relasi Islam dan Negara: Tinjauan Terhadap Kelompok Modernis Dan Neo Modernis," *Ampera: A Research Journal on Politics and Islamic Civilization* 3, no. 02 (2022): 92–101, <https://doi.org/10.19109/ampera.v3i02.11984>.

² Idris Thaha, Ismatu Ropi, and Saiful Umam, "Religion and the Identity of Independent Indonesia: A Study on Religious Narratives According to the Founding Fathers," *Ulumuna* 28, no. 2 SE-Articles (2024), <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v28i2.-916>.

³ Pepen Irpan Fauzan and Ahmad Khoiril Fata, "Model Penerapan Syariah Dalam Negara Modern (Studi Kasus Arab Saudi, Iran, Turki, Dan Indonesia)," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 12, no. 1 (2018): 51–70, <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v12i1.1328>. Yayang Nuraini Zulfiani and Suwardi Maninggesa, "The Role of Religion in The Constitutions of Indonesia and Pakistan: Comparison of Islamic Constitutional Law," *Mimbar Keadilan* 15, no. 2 (2022): 37–49. See also Nor Hasan, "Agama Dan Kekuasaan Politik Negara," *Karsa: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Keislaman* 22, no. 2 (2015): 260, <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v22i2.532>.

⁴ Muntoha, "Religion and State Relation in Perspective of Indonesian Islamic Organization in Reformation Era," *Millah* 12, no. 2 (2016): 579–92, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.volxii.iss2.art12>. See also A Jufri, "Konsepsi Politik Islam Dan Realitas Relasi Islam Dan Negara Di Indonesia Pascareformasi," *Farabi: Jurnal Pemikiran Konstruktif Bidang Filsafat Dan Dakwah* 18, no. 2 (2018): 42–55.

⁵ Adang Sonjaya and Budi Rahayu Diningrat, "Relasi Agama Dan Politik Di Indonesia," *JCIC* 5, no. 1 (2023): 21–28, <https://doi.org/10.51486/jbo.v5i1.82>. Hamsah Hasan, "Hubungan Islam Dan Negara: Merespons Wacana Politik Islam

relationship is frequently contested through the instrumentalization of religion in political arenas, necessitating a sophisticated multiculturalist framework to prevent social polarization⁶ and interfaith friction.⁷ Indonesia's adherence to its four national pillars, *Pancasila*, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, NKRI, and the 1945 Constitution offers a technical resolution to this dialectic by binding citizens geographically to the state while preserving their spiritual autonomy.⁸ Consequently, *Pancasila* functions as a unifying "middle path" (*kalimah sawā*); it establishes a non-theocratic yet non-secular entity that rejects a single-religion basis while simultaneously guaranteeing theistic freedom, ensuring that religious values actively reinforce national morality within a secure legal environment.⁹

Kontemporer Di Indonesia," *Al-Ahkam* 1, no. 25 (2015): 19, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ahkam.2015.1.25.192>. Muzayyin Ahyar and Alfitri, "Aksi Bela Islam: Islamic Clicktivism and the New Authority of Religious Propaganda in the Millennial Age Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v9i1>. See also Arskal Salim, *Challenging the Secular State: The Islamization of Law in Modern Indonesia* (2008) <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.46-6446>.

⁶ Aretsa Zana Ayunda et al., "Tantangan Multikulturalisme Di Indonesia: Menyoal Relasi Agama Dan Ruang Publik," *Alsyls: Jurnal Keislaman Dan Ilmu Pendidikan* 2, no. 1 (2022): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.58578/alsys.v2i1.138>. See also Nuril Fajri, "Diskursus Kontestasi Agama Dan Negara: Reposisi Tauhid Sosial Dan Nilai-Nilai Pancasila," *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama* 14, no. 1 (2020): 1–20.

⁷ Rumadi, "Speaking the Unspeakable: The Status of 'Non-Muslims' in Indonesia Speaking the Unspeakable: The Status of 'Non-Muslims in Indonesia,'" *Samarub Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 6 (2023): 734–56, <https://doi.org/10.22373/-sjhk.v6i2.13576>; Roni Tabroni et al., "Urban Chinese Muslims And State Politics: A Historical Analysis of Chinese Muslim Citizenship in the New Order Era," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 19 (2025): 48, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2025.19.1.48-71>.

