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## Analysis of the Influence of the NII Separatist Movement on Indonesia's Ideology as a Democratic State

Ubaidah Adielah<sup>1</sup>, Imam Tajus Subkhi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang

Email: [adillahubaedah13@gmail.com](mailto:adillahubaedah13@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

*This article analyzes the influence of the NII (Negara Islam Indonesia / Islamic State of Indonesia) separatist movement on Indonesian democracy and national ideology. NII is an Indonesian Islamic militant organization that has existed since the post-independence period, founded on August 7, 1946, under the leadership of S.M. Kartosoewiryo, aiming to replace the Indonesian state ideology of Pancasila with an Islamic caliphate system based on the Quran. This study uses a qualitative research method with a post-positivist paradigm, combining library research and an in-depth interview with JP, a former NII member from West Sumatra. Social Constructivism theory is employed as the theoretical framework to analyze how radical ideologies are constructed and disseminated. The findings reveal that the NII movement poses a significant threat to national integrity and Indonesian democracy through radical indoctrination, closed structural recruitment, and activities that are contrary to the constitutional foundations of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). This research concludes that state authority and a constructive approach toward radical ideologies are essential to safeguard the continuity of Indonesian democracy.*

*Keywords: Separatism; NII (Negara Islam Indonesia); Democracy; Radicalism; Constructivism*



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## I. INTRODUCTION

Humans are social beings who live within social systems. Social systems are formed from social realities and social agreements. This is in line with the social contract offered by Wendt, one of which is the political system. Politics is an instrument or means for organizing and managing the governance of a state. Ideology plays an important role in the integrity of a state. Through ideology, a state knows the direction and goals it aims to achieve. Not only that, ideology is also a belief or doctrine that serves as a fundamental foundation for statehood and social life. Therefore, it is important for a state to have an ideology. Pancasila is Indonesia's ideology, enshrined in the Constitution (UUD) that was proclaimed on June 1, 1945. The UUD serves as the foundational written constitutional basis governing all aspects and prohibitions of statehood for all officials and citizens. The following articles indicate that Indonesia is a democratic state.

1. Article 1 paragraph 2 of the 1945 Constitution states: *"Sovereignty rests in the hands of the people and is exercised in accordance with the Constitution."*

2. Article 28 states: *"The freedom of association and assembly, to express thoughts orally and in writing, and so forth, shall be stipulated by law."*

Democracy is one of the most widely adopted governance systems among countries in the world. It is the state system that continues to exist to this day, as evidenced by the large number of countries that adopted democracy as their system of government following the end of the Cold War won by the United States.

It is undeniable that the existence of democracy is a snowball effect of this phenomenon. This does not mean that democracy has no shortcomings or weaknesses—such as mobilized democracy, guided democracy, and so forth. However, at the very least, democracy provides a space for the people to participate in the political governance of a state. As for definitions of democracy by scholars, for example Montesquieu argued that state power must be divided and exercised by three different and separate institutions: first, the legislature which holds the power to make laws; second, the executive which has the power to implement laws; and third, the judiciary, which holds the power to adjudicate the implementation of laws—each institution operating independently without influence from the others. Meanwhile, Aristotle defined democracy as freedom, since only through freedom can every citizen share power within their state. Aristotle also stated that if a person lives without freedom of choice in their way of life, it is the same as being a slave.

Contemporary Middle Eastern countries have also become aware of democracy. The Arab Spring phenomenon is one empirical example showing that democracy has been adopted and accepted in many countries worldwide. The Arab Spring is a political term describing waves of revolutionary movements in several Middle Eastern countries around 2011. The Arab people themselves referred to the Arab Spring as al-Tsaurat al-Arabiyyah—a revolution intended to transform Arab society and government toward an ideal order. According to the journal *Religion and Democracy: The Emergence of Islamic Political Power in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya* (2014) by Muhammad Fakhry Ghafur, the Arab Spring was caused by political, economic, and governance crises in several Middle Eastern countries. The factors behind the Arab Spring include: authoritarian regimes that had persisted for decades; high levels of social and economic inequality; the desire of Arab society to improve social, political, economic, and governmental systems; and the decline of political rights and civil liberties in certain countries. The Arab Spring revolution wave generally aimed to overthrow authoritarian regimes and injustice, while also seeking to implement democratic systems across the Middle East.

