William James's Pragmatism and the Issue of Islamic Populism in Indonesia during the 2017 Gubernatorial Election and the 2019 General Election

[1]Veri Setiawan, [2]Fauzan Daffa Mutaqin, [3]Christal Augustine
[1]Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa Banten, Indonesia
[2]Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa Banten, Indonesia
[3]Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa Banten, Indonesia
[1]veri.setiawan@untirta.ac.id, [2] 2288220024@untirta.ac.id, [3] 2288220050@untirta.ac.id
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Abstrak: *Fenomena populisme Islam telah menjadi topik perdebatan yang intens, khususnya ketika muncul sebagai kekuatan politik yang nyata pada Pilkada DKI Jakarta tahun 2017 dan Pemilu Indonesia tahun 2019. Kelompok populis yang terlibat dalam peristiwa tersebut menggunakan berbagai strategi untuk mencapai tujuan politik mereka, antara lain dengan memobilisasi dukungan massa melalui politik identitas, sentimen keagamaan, serta penyebaran informasi yang menyesatkan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara pragmatisme William James dengan menguatnya gerakan populisme Islam di Indonesia pada momentum politik tersebut. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif, penelitian ini menganalisis sejauh mana praktik populisme Islam mencerminkan kecenderungan pragmatis, khususnya gagasan bahwa kebenaran diukur dari konsekuensi praktis yang ditimbulkannya. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa populisme Islam di Indonesia pada periode tersebut sangat bertumpu pada strategi pragmatis yang lebih mengutamakan keuntungan politik dibandingkan prinsip etika maupun nilai keagamaan. Praktik semacam ini memperlihatkan bahwa wacana populis lebih bertujuan mengeksploitasi identitas keagamaan dan mobilisasi massa untuk kepentingan praktis jangka pendek daripada benar-benar mewakili aspirasi rakyat secara substantif. Analisis ini menegaskan adanya pertautan antara populisme religius dan filsafat pragmatisme, serta menyoroti implikasinya terhadap keberlanjutan demokrasi di Indonesia.*
Kata Kunci: populisme Islam, politik Indonesia, pragmatisme, William James

ABSTRACT: *The phenomenon of Islamic populism has become a subject of intense debate, particularly as it emerged as a tangible political force during the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election and the 2019 Indonesian General Election. The populist groups involved in these events employed various strategies to achieve their political objectives, often by mobilizing mass support through identity politics, religious sentiment, and widespread use of misinformation. This study aims to examine the relationship between William James's pragmatism and the rise of Islamic populist movements in Indonesia during these electoral moments. By employing a qualitative-descriptive approach, this paper analyzes the extent to which Islamic populist practices reflected pragmatic tendencies, especially the notion that truth is measured by its practical consequences. The findings reveal that Islamic populism in Indonesia during this period leaned heavily on pragmatic strategies that prioritized political gains over ethical or religious principles. Such practices demonstrate that the populist discourse was less about representing the people in a substantive sense and more about exploiting religious identity and mass mobilization for practical, short-term objectives. This analysis underscores the convergence of religious populism and pragmatic philosophy, highlighting its implications for the sustainability of democracy in Indonesia.*
Keywords: *Islamic populism, Indonesian politics, pragmatism, William James*

INTRODUCTION

The issue of populist movements in contemporary times has also emerged in Indonesia, particularly during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election (Pilkada DKI Jakarta) and the 2019 general election, in which the confrontation between nationalist populism and Islamic populism became highly visible. Political frictions between the two camps were evident, as contentious issues such as the rhetoric of *Pancasila* versus *Khilafah*, the criminalization of religious leaders (*ulama*), anti-Islam narratives, and accusations of being anti–Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) dominated democratic public discourse in Indonesia. During this period, various sentiments surfaced, including anti-foreign, anti-*aseng* (a derogatory term for ethnic Chinese), and the dichotomy of *cebong* versus *kampret*, all of which were propagated by supporters from opposing sides. Broadly speaking, this phenomenon reflects the growing strength of Islamic populist movements in Indonesia.[1]

From the perspective of the philosophy of science, the phenomenon of Islamic populism is particularly intriguing to be examined through the lens of pragmatism, especially the thought of William James. Pragmatism emphasizes that the truth of an idea is measured by its practical consequences, thereby making it a relevant framework for understanding political practices imbued with interests. Islamic populism during the 2017 gubernatorial election and the 2019 general election may thus be viewed as a manifestation of pragmatism, wherein religious issues were employed not merely as expressions of religiosity, but as political instruments to achieve practical objectives, namely electoral victory.