⁸ Hayatun Na'imah and Bahjatul Mardhiah, "Perda Berbasis Syariah Dan Hubungan Negara-Agama Dalam Perspektif Pancasila," *Mazhabib: Jurnal Pemikiran Hukum Islam* XV, no. 2 (2016): 151–67; Hamdi Putra Ahmad, "Relasi Ideo-Historis Antara Hukum Negara Dan Hukum Islam Di Indonesia," *In Riqth: Jurnal Agama Dan Hak Azazi Manusia* 11, no. 1 (2022): 1, <https://doi.org/10.14421/inright.v11i1.1779>. See also Sukri Tamma and Timo Duile, "Indigeneity and the State in Indonesia: The Local Turn in the Dialectic of Recognition," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 39, no. 2 (2020): 270–89, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1868103420905967>.

⁹ Nabila Eka Ramadhani Wahyudi, Nurah Nufaisah, and Erwin Kusumastuti, "Peran Agama Dalam Pembentukan Dasar Falsafah Negara Dan Membangun Keutuhan Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia (NKRI)," *At-Ta'dib: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 2, no. 1 (2021): 25–44. Yudi Latif, "The Religiosity, Nationality, and Sociality of Pancasila: Toward Pancasila Through Soekarno's Way," *Studia Islamika* 25, no. 2 (2018): 207–45, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v25i2.7502>. Sukirno, "Posisi Agama

In the contemporary era of digital disruption, Indonesian national cohesion faces unprecedented challenges from social media-driven provocations and the resurgence of transnational movements, such as HTI and the Muslim Brotherhood which advocate for a caliphate as a "more Islamic" alternative to the current pluralist state.¹⁰ This ideological friction necessitates a scholarly re-examination of the religion-state nexus through the lenses of political pluralism and multiculturalism to resolve the false binary between religious literalism and state ideology.¹¹ To address this gap, this study analyzes the *dār al-mīḥāq* (State of Agreement) paradigm proposed by Ma'ruf Amin, a prominent traditionalist muslim cleric who served as the vice president of Indonesia 2019-2024. He asserted the Republic not as a secular deviation from faith, but as a sophisticated multicultural agreement that harmonizes the principles of Islamic organization with pluralist political theory.

Adopting a qualitative library research design, this inquiry systematically interrogates a spectrum of literary artifacts, including seminal monographs, peer-reviewed journals, and archival periodicals

Dalam Konstruksi Negara Republik Indonesia Berdasarkan Pancasila Dan UUD 1945," *Jurnal Hukum Caraka Justitia* 1, no. 2 (2021): 96, <https://doi.org/10.30588/-jhcj.v1i2.920>. Agus Fauzi, "Agama, Pancasila Dan Konflik Sosial Di Indonesia," *Lentera Hukum* 4, no. 2 (2017): 98–106. Muhammad Izul Ridho and Robiah Solehah, "Relasi Islam Dan Negara Perspektif Kiai Haji Ahmad Siddiq Jember," *Mozai: Islamic Studies Journal* 01, no. 01 (2022): 1–11. Alda Kartika Yudha, "Hukum Islam Dan Hukum Positif: Perbedaan, Hubungan, Dan Pandangan Ulama," *Jurnal Hukum Novelty* 8, no. 2 (2017): 157, <https://doi.org/10.26555/novelty.v8i2.a7019>. Ismail Faisal, "Religion, State, and Ideology in Indonesia: A Historical Account of the Acceptance of Pancasila As the Basis of Indonesian State," *Indonesian Journal of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies* 1, no. 2 (2018): 19–58, <https://doi.org/10.20885/ijiiis.vol1.iss2.art2>. Nurul Dwi Tsuraya and Masduki Asbari, "Pancasila Dan Agama: Telaah Singkat Pemikiran Yudi Latif," *Jurnal Pendidikan Transformatif* 2, no. 1 (2022): 15–18. Supriadi Cecep, "Relasi Islam Dan Negara," *Kalimab* 13, no. 1 (2015): 200–221. Nurfaika Ishak and Romalina Ranaivo Mikea Manitra, "Constitutional Religious Tolerance in Realizing the Protection of Human Rights in Indonesia," *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System* 2, no. 1 (2022): 31–44, <https://doi.org/10.53955/jhcls.v2i1.24>. Zakiyah Darajat, "Probematika Agama Dan Negara: Perspektif Sejarah," *Buletin Al-Turas* 25, no. 1 (2019): 75–91, <https://doi.org/10.15408/bat.v25i1.8682>. See also Hasyim Asy'ari, "Relasi Negara Dan Agama Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Pembinaan Hukum Nasional* 37, no. 1 (2014): 60–67.

¹⁰ Johannes Enggar Harususilo, "UNJ Bedah Buku 'Darul Misaq' Ma'ruf Amin: Jalan Tengah Pandangan Islam Dan NKRI," Kompas.com, 2021.