Tracing its history, democracy can be divided into three periods. The first is ancient Greece, the second is ancient Egypt, and the third is the American Revolution. In ancient Greece, the epistemological concept of democracy emerged in the fifth century BCE in Athens. Democracy derives from the Greek words *demos* (people) and *kratos* (power). Around the same time, the term Republic was introduced in Rome, from *res* (power) and *publica* (the people). In essence, democracy and republic are terminologically equivalent. In ancient Egypt, democratic principles were practiced long before democracy emerged in Greece. According to Yves Schemel (cited by Suyatno), democracy already existed in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, where city councils and assemblies were far more democratic than the Greek polis model. Members spoke freely, and women were permitted to join—rules not found in Greek democracy, where women were not recognized as citizens. The Egyptian model also accommodated pluralism and practiced delegation representing constituents. Subsequently, the American Revolution led to the expansion of democratic ideology, particularly after the Cold War, following America's victory over Soviet socialist communism. As a superpower, the United States expanded its democratic ideology to countries worldwide through its existence, diplomacy, and influence.

Indonesia also has its own democratic history. Indonesian democracy has transitioned from the Old Order, the New Order, and up to the present day—known as the Reform Era following the end of Soeharto's rule. The many political ebbs and flows since Indonesia's independence have caused transitions and leadership changes across every era. Indonesian democracy can be divided into four periods: Parliamentary Democracy (1945–1959), Guided Democracy (1959–1965), Pancasila Democracy of the New Order Era (1965–1998), and Reform Democracy (1998–present).

Despite all its advantages—individual liberty, fulfilled rights (although not fully due to mobilization and other factors), opportunities for citizens to participate in political governance, freedom of expression, and more—democracy is not without challenges and shortcomings. For example, groups or movements with opposing ideologies exist in conflict with democracy. This phenomenon is common in Middle Eastern countries, where Islamic militant groups seek to maintain Islamic governance systems. Meanwhile, other communities have already embraced pluralism and can accept modernization. This phenomenon is not limited to the Middle East; acts of terrorism frequently occur in Western and European countries as well. These acts are often carried out using bombs or weapons that endanger environments and people, executed in crowded places causing casualties. For instance, on September 11, 2001, the Islamic militant group Al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden, hijacked four aircraft: two were flown into the Twin Towers in New York, one struck the Pentagon, and one crashed in Pennsylvania, resulting in hundreds of casualties.

Similar phenomena are not limited to Western countries. Indonesia also has Islamic militant groups. On October 12, 2002, in Bali, a bombing killed 202 people—many of them foreign nationals—and wounded hundreds more. The first explosion occurred in front of the Sari Club Discotheque on Jalan Legian, Kuta. Shortly after, a second explosion struck Paddy's Discotheque across from the Sari Club, followed by a third explosion approximately 100 meters from the U.S. Consulate in the Renon area, Denpasar. These militant Islamic acts are motivated by opposing ideologies. The question arises: why do terrorist acts frequently occur in democratic states? The answer is that democratic states grant freedom of expression to all. Unfortunately, radical groups choose to express themselves through weapons and bombs, causing casualties. As Jackson and Sorensen argue, terrorism is an illegal act or act of violence threatening civilization, often aimed at achieving political, religious, or similar goals.

Most of these terrorist acts are motivated by religious beliefs. They consider themselves to be exclusively correct, while contemporary liberal modernization is seen as a deviation contrary to God's law. One of the Islamic militant groups in Indonesia is NII. The NII (Negara Islam Indonesia / Islamic State of Indonesia) is a contemporary Indonesian Islamic militant movement that has existed since the post-independence period. NII was founded on August 7, 1946. One of the significant events in Indonesian history is the establishment of NII under the leadership of S.M. Kartosoewiryo at the beginning of Indonesia's independence. NII was declared a rebel movement disrupting state stability. The government eliminated this movement through military operations, and its leader was executed on September 5, 1962. However, NII's struggle did not end there—following Kartosoewiryo, NII split into several factions, one of which is NII Fillah in Garut, led by Sensen Komara, which has maintained its existence to this day.