This study is significant because it offers a philosophical analysis of contemporary Indonesian political practices, thereby enriching academic discourse on the intersection between the philosophy of pragmatism and the political reality of Islamic populism. Consequently, this research contributes not only to the field of philosophy but also to the study of politics and democracy in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach with a historical-philosophical method. The historical method is used to trace the development of the phenomenon of Islamic populism in the context of Indonesian politics, particularly during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election and the 2019 general election. In historical research, analysis not only records events but also interprets the meaning of a series of

[1] Shofan, "Populisme Islam dan Tantangan Demokrasi Islam di Indonesia," 8.

historical facts that occur.[2] Data are obtained through a review of various primary and secondary sources, such as news archives, public documents, political history literature, and academic writings discussing Islamic populism in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the philosophical method is used to examine William James's pragmatism ideas in depth and then connect them to the practice of Islamic populism. Thus, this research not only presents historical facts but also provides a conceptual analysis based on a philosophical perspective.[3]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Philosophy of Pragmatism

Philosophy is one of the disciplines that has undergone a long and extensive history of development. The question of when philosophy first emerged as a distinct field of knowledge cannot be determined with certainty. Although it is difficult to trace the exact moment of its origin, the place of its emergence can be reasonably identified. Philosophy is believed to have originated in the city of Miletus, one of the ancient Greek city-states. This city was home to the figure regarded as the "first philosopher," namely Thales. Other philosophers who also came from Miletus include Anaximander and Anaximenes.[4]

Although Thales is regarded as the first philosopher, the first person to use the term "philosophy" was Pythagoras (497 BCE). The term emerged as a response to the scholars of that era who referred to themselves as "experts of knowledge." Pythagoras argued that knowledge in its broadest sense was not suitable for human beings due to the limitations of human capacity. He further explained that humans would never be fully capable of overcoming the difficulties and dynamics of nature in the process of acquiring knowledge. Knowledge, he contended, represents only a fragment derived from philosophy, not its entirety. He then concluded that, in essence, human beings are not experts of knowledge, but rather seekers and lovers of wisdom.[5]

Etymologically, the term *philosophy* derives from the Greek words *philos*, meaning "love" or "affection," and *sophia*, meaning "wisdom." The combination of these two words refers to the notion of a "love of wisdom.".[6] The attitude of being wise in making decisions is essential in any context.

According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI), philosophy is defined as knowledge and inquiry, through the use of reason, into the essence of all that exists,

[2] Sjamsuddin, *Metodologi Sejarah*.
[3] Kaelan, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Bidang Filsafat*.
[4] Kaelan, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Bidang Filsafat*.
[5] Rahmat, *Filsafat Administrasi*, 1.
[6] Chaedar Alwasilah, *Filsafat Bahasa dan Pendidikan*, 7.

along with its causes, origins, and governing principles. The core branches of this discipline are logic, aesthetics, metaphysics, and epistemology.[7] In another reference, philosophy is described as knowledge concerning the methods of systematic critical thinking; knowledge pertaining to a universal understanding of all problems; and knowledge of the pursuit of truth in thought, which is boundless and engages with questions that are never definitively resolved.[8]

From these two definitions, it can be concluded that philosophy is a body of knowledge that studies the process of seeking ultimate truth through critical, systematic, and comprehensive inquiry. The term *comprehensive* in this context refers to an attempt to examine phenomena from multiple perspectives until a conclusion can be drawn, which is then regarded as a form of truth. One important point to understand is that truth in philosophy is neither absolute nor eternal. Philosophical truth is subject to change in accordance with the shifting circumstances and conditions of its time.

As previously mentioned, the core branches of philosophy are logic, aesthetics, metaphysics, and epistemology. Among these elements, Aristotle identified metaphysics as the *first philosophy*, that is, the most universal principle, beyond ordinary experience, or something that lies behind direct human perception. Examples of metaphysical questions include inquiries about the existence of God, life after death, the relationship between mind and matter, and other issues considered distant from empirical reality.[9] Although such questions may appear perplexing, inquiries into the metaphysical realm require answers just as much as those concerning the material world.

