Sectarian Narratives of the 2019 Presidential Election and the Radical Transnational Network

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The 8th presidential election in Indonesia occurring in 2019 was heavily peppered with religious narratives and the mobilisation of sectarians. As a result, as found in several observation reports, the demographic analysis of each candidate's vote revealed a sectarian split where Joko Widodo's landslide victory occurred in all provinces where the majority of the population was not Muslim and his considerable defeat in many Muslim-majority areas. This is a big threat to the sustainability of democracy in Indonesia. If we examine the narratives circulated in mass media and social media, the main actors spreading sectarian narratives during the 2019 elections were anti-democratic groups. By using the concept of sectarianism and radical transnational networks, this article argues two points: (1) the sectarian narratives used by antidemocratic forces in Indonesia are related to radical transnational networks; (2) therefore, in preserving democracy, the Indonesian government cannot solely focus on the democratic narrative but should also link this phenomenon with transnational radical networks. The authors hope that this analysis can contribute to the discourse of how democratic forces should deal with forces of anti-democracy.

Keywords: democracy, Indonesia election, radical transnational networks, sectarianism.

The 8th Indonesian Presidential Election was held on April 17, 2019 and was called 'the world's biggest one day election' by some media outlets. Election vote counting which was partaken by 192 million people with a 83.90% vote turn-out was done manually and brought victory for Joko Widodo-Ma'ruf Amin. Their rivals, Prabowo Subianto-Sandiaga Uno, rejected the election results and filed a lawsuit to the Constitutional Court on charges of fraud. After a hearing that was covered live by a number of television stations, the Constitutional Court ruled that the allegations were unproven. Based on this decision, the General Election Commission officially declared Joko Widodo-Ma'ruf Amin as the President and Vice-President of Indonesia for 2019-2024.

Although Prabowo and Sandiaga Uno officially accepted the decision of the Constitutional Court, several Muslim groups, such as PA 212, GNPF and FUI, continued to protest in rejecting the decision and even threatened to file a lawsuit with the International Court of Justice. Demonstrators waved flags bearing the *shahada*, banners using the word 'jihad', 'defending Islam', or quoting verses from the Koran about justice. During the Constitutional Court trials, they also flooded the streets to perform Islamic rituals such as praying in congregation and reciting the Koran. A cleric even read the *shalawat ashghil*, a special prayer asking for protection from God from the evil of wrongdoers (CNN Indonesia, 2019a).

This situation is a continuation of the narrative that had been built by some political forces in Indonesia which had supported Prabowo in the 2014 contestation, namely the narrative of Islam versus non-Islam. President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo was portrayed as an "enemy of Islam", "communist", or "Christian". On the contrary, Prabowo Subianto was represented by his supporters as the 'the choice of *ulama*' (clerics).

Jokowi responded to these narratives by showing various rituals to the public to prove that he was a true Muslim, such as leading congregational prayers, visiting Islamic boarding schools, and approaching a number of prominent clerics. The culmination of his effort was on 9 August 2018 when Jokowi finally chose a senior and very influential cleric as his Vice President candidate, KH Ma'ruf Amin. Meanwhile, Jokowi's supporters responded to the sectarian narratives by exposing biographies of Prabowo's extended family, some of which were Christians or by bantering Prabowo for allegedly not attending Friday prayers through the hashtag #PrabowoJumatanDimana that was always trending every Friday before the election.

Narrative battles that involve religion and accuse each other as 'less Islamic' or even 'infidel', are phenomena that have the potential to cause divisions in Indonesian society. Some qualitative observations have shown division of support based on identity and religion in a number of regions in Indonesia. Jokowi won a big victory in areas with a majority non-Muslim population or a significant population of non-Muslims. In contrast, Prabowo-Sandi won by a landslide in areas with majority Muslim populations (Brooks, 2019; Sani, 2019; Mcbeth 2019; Pepinsky, 2019).