NII Fillah's understanding of the concept of an Islamic state is that it constitutes a political force functioning to implement and enforce Islamic law, and that it is the only *tariqah* (method) for implementing the system and its laws comprehensively in national and state life.

The radicalism movement in Indonesia is a continuation of earlier radicalism phenomena. Phase one is marked by the emergence of the DI/TII Kartosoewirjo movement, followed by Kahar Muzakkar and Daud Beureuh. Phase two saw the emergence of the Jihad Commando movement in the 1970s–1980s, key actors of which were former DI/TII members of the Kartosoewirjo era. Phase three encompasses various terror and violence movements during and after the reform era, from the late 1990s to the present. Phase four is marked by the emergence of new radical Islamic groups, primarily among young people, whose radicalization is more influenced by global events, with modern information and communication technology playing an important role in transmitting radical views.

JP, a friend of the author who was an active NII member for one year and five months, shared that he was invited by a relative who served as the NII head for Sumatra to join NII. JP was placed in the external division—having previously been an internal member—responsible for collecting funds from charity boxes distributed at nearby Alfamart and Indomart convenience stores. According to JP, approximately IDR 5,000,000 (five million rupiah) could be collected per day. Structurally, NII is divided into two parts: internal and external. The internal structure includes the Caliph (Leader, kept private), Governor (known only to certain people), and da'wah (propagation activities mostly conducted in remote villages targeting youth aged 15–25 and above). The external division conducts location surveys, fund collection, socialization, and community outreach such as providing disaster relief assistance.

The structure reveals that NII operates as a closed system in which different divisions do not know each other. JP also stated that weekly military training sessions are conducted in forests to train members to survive under pressure—including how to find food, run, and perform exercises such as push-ups. JP participated in such training only twice while still an internal member; once transferred to the external division, he was no longer aware of such training due to the strict privacy standards of the internal division. JP stated that the military training aims to prepare members to survive in case of raids. The requirement to become an active member is being at least 17 years of age and being initiated by senior or long-standing members. The core goal of NII is to amend the Constitution and transition to Quranic law, transforming Indonesia into Darul Islam (Islamic Territory) under a caliphate system as existed after the Prophet Muhammad's death. NII believes that all non-members are infidels, even if they are Muslim. These goals, ideologies, and activities of NII have a negative impact on national integrity and ideology.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***A. Research Problem***

The Indonesian Islamic militant movement, of which NII is one example, aims to overthrow the government and replace it with a caliphate based on the Quran as a legal reference. This raises the question: Does the NII movement have a significant influence on Indonesian democracy and sovereignty?

### ***B. Research Objectives***

In this study, the author aims to examine the impact or influence of one of Indonesia's Islamic militant movements—NII (Negara Islam Indonesia)—on Indonesian democracy and sovereignty. Using a constructivist theoretical approach and viewing this phenomenon through the lens of ideology, the author examines how far-reaching the influence or impact of the NII radical ideology is on Indonesian democracy. The data are drawn from library sources

and from the informant JP, a former NII member for one year and five months, who served in both internal and external capacities within the organization.

### ***C. Previous Research***

Darul Islam Fillah: Typology of the "Utopian" Islamic Movement in West Java by Adang Sonjaya (Postgraduate UIN SGD Bandung). In this study, Sonjaya describes Darul Islam Fillah as an Islamic movement in West Java. He argues that the new DI Fillah movement emerged as a political ideological movement as a metamorphosis of the Darul Islam movement led by Kartosuwiryo in 1949. This political ideology movement resulted from government policies considered unjust, discriminatory, and politically violent. The DI Fillah movement's idealism tends toward views that are difficult to realize in the context of national and state life in Indonesia.