Richard L. Kirkham (2013) classified metaphysical inquiry in philosophy into two broad categories: realist theories of truth and non-realist theories of truth. The focus of this study is on pragmatism, which falls within the category of non-realist theories of truth, with particular attention to the development of classical pragmatism as articulated by three key figures: Charles Peirce, William James, and John Dewey.[10]
Etymologically, the word *pragmatism* is derived from the Greek term *pragma*, meaning matter, fact, object, something made, activity/action, work, or that which concerns consequences. Pragmatism can thus be understood as a school of thought that emphasizes the functioning of ideas within action.

The roots of pragmatist thought can be traced back to the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus (544–484 BCE), who believed that the fundamental nature of

[7] Departemen Pendidikan Nasional., *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia.*, 392.
[8] Rahmat, *Filsafat Administrasi*, 3.
[9] Chaedar Alwasilah, *Filsafat Bahasa dan Pendidikan*, 12.
[10] Kirkham, *Teori-teori Kebenaran: Pengantar Kritis dan Komprehensif.*

reality is change—everything continuously flows and transforms. A similar perspective was expressed by Protagoras (480–410 BCE), who argued that truth, values, and norms are not absolute, but contingent upon time and place.[11]

The term *pragmatism* was first introduced by Charles Peirce, who derived it from Immanuel Kant's philosophy. In Kant's writings, there are two similar yet distinct terms: *praktisch* (Greek: *praktikos*) and *pragmatisch* (Greek: *pragmatikos*). The former refers to action pursued for its own sake and not based on direct experience, whereas the latter refers to hypothetical belief oriented toward the possibility of achieving particular ends.[12]

In simple terms, pragmatism can be defined as a philosophical movement that maintains that what is true is that which proves itself to be true through its practically beneficial consequences. This school of thought is open to all ideas, provided they yield practical outcomes.[13] The core of this philosophy rests on three main principles: it refrains from addressing normative matters, it rejects absolutism, and it opposes dualism.[14]

Pragmatism has been extensively discussed by scholars, both as a philosophical tradition and as a practical problem-solving strategy. It is also recognized as an attitude and method that prioritizes the consequences and utility of concepts and ideas rather than becoming entangled in endless metaphysical-philosophical debates. This characteristic distinguishes pragmatism from other schools of thought. Responses to pragmatism have been diverse: while many support it, others strongly oppose it. Negative impressions of pragmatism often arise from the perception that it avoids ceaseless philosophical disputes, refuses to engage with fundamental assumptions, perceptions, and values, and instead tends to move directly toward practical planning.[15]

WILLIAM JAMES' PRAGMATISM

William James was the figure most responsible for making pragmatism widely known across the world. He was the first to contribute significantly to the powerful wave of philosophical thought in the Western tradition. With the publication of his

[11] Sunaryo Kuswana, *Filsafat Pendidikan Teknologi, Vokasi, dan Kejurua*, 31.

[12] Keraf. A., *Pragmatisme Menurut William James*, 15–16.

[13] Susanto, *Filsafat Ilmu: Suatu Kajian dalam Dimensi Ontologis, Epistimologis, dan Aksiologis*, 41.

[14] Anastasia Jessica Adinda, *Menelusuri Pragmatisme: Pengantar pada Pemikiran Pragmatisme dari Peirce hingga Habermas*, 5.

[15] Oesman and Alfian, *Pancasila sebagai Ideologi dalam Berbagai Bidang Kehidupan Bermasyarakat, Berbangsa, dan Bernegara.*, 57.

books *Pragmatism* (1907) and *The Meaning of Truth* (1909), the pragmatist movement advanced as though it were destined to dominate twentieth-century philosophy. Pragmatism is more often associated with James than with Charles Sanders Peirce.[16]

William James was born in New York City to Henry James Sr. and Maria Robertson Walsh James. He was known as an enthusiastic and diligent child. His early education was strongly shaped by his father, a Swedish theologian, and he came from a family with a comfortable economic background.[17] Between 1855 and 1860, William James studied in several countries, including England, France, Switzerland, and Germany. He showed an interest in the natural sciences as well as in the arts, particularly painting. During this time, he had not yet decided on the career path he would pursue, and his family gave him the freedom to choose his own profession. From 1860 to 1861, he studied painting under William M. Hunt in Newport. In the autumn of 1861, he entered Harvard's Lawrence Scientific School, where he studied new sciences such as chemistry and anatomy.[18]