¹¹ Moh Dahlan, "Hubungan Agama Dan Negara Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Politik Profetik* 41, no. 1 (2014): 1–28.

to construct a robust analytical framework.¹² Central to the primary dataset are the authoritative works of Amin concerning the *dār al-mīthāq* paradigm and national harmony, which are meticulously triangulated with secondary biographical accounts and contemporary discourses on Islamic political thought. The investigative process utilizes a descriptive-analytical lens to interpret the essence of socio-religious phenomena, while technical rigor is maintained through a scientific content analysis that classifies communicative signs and criteria to derive predictive insights into the causal nexus of the studied behaviors.¹³

***Dār al-Mīthāq*: National Consensus in the Relationship between Religion and the State**

Etymologically, *dār* denotes a territory reflecting the identity of its inhabitants, while *al-mīthāq*, derived from *nathāqa*, signifies a sacred bond or solemn oath.¹⁴ The Qur'an emphasizes *al-mīthāq* 34 times across 29 verses, establishing it as a binding agreement that governs collective interactions through a sacred consensus intended to achieve shared objectives.¹⁵ Consequently, *dār al-mīthāq* is conceptually understood as a territory where social and state activities are regulated by a profound and divinely sanctioned commitment.

In the Indonesian context, *dār al-mīthāq* represents a state founded on the consensus of diverse groups who formulated Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Islam views the fulfilment of such national agreements as a religious obligation, as mandated in QS. Al-Maidah (5): 1, QS. Al-Isra (17): 34, and QS. Al-Mu'minin (23): 8. Adhering to these covenants carries both legal and moral dimensions, which are essential for fostering social stability and justice based on mutually accepted values.

Amin reinforces this normative framework through prophetic traditions that emphasize the duty to honor agreements, warning that breaching a covenant is a hallmark of hypocrisy with severe spiritual

¹² Sukiaty, *Metode Penelitian: Sebuah Pengantar* (Medan: Manhaji, 2016), 51.

¹³ Yati Afyanti and Imami Nur Rachmawati, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif Dalam Riset Keperawatan* (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2014), 5. See also Noeng Muhadjir, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Yogyakarta: Rake Sarasin, 1998), 37.

¹⁴ Rahmat Edi Irawan et al., *Darul Mīthāq Indonesia Negara Kesepakatan Pandangan Prof. Dr. (HC) KH. Ma'ruf Amin* (Jakarta: UNJ Press, 2021), 99–100.

¹⁵ Ibid.

and eschatological repercussions. his perspective elevates the national consensus from a mere political arrangement to a religious mandate, where any violation of the collective commitment yields consequences that transcend worldly legal sanctions, affecting the spiritual standing of the believer.

While some academics parallel *dār al-mīthāq* with social contract theory,¹⁶ others argue that it is more accurately examined through the lens of conflict and consensus theory, reflecting a unified response to domestic and external challenges. Ultimately, Kyai Ma'rif's thought integrates etymological, historical, and epistemological dimensions to provide a normative foundation for nation-building. It constructs a just social order grounded not only in legal norms but also in the moral and faith-based values mandated by Islamic teachings.

Historically speaking, Amin states that the *dār al-mīthāq* concept emerged from three primary factors. First, it seeks to reaffirm the context of ulama consensus on Pancasila, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity), the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), and the 1945 Constitution. This is crucial because millennials and Generation Z often experience historical erosion due to diminished history education across educational levels and the ease of accessing social media, which cannot always be held accountable. As a philosophical foundation for legal formation in Indonesia, Pancasila requires a deep understanding from younger generations so that its fundamental values are preserved.¹⁷

Second, there is a rising ideological rejection from certain elements that threatens national integrity, fueled by inadequate historical education and the proliferation of misinformation on social media which deviates from the founding principles of the NKRI. These groups actively challenge the state's foundations, aiming to transform the republic into a caliphate or establish Islamic law as the constitutional bedrock. Third, the expansion of contemporary Islamist movements poses a severe risk of social fragmentation. In the post-Reform era, transnational ideologies have rapidly infiltrated the educational system, from secondary schools to universities through Tarbiyah movements and *halaqahs*, which systematically propagate

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Farida Patittingi et al., "Relasi Negara Dan Agama Dalam Peraturan Daerah Bernuansa Syariah: Perspektif Pancasila," *Pancasila: Jurnal Keindonesian* 01, no. 01 (2021): 17–33, <https://doi.org/10.52738/pjk.v1i1.1>.

ideologies that seek to alter the fundamental basis of the NKRI in the long term.¹⁸

These three factors inspired Amin to compile and disseminate the *dār al-mīthāq* concept through seminars, lectures, and publications, both by him and a team of writers from Universitas Negeri Jakarta. The goal is that, through print and social media, millennials and Generation Z can gain valid and comprehensive information about the NKRI concept, which is built upon four main pillars: Pancasila, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, NKRI, and the 1945 Constitution.