From NII to ISIS: Ideological and Movement Transformation in Contemporary Radical Islam in Indonesia by M. Zaki Mubarak examines the development of Islamic fundamentalist movements from NII to ISIS. Mubarak explains that religious radicalization movements, including bomb terrorism, have existed since the 1950s, progressing through four phases: the DI/TII Kartosuwiryo movement, the Jihad Commando movement of the 1970s–1980s, various terror and violence movements during and after the reform era, and the emergence of new radical Islamic groups particularly among young people. He argues that religious radicalization movements are not purely jihad-driven but also serve political and economic interests within a global conspiracy framework.

Tracing the Roots of Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia by Ahmad Rizky Mardhatillah Umar concludes that radical Islam, viewed from historical and political economy units of analysis, is rooted in social gaps in Indonesian society—gaps arising from groups controlling power over capital and authority since the era of the national movement, resulting in Islamic groups not being accommodated in the political structure and thus undertaking radical actions.

Activities of the DI/TII Gangs and Their Impact on the Sidrap Community 1950–1965 by Eka Wulandari, Jumadi, and La Malihu (History Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, UNM) examines the DI/TII movement of Abdul Qahhar Mudzakkar in Sidrap Regency, finding that the gang's activities—including destruction of bridges, roads, telephone wires, and the abduction of active government members—had a significant impact on the Tolotang community, which was placed in a difficult situation by the gang's demand for Islamic law as the foundation of governance.

## **III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### ***A. Constructivism Theory***

Social Construction Theory is a study by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, widely known through their book *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (1966). Berger defines reality as an objective reality existing outside individuals, occupying a position as a social fact, while knowledge constitutes subjective reality existing within human consciousness.

Social construction is based on the philosophical argument of constructivism, viewed as a cognitive effort by every individual to interpret social reality. Subsequently, individuals construct their own knowledge of the reality they have observed, based on previously held knowledge. Berger's sociological methodology rests on the assumption that every human being has meaning and strives to live in a meaningful world. Berger views society as a

dialectical process encompassing externalization, objectivation, and internalization, which ultimately shape social reality.

The conceptual foundation used by the author is constructivism theory as a Social Theory. This is motivated by the fact that the phenomenon addressed by the author correlates with ideology and social life. Democracy as a contemporary doctrine adopted by many states in their governance systems is open and capable of accepting modern change, while the ideology of radical Islamic organizations opposes the modernity of democracy, viewing the fundamental doctrine of contemporary liberal modernity as leading to a sense of exclusive correctness and the condemnation of all things outside their religious law as wrong and deviant.

The national ideology of Indonesia is Pancasila—panca meaning five and sila meaning principle. These five principles constitute the fundamental basis governing how statehood and social life proceed. Embedded within one of these five principles is the element of democracy. The fourth principle states: "Democracy led by the wisdom of deliberation among representatives." This point is in direct opposition to NII's goal of establishing a caliphate.

The social world is the world of human consciousness: thoughts and beliefs, ideas and concepts, language and discourse, signs, signals, and understandings among human beings, particularly human groups. The social world is an intersubjective domain—it is meaningful for the people who create it and live within it, because they construct it. As Jackson and Sorensen state, the social world resides in physical entities that are constructed, with material sources being elements that constitute social structure. In this sense, materialism is part of constructivism. However, the ideas and beliefs concerning those entities are most important—what those entities mean in people's minds.

Ideology is the result of construction by individuals or groups, understood as a guide to life in social interactions or as firmly held beliefs within group settings. Radical/fundamentalist Islamic organizations have their own worldview or ideology as a guide to the direction in which the organization moves. NII, with its ideology rooted in a contextual or literal reading of the Quran and God's law, firmly rejects any law that conflicts with its doctrine. According to JP as a former NII member, NII aims to amend the state Constitution to transition to Quranic law and transform Indonesia into Darul Islam (Islamic Territory). The method of spreading their ideology is through propagation activities in remote villages, where they embed radical NII ideologies to recruit new members.