In 1863, he enrolled in Harvard Medical School and earned his degree in 1869. He interrupted his studies in 1865 to travel to Brazil, but eventually returned to complete them. His exposure to multiple fields of study nurtured an open-minded and tolerant attitude toward differing opinions. He began teaching anatomy and physiology at Harvard in 1869 and, by 1875, was teaching psychology.[19] James's intellectual orientation gradually shifted from psychology toward philosophy during the 1880s. He became interested in pragmatism as a method for addressing philosophical disputes, inspired by the empirical orientation in the pragmatism of Charles S. Peirce. James developed Peirce's conception of pragmatism further—not merely as a way to test the consequences of subjective experience, but as an approach applicable to all experiences and the broader concerns of human life.[20] James's central thesis emphasized the importance of action in human purpose. At least three elements underpin his pragmatism: the meaning of pragmatism, the theory of truth, and the theory of meaning..[21]

For William James, pragmatism carried a meaning similar to that proposed by Charles S. Peirce, namely as a method for determining the practical consequences of an idea or action. Pragmatism may be understood as a philosophy of action, though

[16] Tafsir, *Filsafat Umum: Akal dan Hati Sejak Thales Hingga Jame*, 167.
[17] Keraf. A., *Pragmatisme Menurut William James*, 22.
[18] Hutchins, *Great Books of Western World Jilid 53*, 167.
[19] Hutchins, *Great Books of Western World Jilid 53*, 167.
[20] Keraf. A., *Pragmatisme Menurut William James*, 35.
[21] Keraf. A., *Pragmatisme Menurut William James*, 35.

not as a ready-made philosophical system or as a provider of ultimate answers to philosophical questions. Instead, it seeks only to determine the practical consequences of problems, without offering final solutions.[22] For James, pragmatism was not merely a method but also a theory of truth. Truth, in this sense, corresponded with dictionary definitions: the agreement between our ideas and reality. He also believed that a true idea is one that is capable of revealing actual reality.[23] Moreover, James emphasized the importance of true ideas as instruments for action. He illustrated this with an example: when a person is lost in a forest and discovers a small path, they might form the belief that the path will lead to a human settlement. This belief then motivates the person to follow the path in order to save themselves. Whether or not a settlement lies at the end of the path will be verified only after acting upon the idea. If indeed a settlement is found, then the idea proves to be true.[24]

PRAGMATISM AND THE ISSUE OF ISLAMIC POPULISM IN INDONESIA

The wave of populist issues is by no means new in the history of global politics. Studies on populism have long developed, particularly in Latin America, and more recently in North America and Europe—and have, of course, evolved into a global field of study. Some scholars have also observed the emergence of populism in several Asian countries, such as Thailand at certain points in its political history.[25] Like other contemporary discourses, populism emerges as a concept that can be filled with various ideas. Scholarly studies on populism date back to the late nineteenth century, beginning with peasant movements in Russia and the United States, followed by the rise of populism in Latin America during the mid-twentieth century, and continuing to its contemporary resurgence in Europe, the United States, and Latin America.[26]

In general, discussions of populist movements are defined within social, economic, and political studies and are analyzed through diverse theoretical approaches, including structuralism, post-structuralism, modernization theory, social movement theory, party politics theory, political psychology, political economy, and theories of democracy.[27] These multiple perspectives have given rise to a variety of definitions of populism.