In early days of the republic, there are two extreme poles in how the relationship between religion and the state is perceived. On the one hand, religion is expected to enlighten its followers so that they can embrace and respect fundamental state values,¹⁹ while on the other hand, the state is responsible for protecting the entire religious community.²⁰ These two poles are diametrically opposed, making it difficult in Indonesia's diverse and plural society to establish a form of governance that reconciles both.²¹ Within Indonesia itself, two primary mainstream poles can be identified: first, the radical revivalist pole, which aspires to formalize Islamic law as the basis of the state, represented by HTI, FPI, and the Muslim Brotherhood (embodied in the Prosperous Justice Party/PKS); and second, the liberal secular pole, which aims to separate state affairs from religious matters, thus restricting religion to the private sphere, represented by JIL.²²

The dialectic between these poles evolves in tandem with social, political, economic, and educational developments, and it receives both domestic and international support. To maintain national unity,²³ Kyai

¹⁸ Anton Minardi, "The New Islamic Revivalism In Indonesia Accommodationist and Confrontationist," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 12, no. 2 (2018): 247–64, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2018.12.2.247-264>.

¹⁹ Theguh Saumantri, "The Harmonization of Religion and The State: A Study of The Indonesia Context," *Jurnal Studi Sosial Keagamaan Syekh Nurjati* 2, no. 1 (2022): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.24235/sejati.v2i1.11>.

²⁰ Irawan et al., *Darul Mitsaq Indonesia*, 99–100

²¹ S Abdi, "Negotiating Islam, Democracy and Pluralism: Islamic Politics and the State in Post-Reform Indonesia," *Mazhab Jurnal Pemikiran Hukum Islam* 24, no. 1 (2025): 101–30, <https://doi.org/10.21093/mj.v24i1.10078>.

²² Ali Maksum, "Discourses on Islam And Democracy in Indonesia: A Study on the Intellectual Debate between Liberal Islam Network (JIL) and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI)," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 11, no. 02 (2017): 405–22.

²³ Irawan et al., *Darul Mitsaq Indonesia*.

Ma'ruf seeks to offer a national solution through the concept of *wasathiyatul Islam* (Islamic moderation), a key idea underlying the *dār al-mīthāq* concept.

Historically, the *dār al-mīthāq* concept is rooted in the Medina Charter, which established the Prophet Muhammad's political agreements with diverse societal groups. This Charter serves as an inspirational model for political struggle, affirming Islam as a faith that embraces diversity as a source of strength for a dignified civilization. By employing the universal term "ummah" rather than explicitly enforcing criminal sharia, the Charter articulates an Islamic political vision grounded in equality, distinguishing it from perspectives that advocate for the implementation of Islamic law based on Saudi or Ottoman political models.²⁴

In the Indonesian context, this consensus-based model was adapted by the founding fathers, who navigated intense post-World War II debates during BPUPKI and PPKI sessions regarding the role of Islam in state-building.²⁵ Early 1945 witnessed significant ideological friction; while figures like Abikusno argued for the state as a vehicle for Islamic continuity, secular nationalists, exemplified by Hatta, rejected the derivation of national law solely from the Qur'an. These negotiations between nationalist and Islamic camps culminated in a strategic compromise through the adoption of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.²⁶ This agreement guaranteed that the state would not be exclusively Islamic while conceding the Jakarta Charter, thereby establishing a pluralistic foundation for the nation.

The evolution of Indonesia's constitutional identity was marked by the strategic insertion of the Jakarta Charter into the original philosophical framework of Pancasila, which initially mandated the implementation of Sharia for Muslims.²⁷ However, this consensus underwent a rapid political transformation following the proclamation of independence, leading to the pivotal substitution of the charter's

²⁴ Zuhairi Misrawi, *Madinah: Kota Suci, Piagam Madinah, Dan Teladan Muhammad SAW* (Jakarta: Kompas Media Nusantara, 2009), 293–94.

²⁵ Salim, *Challenging the Secular State*.

²⁶ Ahmad Asroni, "Pemikiran K.H. Wahid Hasyim Tentang Relasi Islam Dan Negara," *Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses* 3, no. 2 (2021): 2621–6590.