### ***B. Social Definition Paradigm Theory***

Using the theoretical foundation of the social definition paradigm, particularly constructivism theory as a social theory, can explain this phenomenon. The phenomenon of ideological difference between democratic ideology and opposing Islamic fundamentalist ideology poses a threat to national integrity. This is the result of ideas constructed by subjects with differing perspectives on Indonesia's social and political reality. Between these two ideologies, the more adaptive ideology—capable of responding to the dynamics of the contemporary world without being left behind—is preferable. Thus, efforts to reconstruct ideology are needed, as exemplified by the government's response to radical groups such as NII.

Constructivist ideas constitute the most important aspect in influencing actions. Ideas occupy a position above material aspects; the existence of material is the manifestation of an idea. It can be concluded that ideas exert a great influence on a movement or organization in terms of its direction, dynamics, and goals. NII, with its ideology, implements material

manifestation that is synchronized and supportive of it. As previously discussed, NII's fundamental ideology and goals are directed toward building an Islamic State of Indonesia and reconstructing Indonesia's ideology—painstakingly built by its founders—thereby threatening Indonesia's integrity and sovereignty.

Democracy as a contemporary state system has encountered a boomerang phenomenon, as supported by many empirical facts. However, democracy grants freedom to the people to express themselves and hold beliefs. Ideologies that are contrary to Pancasila potentially threaten national integrity. There is concern that radical doctrines, continuously spread among communities with limited education, will be easily accepted, causing NII membership to grow and—most alarmingly—enabling NII members to infiltrate government ranks. Therefore, the state must pay greater attention to NII and reconstruct radical ideology toward a full Pancasila ideology. Constructivism as a social theory is capable of explaining this phenomenon, with the hope that radical movements or organizations can be addressed wisely for the sake of a prosperous state amid diversity.

#### **IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

##### ***A. Research Paradigm***

This study uses a post-positivist methodological paradigm. This paradigm is used because it offers a perspective appropriate to the needs of the researcher in the research process. It emphasizes comprehensive, integrity-oriented, subjective, specific, and non-quantified analysis. The researcher plays an active role in the research, which can draw on participant sources, local knowledge, and a focus on process orientation.

##### ***B. Research Approach***

This study uses an epistemological approach—that is, an approach or method of constructing knowledge using specific methods. This study employs a qualitative post-positivist method. The construction of knowledge is drawn from informant data, previous research journals, credible websites, and the researcher's subjective analysis, utilizing a logical framework in research analysis. Based on the available data, this study aims to reconstruct the thought patterns of radical groups that are inconsistent with the NKRI, motivated by values threatening national integrity arising from NII's radical activities.

##### ***C. Type and Basis of Research***

This study has the pure objective of developing or refining existing theory. Its focus is on building a coherent and valid theoretical framework to explain the phenomenon of NII radicalism's influence on the values of NKRI integrity. It uses qualitative post-positivist research methods with interviews and library research data sources, and employs an associative typology to determine the relationship or influence of NII's radical values on NKRI values definitively.

##### ***D. Research Time and Location***

The research will be conducted after this research proposal has been approved, critiqued, and received suggestions and input from the supervising faculty council. The research will be conducted online via Zoom or WhatsApp for data collection from the informant JP, given that the researcher and informant are located on different islands.

##### ***E. Data Sources***

In this study, the researcher utilizes existing literature, including research journals, credible websites, and relevant information from the informant "JP". The data from these

sources will be analyzed with the researcher's subjectivity in accordance with the research paradigm adopted.

#### ***F. Data Collection Method***

In this study, the qualitative data collection techniques used are library research (literature study) and in-depth interviews with the key informant JP, a former member of the NII separatist movement. Through library research, the researcher collects various relevant secondary data sources such as books, scientific journals, research institute reports, government documents, mass media articles, and other literature discussing the history, ideology, and activities of the NII movement. This technique is used to build a theoretical framework and contextual understanding of the background, movement patterns, and NII's influence on Indonesia's ideological system and democracy.

To complement the theoretical data, the researcher also conducts in-depth interviews with JP. The interviews are semi-structured, using an interview guide while remaining flexible for further information exploration. The interviews focus on JP's personal experience during NII membership, views on the organization's ideology, reasons for leaving, and critical reflections on the movement's impact on society and the state. This combination of library research and in-depth interviews aims to produce a comprehensive understanding—both theoretically and empirically—of NII's influence on Indonesia's ideology as a democratic state.