According to Laclau (2005), populism is a *political logic*—a consequence of the political conditions within society. It provides a specific framework for categorizing

[22] Keraf. A., *Pragmatisme Menurut William James*, 35–36.
[23] Keraf. A., *Pragmatisme Menurut William James*, 40.
[24] Keraf. A., *Pragmatisme Menurut William James*, 41.
[25] Shofan, "Populisme Islam dan Tantangan Demokrasi Islam di Indonesia," 8.
[26] Gidron and Bonikowski, *Varieties of Populism*.
[27] Gidron and Bonikowski, *Varieties of Populism*.

political goals, oriented primarily toward "the people," and for articulating *particular demands*, that is, social demands arising from widespread dissatisfaction with socio-economic conditions. From this definition, it may be analyzed that populist movements emerge when a nation's social, economic, and political order deteriorates, giving rise to deep distrust. In PWD's research, populism is understood as a Manichean political style encompassing three central dimensions. First, populism refers to "the people," with populist leaders typically claiming to represent and act on behalf of the people in a general sense. Second, populism concerns the creation and reinforcement of direct ties between populist leaders and the people. Third, this style of politics strongly carries anti-establishment and anti-elite sentiments..[28]

Pengertian tersebut mengandung dua makna yang berniai positif dan negatif. Makna positifnya dalah populisme dipandang sebagai sebuah gerakan yang yang bisa melahirkan sebuah paradigma baru bahwa pembangunan harus berorientasi pada rakyat. Makna negatif dari pengertian tersebut adalah populisme dapat diartikan sebagai sebuah gerakan melawan dominasi oligarki dengan jalan mobilisasi massa dan kelompok-kelompok yang termarjinalkan. This understanding conveys both positive and negative meanings. On the positive side, populism is seen as a movement capable of producing a new paradigm—that development should be people-oriented. On the negative side, populism may also be interpreted as a movement opposing oligarchic domination through the mobilization of the masses and marginalized groups.[29]

For many Indonesian Muslims, religious identity (in this case, Islam) was increasingly perceived as a source of political mobilization. Referring to Vedi R. Hadiz in *Islamic Populism in Indonesia and the Middle East* (2019), the *Aksi Bela Islam* (Defend Islam Movement), which employed Islamic symbols as a unifying force and a basis for mobilization, was believed to lay the foundation for the rise of Islamic populism in Indonesia.. [30] In practice, this scenario was played out in Indonesian politics, albeit primarily for pragmatic, electoral purposes.

Identity politics and religious populism were clearly deployed for political ends. The 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election and the 2019 presidential election revealed how religious interpretations were weaponized against political opponents. Religious politicization, hate speech, and radical ideologies spread rapidly within Indonesian Islam at that time. What should have been a source of mercy and

[28] Savirani, et al., *Demokrasi Di Indonesia: Antara Patronase Dan Populisme, Ringkasan Eksekutif Project Power, Welfare, and Democracy*.

[29] Shofan, "Populisme Islam dan Tantangan Demokrasi Islam di Indonesia," 4.

[30] Shofan, "Populisme Islam dan Tantangan Demokrasi Islam di Indonesia," 5.

compassion for all beings was tainted by hostility and hatred.[31] The momentum of Islamic populism escalated during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, beginning with Basuki Tjahaja Purnama's (Ahok) speech on the interpretation of Qur'anic verse Al-Maidah 51, delivered during the campaign.[32] The speech was perceived as offensive and insulting to Muslims. This incident spread rapidly through social media, amplifying anti-Islamic and anti-Chinese sentiments. The narrative of victimhood was strategically deployed by Islamic populist groups in Jakarta to gain electoral support.

This polarization cannot be regarded as a simple phenomenon, for it eroded public rationality and created a reality often described as a "post-truth society." In such a reality, the correspondence theory of truth—which posits truth as the alignment between statements and facts—was rendered ineffective. Instead, statements, continuously disseminated through social media, were accepted as truth regardless of factual basis, giving rise to hoaxes. Conversely, factual information was often rejected as untrue.[33] Here, fanaticism suppressed reason and sharpened political divides. A similar dynamic re-emerged during the 2019 presidential election, which featured two prominent figures: Prabowo Subianto and Joko Widodo (Jokowi). Prabowo exemplified a textbook populist candidate, portraying the system as corrupt and pledging to restore it while denouncing foreign interests. Jokowi, on the other hand, offered a softer populist narrative—reform from within, positioning himself as inclusive and non-confrontational.[34] During the campaign, confrontation between the Islamic populist camp supporting Prabowo and the nationalist populist camp supporting Jokowi intensified, with both sides exchanging attacks and delegitimizing their opponents. The contest culminated with the announcement of the election results on May 21, 2019. The National Winning Body (BPN), led by Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Uno, rejected the official results. Protests against alleged electoral fraud erupted nationwide, involving not only political elites but also grassroots supporters of Prabowo and Sandiaga. Much of the dissent was expressed on social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp. The opposition even mobilized mass demonstrations targeting the offices of the KPU (General Elections Commission) and Bawaslu (Elections Supervisory Agency), accusing them of systematic, structured, and massive fraud..[35] Social media "wars" between the two camps persisted well beyond the announcement and into Jokowi's inauguration. The period from 2017 to 2019 thus