²⁷ Bagir Manan, Ali Abdurahman, and Mei Susanto, "Pembangunan Hukum Nasional Yang Religius: Konsepsi Dan Tantangan Dalam Negara Berdasarkan Pancasila," *Jurnal Bina Mulia Hukum*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.23920/jbmh.v5i2.303>.

seven words with "Belief in One Almighty God" on August 18, 1945. This historical shift triggered a protracted discourse on religion-state relations that resurfaced as recently as the 2002 MPR Annual Session, reflecting a consistent national preference for a governance model that rejects both absolute secularism and exclusive religious formalization.²⁸

Epistemologically, Kyai Ma'ruf's *dār al-mīthāq* paradigm is deeply anchored in the Quranic imperative to honor covenants, specifically drawing from Surah an-Nisa (4): 92 regarding the obligation of *diyyat* (blood money) within the context of a peace treaty. This scriptural foundation elevates the sanctity of national agreements from mere political contracts to profound ethical obligations with both temporal and eschatological consequences. Consequently, *dār al-mīthāq* serves as a practical instrument for safeguarding socio-political equilibrium and justice, asserting that the Republic is a "State of Consensus" whose harmony must be preserved as a fulfillment of religious and civic promises.

Referring to that verse, Kyai Ma'ruf affirms that every agreement is binding and must be upheld. In 2018, leading up to the presidential election, the caretaker of the An-Nawawi Islamic Boarding School in Tanara, Serang, Banten, reiterated the importance of protecting the nation through *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood) and *ukhuwah wathaniyah* (national brotherhood), stating:

*"Considering the high level of diversity in Indonesia, safeguarding our nation and state must be achieved through ukhuwah Islamiyah and ukhuwah wathaniyah."*²⁹

This *dār al-mīthāq* concept, disseminated through seminars, lectures, and publications, is expected to serve as a reliable reference for millennials and Gen Z in understanding and upholding the concept of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, based on the four central pillars of Pancasila, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, the NKRI, and the 1945 Constitution, so that national unity remains preserved amid ever-changing political and social dynamics.³⁰

²⁸ Irawan et al., *Darul Mitsaq Indonesia*.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Syamsun Ni'am, "Islam, Moderation, and Prospects Indonesian Islamic Education for the World," in *Proceedings of the 1st Annual Conference of Islamic Education (ACIE 2022)* (Atlantis Press SARL, 2023), 161–91, https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-044-2_17.

This concept is in line with the moderate stance of Amin as a traditionalist Muslim which termed as Islam *Wasatīyyah*. The two religious trends driving diversity toward extreme poles, namely the right-wing (revivalist-radical) and the left-wing (liberal-secular) camps. To overcome these two extremes, religious moderation must be widely promoted as a solution to foster Muslims' awareness of moderatism, particularly through the concept of Islam *Wasatīyyah*. According to Amin, religious moderation constitutes the mainstreaming of moderate Islam, an urgent endeavor in light of the rise of right-wing radicalism, the politicization of Islam, and left-wing radicalism leading to liberalism and secularism in society.³¹

For traditionalist Muslim like Amin, Islam wasathy, or moderate Islam, also referred to as Islam Tengah (Middle Islam) forms the core teaching of the Prophet Muhammad. Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah (b. 1935 CE), a prominent Mauritanian muslim scholar and jurist, emphasizes that the middle way in religion is part of the natural order and social norms that prioritize balance in understanding religion without going to extremes. Moderatism thus serves as a methodology that opposes any conduct, speech, or attitude that strays beyond the bounds of balance and fairness. Meanwhile, for Al-Ghazali (d. 1111 CE), Middle Islam is based on equilibrium and caution in grappling with two-sided issues such as faith–disbelief and right–wrong, avoiding narrow-minded fanaticism, and purifying the heart from worldly ambitions, material interests, and the quest for power.³² Consequently, Middle Islam signifies an understanding and practice of Islamic teachings that prioritize balance, neither extreme nor reductionist while focusing on harmonizing contradictions, exercising prudence in administering justice, and maintaining sincerity in faith.

The implementation of “Middle Islam” permeates various religious domains, integrating divine authority with human responsibility in *'aqidah*, and synthesizing partial (*juḥūḍiyah*) with holistic (*kullīyah*) references in sharia. In *'ubudīyah*, worship transcends symbolism to become a profound spiritual act, while *mu'amalah* and *da'wah* emphasize harmonious social relations and the dual service to God and humanity through the appreciation of differences. Furthermore, *akhlāq* balances ethics, logic, and aesthetics, ensuring that religious texts are

³¹ Irawan et al., *Darul Mitsaq Indonesia*, 99–100

³² Ibid.

approached through a modern lens consistent with contemporary theories of religious relations, thereby validating the enduring relevance of Middle Islam.³³

Overall, Middle Islam embodies an outlook oriented toward harmony, mindfulness in approaching differences, and a pure-hearted approach to faith. Its implementation is mirrored in the aspects of *‘aqīdah*, *sharia*, *‘ubudiyah*, *mu‘amalah*, *akhlaq*, and *da‘wah*, where religious texts are increasingly interpreted through modern methodologies aligned with theories of religious interaction.