#### ***G. Data Analysis Technique***

In this study, the researcher uses an interactive data analysis model adapted from Miles and Huberman, consisting of three main components:

1. **Data Reduction:** The process of simplifying data from interviews or observations, selecting key points, focusing on important aspects, and searching for themes and patterns.
2. **Data Display:** Presenting data in descriptive narrative form, matrices, graphs, or tables so that data can be more easily understood and analyzed.
3. **Conclusion Drawing and Verification:** The final stage of data analysis, in which the researcher makes interpretations of the reduced and displayed data, then draws conclusions that are continuously verified to ensure validity.

## **V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***A. The NII Movement and Its Ideological Threat to Indonesian Democracy***

Ideology is a thesis above material. The existence of material is the manifestation of an idea. Constructivism as a social theory affirms this. The existence of a militant movement or organization arises because there is an idea underpinning the formation of that organization and determining its direction. NII, as an Islamic militant organization operating in the religious and sociopolitical arena, was formed with the goal of establishing an Islamic state governed by Quranic law, creating Darul Islam, and replacing the Pancasila ideology with a caliphate system as existed in the era following the Prophet Muhammad's death.

This radical ideology clearly threatens state sovereignty. Furthermore, Indonesia's democratic system is disrupted because NII's rules define participation in democracy as a form of Thagut (idolatry). Not only does it threaten, it also interferes with how the state system operates properly. Therefore, greater attention and constructive efforts by the government and relevant parties are urgently needed.

### ***B. Constructivist Analysis of NII's Ideological Influence***

Using the social definition paradigm's theoretical foundation—particularly constructivism as a social theory—this phenomenon can be explained. The ideological difference between democratic ideology and opposing Islamic fundamentalist ideology results in threats to national integrity. This is the result of ideas constructed by subjects with differing perspectives on Indonesia's social and political reality.

Constructivist ideas constitute the most important aspect in influencing actions. NII, with its ideology, implements material manifestation that is synchronized with its goals. NII's fundamental ideology and goals—directed toward building an Islamic State of Indonesia and reconstructing the Indonesian ideology painstakingly built by its founders—thus threaten Indonesia's integrity and sovereignty.

Democracy as a contemporary state system has encountered a boomerang phenomenon. Despite this, the state must pay greater attention to NII and work to reconstruct radical ideology toward a full Pancasila ideology. Constructivism as a social theory is capable of explaining this phenomenon, with the expectation that radical movements can be addressed wisely for the sake of national prosperity amid diversity.

This research focuses on how NII's influence on NKRI's ideology leads to acts of radical separatism. The study is directed toward a deep analysis of the influence of the NII Separatist Movement on Indonesian state ideology, particularly in the context of democracy, Pancasila, and national integration. This research not only addresses the historical aspects of NII's emergence and development, but also highlights how this movement spreads its ideology through various channels such as informal education, digital media, and closed cadre recruitment. The primary focus is on the forms of influence exerted by this movement on the value system and ideological structure of the nation, including the potential for deviation from the principles of popular sovereignty, religious tolerance, and the spirit of unity in diversity.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Ideology is a thesis above material; the existence of material is the manifestation of an idea—as constructivism as a social theory affirms. The existence of a militant movement or organization arises because there is an idea underpinning its formation and determining its direction and goals.

NII, as an Islamic militant organization operating in the religious and sociopolitical arena, was formed with the goal of establishing an Islamic state governed by Quranic law, creating Darul Islam, and replacing the Pancasila ideology with a caliphate system. This radical ideology clearly threatens state sovereignty. Indonesia's democratic system is disrupted because NII's rules define participation in democracy as a form of *Thagut*. Not only does it threaten, it also interferes with the proper functioning of the state system. Therefore, the government and relevant parties must pay greater attention to NII and undertake constructive efforts to redirect radical ideology toward Pancasila, in order to ensure the continued prosperity of Indonesia as a nation of unity in diversity.

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