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From the results of the manual calculation carried out by the KPU, it was seen that the division of votes was based on the population's religion. Joko Widodo or Jokowi-Ma'ruf Amin gained absolute victory in Bali, East Nusa Tenggara, North Sulawesi, West Sulawesi, Papua, West Papua and West Kalimantan. In contrast, Prabowo - Sandiaga Uno won by a landslide in Aceh, West Sumatra, West Nusa Tenggara, Riau, Banten and West Java. The following table shows the final results of the vote count in several provinces which shows a sectarian patter

Table 1. Distribution of Votes in Muslim and Non-Muslim Majority Areas

Areas with a Majority of Non-Muslims		Areas with a Majority of Muslims	
Number of Jokowi Voters		Number of Prabowo-Sandi Voters	
Bali	91.68%	Aceh	85.59%
NTT	88.57%	Sumbar	85.92%
Sulut	77.24%	NTB	67.89%
Sulbar	64.32%	Riau	61%
Papua	90.7%	Banten	61.54%
Papua Barat	79.82%	Jawa Barat	59.93%
Kalbar	57,50%		

Source: KPU (Commission of Election, Prayoga, 2019)

Many Indonesian observers provide similar responses to this result, such as Mahfud MD, a law professor and prominent political observer in Indonesia; Kunto A. Wibowo from the Kedai Kopi Survey Institute; Irwansyah, Head of the Aceh Regional Campaign Team; General Moeldoko, Chief of Staff of the Indonesian President; and Asrinaldi, an academic from Andalas University. They all assessed that religious factors contributed to Jokowi's defeat in some provinces such as Aceh, West Java, and West Sumatera (Kami, 2019; CNN Indonesia, 2019b; Abonita, 2019; Egeham, 2019; Anugerah and Marta, 2019).

The question is, which actor was most active in voicing sectarian narratives during the 2019 elections? Aminudin, an academic from Brawijaya University, in evaluating Jokowi's big victory in two provinces in Java which had Muslim majorities, namely East Java (65.79%) and Central Java (77.29%) stated that Prabowo-Sandiaga's weak point was their closeness to Islamist groups, even "hardliners". This contradicts the moderate political line of Nahdlatul Ulama, the dominant Islamic mass organisation in the two regions. The results of a survey conducted by the Indonesian Political Indicators in early April 2019 showed that 62.7% of NU residents supported Jokowi-Ma'ruf, while the rest supported Prabowo-Sandiaga, especially in Banten and West Java (Teguh, 2019).

The role of Islamist groups in Indonesia's 2019 political contestation can be seen, among others, in the Prabowo-Sandi campaign (April 7, 2019) when the Chair of the Islamic Community Forum (FUI) Al-Khaththath read the MUI (Board of Indonesian Clerics)'s *fatwa* [*decree*] on the Right to Vote (published 2009) about the obligation to "choose a leader who fights for Islam" in the election. But he added a narrative outside of the *fatwa*, namely, "... choosing a leader who does not meet the conditions as referred to in item 4 [of MUI's *Fatwa*], namely not having faith, being devout, dishonest, cannot be trusted, not aspirational, stupid [*planga-plongo*, the mockery that many anti-Jokowi groups convey] and not fighting for the interests of Muslims, is *haram* [forbidden]" (Detik, 2019a).

Although Al-Khaththath did not explicitly mention who he called 'forbidden to choose', because it was said during Prabowo's campaign, it was clear that he was talking about Jokowi. In his speech at Baiturrahman Mosque, Jakarta, on November 22, 2018, he stated that "those who elect leaders who do not fight for Muslims will be burned in hell" and "the campaign team of such leaders will be most exposed to hellfire" (CNN Indonesia, 2019c). Other very popular scholars also spread similar narratives, such as Habib Rizieq Shihab (Chairperson of FPI, Forum of Islamic *Umma*) who said it was forbidden to choose supporters of "religious dissidents" (Detik, 2018a) and Felix Siauw (an Indonesian Hizbut Tahrir activist) who denounced Jokowi's government as "anti-Islam" and "criminalizing the *ulama*" (Siauw, 2018b).

The interesting aspect of this phenomenon is that these Islamist groups are supporters of the establishment *khilafah*, an Islamic anti-democratic system. Jokowi had made a number of efforts in blocking

the movement of these anti-democratic groups during his first administration, including dissolving Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia and arresting several *ulama* who openly gave radical statements. However, the response given by a number of observers was negative. They assessed that "[Jokowi is doing] a deliberate and increasingly systematic effort to impede and enfeeble the legitimate opposition essential to democratic regimes" (Power, 2018); "the government is increasingly turning to authoritarian measures to shore up its support and stymie its opponents" (Aspinall, 2019); dan "Jokowi is fighting illiberalism with illiberalism" (Mietzner, 2018).

This raises a research question, how should democratic governance behave in the face of anti-democratic forces? By using the concepts of sectarianism and radical transnational networks, the authors analyse the activities of one of Islamist groups that had actively spread sectarian narratives ahead of the 2019 presidential election, namely Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI).