Implementing *Dār al-Mīthāq* in National Life

Based on the aforementioned argument, the implementation of *dār al-mīthāq* concept according to Amin within the framework of national religious moderation is measured by four primary indicators: tolerance, anti-violence, national commitment, and an accommodating religious understanding. Tolerance entails respecting the rights and convictions of others despite differences, while anti-violence strictly prohibits verbal or physical coercion in the name of religion. National commitment involves a definitive embrace of the NKRI’s four pillars, Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the Unitary State, and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. Finally, an accommodating religious understanding requires Muslims to behave adaptively within Indonesia’s multicultural and multi-faith context while remaining responsive to the advancements of the modern era.

Hence, the more comprehensively these four indicators are possessed and practiced by Muslims, the more accurately they reflect the practice of *dār al-mīthāq* or moderate religiosity. Conversely, the fewer indicators that are met, the less the concept can be considered to fulfill the principles of religious moderation.

Consequently, Amin conceptualizes Indonesia’s pluralism as a structural reality requiring integrative governance rather than a liability to be suppressed, advocating a dialogical paradigm where diversity serves as a resource for national cohesion. By rejecting the religion-state binary, he emphasizes that ethical commitments like mutual respect and continuous interfaith engagement function as essential preventive mechanisms against fragmentation. To operationalize this

³³ Ifitah Jafar and Mudzhira Nur Amrullah, “Dakwah Relasi Agama (Studi Preliminari Berbasis Al-Qur’an),” *Jurnal Dakwah Tabligh* 20, no. 1 (2019): 145, <https://doi.org/10.24252/jdt.v20i1.9609>.

vision, he formulates a strategic fourfold framework, encompassing theological, political, juridical, and sociological dimensions as a formal corridor for managing diversity and mitigating latent societal conflicts.³⁴

Within the theological and political spheres, Amin aligns Nahdlatul Ulama's intellectual tradition of political *fiqh* with the Pancasila ideology, orienting religious doctrines toward peaceful coexistence and shared ethical values.³⁵ This approach institutionalizes national life through four pillars; Pancasila, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, NKRI, and the 1945 Constitution while remaining vigilant against transnational ideologies that might disrupt inclusive national frameworks. In this context, state policy must prioritize socio-economic justice and balance to navigate historical constitutional debates and preserve collective stability.³⁶

From a juridical and sociological standpoint, Article 29 of Indonesian Constitution reinforces religious freedom and the rule of law, necessitating consistent enforcement to prevent discriminatory practices.³⁷ Sociologically, religion remains a central organizing force guided by tolerance principles of *lakum dinukum wa liya din*, which preserve doctrinal boundaries without obstructing social interaction. Regulatory instruments and the pivotal role of *ulama* in educating communities on the distinction between *furū'* (particularity) and *uṣūl* (principles) are crucial in maintaining equilibrium, ensuring that minor ritual differences do not escalate into fundamental national divisions.

***Dar al-Mīthāq* in the Perspective of Political Pluralism and Multiculturalism**

The concept of *dār al-mīthāq* is rooted in the semantic interplay between *dār*, denoting a socio-territorial space embodying collective identity, and *mīthāq*, derived from *wathāqa*, which signifies a binding

³⁴ Irawan et al., *Darul Mitsaq Indonesia*.

³⁵ Ma'ruf Amin, *Empat Bingkai Kerukunan Nasional* (Banten: Yayasan An-Nawawi, 2013), 110–11.

³⁶ Fajar Syarif, "Ijtihad Politik Nu: Negara Pancasila Adalah Negara Islam," *Alfjad: Jurnal Sosial Keagamaan* 3, no. 2 (2019): 56, <https://doi.org/10.31958/jsk.v3i2.1625>.