[31] Shofan, "Populisme Islam dan Tantangan Demokrasi Islam di Indonesia," 6.
[32] Arifin, "Islam, Populisme Dan Masa Depan Demokrasi Di Indonesia," 11.
[33] Arifin, "Islam, Populisme Dan Masa Depan Demokrasi Di Indonesia," 11.
[34] Mietzner, *Reinventing Asian Populism*.
[35] Basya, "Populisme Islam, Krisis Modal Sosial Dan Tantangan Terhadap Demokrasi," 45.

provided concrete evidence of the growing prominence of Islamic populism in Indonesia's political arena.

Reflecting on the events of the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election and the 2019 presidential election, a clear correlation emerges between the rise of Islamic populism in Indonesia and the philosophy of pragmatism. It must be emphasized that pragmatism is open to any idea so long as it produces practical consequences; truth is defined not by its methods, but by the benefits it yields. Based on this understanding, the Islamic populist movement during the 2017 gubernatorial election and the 2019 presidential election may be seen as an embodiment of pragmatic practice. In this context, Islamic populism aligns with the negative interpretation of populism—namely, as a movement opposing oligarchic domination by mobilizing the masses and marginalized groups. The majority of groups rejecting the 2019 election results shared a common identity emphasizing religious devotion and feelings of marginalization. Most of their supporters came from the urban middle class and the educated, while others were from the urban poor. They were activists and constituents of Islamist-oriented parties and organizations such as PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera) and FPI (Islamic Defenders Front), modern-conservative groups like PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional), and populist-oriented parties like Gerindra, which advocated national self-reliance and improved welfare for the urban poor and middle-class Muslims. These ideas were championed by Prabowo Subianto, Gerindra's chairman and presidential candidate.[36]

This phenomenon, however, was not a genuine effort to create a people-centered paradigm of development as envisioned in the ideals of populism. Rather, it was a series of pragmatic maneuvers by Islamic populist groups to advance their political objectives, which themselves remained ambiguous. Their strategies extended beyond attacking opponents' visions and missions, intruding even into personal domains that should not have entered public discourse due to ethical considerations. Worse still, hoaxes circulated widely, aimed at discrediting their rivals, creating the framing that they alone represented the true face of Islam while their opponents were branded as *kafir* (infidels). They sought to instill unfounded fears that if their labeled "infidel" opponents were to win, Islam would be imperiled. This dynamic illustrates how closely Islamic populism in practice aligned with pragmatism, particularly William James's assertion that pragmatism seeks to determine the practical consequences of arising problems.[37]

[36] Basya, "Populisme Islam, Krisis Modal Sosial Dan Tantangan Terhadap Demokrasi," 45.
[37] Keraf. A., *Pragmatisme Menurut William James*, 35–36.

Such an orientation is clearly pragmatic, though in ways that diverge from Islamic teachings, which do not condone deceit in the pursuit of victory. The practice of Islamic populism during this era contradicted the principles of Islamic religiosity, which emphasize goodness, love, and compassion. The 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election and the 2019 presidential election thus serve as valuable lessons on the fragility of Indonesia's democracy and the dangers posed by Islamic populism to its sustainability.

CONCLUSION

The political stage of the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election and the 2019 General Election has served as evidence of the growing strength of Islamic populism in Indonesia, which was heavily laden with elements of practical politics. This phenomenon aligns with the principles of the philosophy of pragmatism, particularly William James's pragmatism, which emphasizes that pragmatism is a school of thought open to anything insofar as it yields practical consequences, holding that what is considered true is whatever proves useful, regardless of the means employed, provided that it brings about practical benefits. The practices adopted by Islamic populist groups during this period, however, did not reflect the fundamental principles of Islam. The proliferation of "buzzers" disseminating hoaxes to relentlessly attack political opponents demonstrated a political orientation that was overtly pragmatic, driven solely by the pursuit of political objectives.

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