Conceptual Frameworks
a. Sectarianism and Radical Transnational Networks
Sectarianism can be briefly interpreted as "one's strong support for certain religious or political groups and often involves conflict with other groups" and this can be found in various communities, both Muslim and non-Muslim (Rahman, 2019). Hinnebusch (2019) defines sectarianism as the identification of a religious community which sharply Emphasise s boundaries with the *Other*, especially when politicised and involving monopoly claims over religious truth.

Previous studies of sectarianism have dealt with conflict in the Middle East, where generally rulers are seen as perpetrators of sectarization or using sectarian issues to silence opposition. In Bahrain, protests that were originally non-sectarian immediately became sectarian as a result of the Al Khalifa's strategy to frame this action as a demonstration of the Shiites against the power of a Sunni government and spread the opinion that if the Shias win, the Al Khalifa regime loses, and the Sunnis in Bahrain will be in danger. Meanwhile, in Egypt, the Al Sisi regime was sectarizing the demonstrators who were members of the Muslim Brotherhood by calling them foreign powers, traitors, and sectarians. Conversely, the Muslim Brotherhood also gave rise to the narration that anyone who opposed Morsi was Christian, liberal, or supporters of the old corrupt regime, and was not a 'true Muslim' (Valbjorn, 2019).

Hurd (2015) writes that sectarianism is a special modern discourse about religious involvement in politics that is endorsed or even institutionalise d by those who hold power to fulfill certain political agendas. Hurd further explained that because sectarianism is a political process, it is not appropriate to view religion as inherently pushing people to conflict or that religious differences will lead to conflict. Therefore, it is not enough to make religious teachings the only factor in explaining violence occurring in society, both physical violence (terrorism) and political violence (pressure on different political groups), regardless of the political conditions underlying the violence.

Adamson (2005) defines the Radical Transnational Network (RTN) as non-state actors who network with one another across national borders who use violence to achieve political goals, such as Al-Qaeda, Tamil Tigers, Kurdistan Workers' Party and Kosovo Liberation Army. However, it should be underlined that the RTN is not always the same as terrorist organisations. Schmid (2013) suggests distinguishing between terrorism and 'political violence'. Non-state actors sometimes resort to political violence against the state, ranging from 'mild' actions such as hunger strikes, to destruction of public property, hate crimes, and at the highest stage take up arms to overthrow power.

RTN benefit from globalisation because of the convenience provided by communication and transportation technology, enabling them to have political resources that are cross-border in nature, both in terms of funds and opportunities for dissemination of ideas and ideas to recruit more followers (Adamson, 2005). For example, the Syrian armed political movement, the Free Syrian Army, which rebelled against the Assad regime, received financial assistance from civil society from various Gulf countries which was handed over to donors from Kuwait, who then sent it to Syria via bank transfer, *hawala* (the traditional brokerage network), cargo, or cash carried in person (Dickinson, 2013).

b. Options Available to Countries in the Face of Anti-Democratic Power

Mietzner (2018) identifies several actors who seek to destroy democracy from within, namely they openly form antidemocratic parties, mass movements that propagate changes in state shape, and individuals who use grassroots structures and social media to counter the democratic status quo.

Mietzner (2018) conducted a literature review and concluded that there were three opinions about the ways that a democratic government might take in dealing with antidemocratic groups; firstly 'militant democracy' which considers that the government must criminalize or shut down organisations that reject democratic rules. Secondly, tolerating the intolerant, that is, accommodating radical groups in the hope that their views can be shifted to moderate. Third, concentric containment, which is to isolate the non-democratic actors and at the same time take a systematic approach to their supporters and answer the issues of their concern.

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Meanwhile, Plotke (2006) mentions three options that democratic governments can take in the face of anti-democratic forces, namely political tolerance, repression (which is generally the same as militant democracy), and incorporation. Plotke stated that political tolerance is not the same as acceptance or agreement, but rather more openness to accept various political offers from various circles. However, tolerance cannot provide answers to problems that exist related to the relationship between culture (including religion) and politics. For example, the government may recognise the existence of a particular religious group; but when the religious group has a political view which states that only their group can become a political leader [the president], it will certainly be a threat to democracy.

Political repression is the use of power, especially by the state, to limit or eliminate the capacity of actors in carrying out their political activities; starting from the imposition of rules that strictly restrict anti-democratic forces, to prohibit anti-democratic organisations and take legal action against individuals who play a role in violent actions.