³⁷ Syamsun Ni'am and Anin Nurhayati, "Pemikiran Kebangsaan K.H. Achmad Siddiq Dan Implikasinya Dalam Memantapkan Idiologi Pancasila Sebagai Dasar Negara Di Indonesia," *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v23i2.1106>.

covenant reinforced by moral commitment and oath; consequently, it refers not merely to a physical territory but to a socio-political order grounded in a shared agreement among citizens to sustain harmony and stability within a plural society. This conceptualization implies that such covenants constitute a collective obligation that must be upheld as part of ethical and legal responsibility. Amin underscores this principle by referring to Qur'ānic teachings that position the fulfilment of agreements as a moral imperative. In the Indonesian context, this normative framework is reflected in the national consensus embodied in *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution, which function as foundational covenants structuring the relationship between religion, society, and the state.³⁸

From the perspective of political pluralism, *dār al-mithāq* reflects the principle that stability in a diverse society depends on negotiated consensus among groups with different identities, beliefs, and interests. Rather than enforcing uniformity, the state operates as a space for dialogue, cooperation, and mutual recognition. This idea is historically rooted in the Constitution of Medina, established by the Prophet Muḥammad, which functioned as a political covenant regulating relations among Muslims, Jews, and other communities based on equality, justice, and mutual protection. This arrangement represents an early form of social contract, demonstrating that cross-cultural and interreligious cooperation can be institutionalized through shared agreements.

In Indonesia, this concept is reflected in the formation of the state through negotiations among nationalist, religious, and secular groups, resulting in a consensus that accommodates diversity within a unified framework. From a multicultural perspective, *dār al-mithāq* provides a normative basis for managing pluralism by emphasizing recognition, tolerance, and cooperation, where diversity is treated as a social reality to be governed through collective agreement rather than uniform imposition.

Multiculturalism is not limited to passive tolerance but requires institutional recognition of diversity within political and social structures, where cultural groups actively participate in shaping a shared civic order without losing their distinct identities. It entails a

³⁸ Masykuri Abdillah, "Aktualisasi Islam dan Keindonesiaan Dalam Konteks Ideologi Negara Pancasila," *Himmah: Jurnal Kajian Islam Kontemporer* 4, no. 1 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.47313/jkik.v4i1.1100>

continuous negotiation of recognition, equality, and participation, thereby transforming diversity into a constructive element of national cohesion rather than fragmentation.³⁹ In this framework, the concept of *dār al-mīthāq* can be understood as a covenant-based political model that accommodates plurality through shared agreements, enabling collective identity formation while preserving difference. In the Indonesian context, such a model is reflected in patterns of interreligious relations sustained through social interaction, mutual respect, and community-based mechanisms of conflict resolution, where harmony is maintained not only by formal institutions but also by culturally embedded practices of cooperation and collective commitment.⁴⁰

Empirical studies further demonstrate that Indonesian Muslim communities, particularly in rural settings, often develop inclusive and adaptive forms of interaction with other religious groups, shaped by local traditions and everyday social engagement that foster trust and coexistence.⁴¹ This “indigenous Islamic multiculturalism” illustrates the compatibility between religious commitment and social inclusivity, reinforcing the relevance of *dār al-mīthāq* as a lived framework rather than a purely theoretical construct. However, challenges arise when multicultural recognition remains symbolic without being translated into substantive equality, as seen in cases of “pseudo-multiculturalism” where minority groups experience limited inclusion⁴² despite formal acknowledgment.⁴³ This condition underscores that the effectiveness

³⁹ Tariq Modood, Bhikhu Parekh, Charles Tyler, Varun Uberoi, and James Connelly, “Multicultural Conversations: The Nature and Future of Culture, Identity and Nationalism,” *Ethnicities*, 25 no. 1 (2025): 125–148.

⁴⁰ Theodoros Pangalila and Charstar A. Rumbay, “Multicultural Relation between Religious Communities in Indonesia,” *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 80 no. 1 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.9645>

⁴¹ Fawaizul Umam and Mohamad Barmawi, “Indigenous Islamic Multiculturalism: Interreligious Relations in Rural East Java, Indonesia,” *Ulumuna: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 27 no. 2 (2023): 649–691, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v27i2.752>

⁴² Achmad Ubaedillah, “The Minority and the State: Chinese Muslims in the Modern History of Indonesia,” *Al-Jami’ah* 61, no. 1 (2023): 107–36, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2023.611.107-136>.

⁴³ Ismail Ruslan, Yusriadi, Imron Muttaqin, Nunik Hasriyanti, and Chong Shin, “Chinese Muslim Community and Pseudo-Multiculturalism in West Kalimantan, Indonesia,” *Ulumuna: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 28 no. 2 (2025): 911–932. <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v28i2.867>

of *dār al-mīthāq* depends on the genuine implementation of covenantal principles that ensure equal participation, protection of rights, and the dignity of all communities.

The concept of *dār al-mīthāq* provides an alternative to rigid secularism by integrating religious values into the public sphere without formalizing a particular religious legal system, positioning religion as a source of moral guidance while affirming that political authority rests on national consensus. This approach represents a middle path between religious formalism and strict secularism, enabling religion to inform public ethics without undermining the pluralistic character of the state.

In the Indonesian context, *dār al-mīthāq* functions as a framework for managing ideological diversity through consensus and dialogue rather than conflict, as reflected in indicators such as religious moderation, tolerance, non-violence, national commitment, and accommodation of local culture that collectively sustain social cohesion. Moreover, its relevance becomes increasingly significant in the contemporary era marked by globalization and the spread of transnational ideologies, where reinforcing public awareness of the foundational national covenant is essential to preserving unity, encouraging citizens to uphold shared agreements, and ensuring the continued peaceful coexistence of diverse communities.⁴⁴

Ultimately, the thought of Amin regarding *dār al-mīthāq* presents an integrative framework for understanding the relationship between religion and the state in a plural society. By emphasizing the importance of collective agreements, tolerance, and dialogue, the concept contributes to the development of a political order that respects diversity while maintaining national unity. Within the perspectives of political pluralism, multiculturalism, and a moderate understanding of secularism, *dār al-mīthāq* can be interpreted as a conceptual bridge that connects religious values with the realities of a modern democratic nation-state.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Moh Nur Fauzi, "The Convergence of Maqasid Shari'a and Pancasila in Strengthening the Spirit of Nationalism in Indonesia," *At-Turāṣ: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 10, no. 1 (2023): 98–115. <https://doi.org/10.33650/at-turas.v10i1.6099>

⁴⁵ Dalilul Falihin, et.al., "Multiculturalism Insight Based on Qur'an and its Relevance to Plurality in Indonesia," *Jurnal Adabiyah* 24, no. 1 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.24252/jad.v24i1a5>

Critique of *Dār al-Mīthāq*

While Amin's concept of *dār al-mīthāq* offers a compelling normative framework for managing the relationship between religion and the state in a plural society, from the perspective of multiculturalism theory, it reveals a tendency toward normative integration that does not fully address issues of recognition and power asymmetry among social groups. Multiculturalism, as articulated by scholars such as Parekh and Modood, extends beyond harmony and tolerance to emphasize institutional recognition and equitable inclusion of minority identities. In this regard, *dār al-mīthāq* prioritizes national consensus as a unifying principle, yet it does not sufficiently elaborate on how structural inequalities and majority dominance can be negotiated within the political system.

Furthermore, Amin's framework largely reflects a form of "normative multiculturalism," which emphasizes peaceful coexistence, rather than "critical multiculturalism," which acknowledges conflict, resistance, and structural inequality as inherent features of plural societies. This limitation is evident in the strong emphasis on moderation, tolerance, and consensus as primary solutions, without a corresponding critical engagement with issues such as social exclusion or *pseudo-multiculturalism*, where diversity is formally recognized but not substantively accommodated through equal access to resources and political participation.

At the same time, in the context of globalization and the rise of transnational ideologies, the *dār al-mīthāq* concept retains strategic relevance as a tool for preserving national cohesion. However, from a multiculturalist perspective, its effectiveness remains contingent upon the development of more robust institutional mechanisms that ensure substantive justice and inclusive participation across diverse groups. Therefore, the central critique of Amin's thought lies in its need to move beyond a normative consensus-based model toward a structurally grounded multicultural framework capable of delivering genuine equality, recognition, and social justice regardless of religious affiliation.

Conclusion

This research concludes that the *dār al-mīthāq* concept, formulated by Ma'ruf Amin, represents a pivotal shift towards a "state of consensus" that effectively harmonizes Islamic political identity with

Indonesia's pluralistic foundations. By employing a perspective of political pluralism and multiculturalism, this study demonstrates that the integration of religious values into the national framework is not a form of theocratization, but rather a sophisticated multicultural agreement. The findings indicate that this paradigm successfully bridges the long-standing ideological rift between Islamism and secularism, positioning the Republic of Indonesia as a legitimate, religiously sanctioned commitment (*mīthāq*) that ensures the protection of both faith and civil diversity in a modern democratic landscape.

The study contributes a robust normative and empirical framework for managing religious diversity and formulating policies that prevent social polarization. To sustain this social stability, it is recommended that policymakers and academic institutions institutionalize the principles of *dar al-mīthāq* within national educational curricula and regulatory drafting processes. Furthermore, future interdisciplinary research should focus on the practical implementation of this integrative model across various legal and social domains to ensure its resilience against the rising tide of transnational extremist ideologies and digital-era disruptions, thereby reinforcing Indonesia's position as a global model for inclusive and moderate governance. []

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