Plotke states that repression of anti-democratic forces is indeed a dangerous instrument with strong potential to weaken democracy. But at the same time, citizens also have an interest in maintaining the government they have chosen. If the antidemocratic power is left to strenghten, the citizens' political rights will be threatened; in extreme cases, security and unity of the country are also threatened. But Plotke underlined the two conditions in choosing repression. First, the group has so far been protected by freedom of expression in which they have openly rejected democracy and carried out actions that endanger the sustainability of democracy; and second, the act of repression must be carried out within the corridor of the law.

Plotke suggested the third option, incorporation, which is to invite anti-democratic forces to join democratic processes but at the same time, democratic governments remain firm in rejecting anti-democratic projects aimed at blocking and destroying democratic practices. In practice, the incorporation strategy can involve repression of radicalise d political forces and increase their resistance to democratic forces (Plotke, 2006). The authors consider that this third option is appropriate in the cases of antidemocratic forces in Indonesia and will be explained in the next section.

Sectarian Politics in Indonesia and the Role of the Radical Transnational Network

A number of observers confirmed that sectarianism and polarisation between pluralist or nationalist versus Islamist groups in Indonesia has increased since Jokowi was elected president in 2014. However, they considered that Jokowi's response toward the Islamists was turning into authoritarianism and is a threat towards Indonesia's democracy (Hadiz, 2017; Powers, 2018; Aspinall, 2019; and Davidson, 2019). Busch (2017) explicitly stated that Jokowi's decision to ban HTI has "threatened the freedom of assembly" for all the people. Some of these authors did not thoroughly analyse the anti-democratic activities and sectarian politics carried out by HTI and its relation to radical transnational networks.

Hizbut Tahrir (meaning *Party of Liberation*) is a political party originally founded by Sheikh Taqiyuddīn al-Nabhāni in Jerusalem in 1953 with the aim of establishing a global government headed by a caliph in which all the legal rules carried out by that government were based on the law (*syariah*) of God. This movement then spread to various countries with the same ideology, which generally appeared in the form of anti-democratic narratives and anti-nationalism, and anti-other ideologies that were considered contrary to Islamic teachings (Azman, 2018; Kartini, 2015; Arifan, 2014)

The establishment of the Indonesian branch of Hizb ut-Tahrir, called Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) can be traced from 1982-1983, when an Indonesian student studying in Jordan, M. Mustofa, along with an Australian Hizb ut-Tahrir activist from Lebanon, Abdurrahman Al-Baghdadi, introduced the ideas of the khilafah to students of Bogor Agricultural University (IPB). The introduction of Hizb ut-Tahrir's teachings occurred along with the increasingly widespread campus preaching

movement at that time, which was carried by ex-Masyumi Party activists, to quell the liberal Islamic movement (Arifan, 2014). In 2007, HTI held an International Khilafah Conference at the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium in Jakarta, which was attended by around 80,000 people and invited many national figures, but according to the BBC report (2007), the only figure present at the time was Din Syamsuddin (then serving as the Chairman of Muhamadiyah).

When Mustofa returned to continue his studies in Jordan, the expansion of the HTI network was carried on by several figures including Fathul Hidayah, Asep Syaifullah, Adian Husaini, and Hasan Rifai Al-Faridi under the guidance of Abdurrahman Al-Baghdadi assisted by two Saudi alumni, Abas Hall and Abdul Hannan. The leadership of Hizb ut-Tahrir was held by Muhammad Al-Khathath for some time, who left in 2010 and founded the FUI (Azman, 2018), and he was also active in spreading sectarian narratives leading up to the 2019 Presidential Election as quoted in the previous section. At present, HTI is led by Rokhmat S. Labib with Ismail Yusanto as the spokesman.

In 2014, HTI was registered as an 'association legal entity' through electronic registration at the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. Thus, even though Hizb ut-Tahrir was essentially carrying out political activities, namely encouraging changes in the system from a democracy to a khilafah and implementing sectarian politics, they had not formed a formal political party. HTI's sectarian narratives has received massive resistance from nationalist and pluralist groups. One element of society that strongly supports the disbanding of HTI is Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the largest Islamic community organisation in Indonesia. According to NU, organisations that undermine national unity and Pancasila must be disbanded (Gual, 2017). With such moral support from nationalist and pluralist groups, the government finally revoked the HTI Legal Entity Decree on 19 July 2017.

Nevertheless, the revocation of this decree did not seem to discourage HTI's activities in carrying out sectarian politics. Ahead of the 2019 presidential election, HTI actively spread sectarian narratives. Among others, in 2018 Ismail Yusanto defended an orator named Bahar bin Smith who was detained by the police in the case of persecution of two teenagers. The parents of the two teenagers filed a report to the police in December 2018 and the police immediately arrested him. Video footage of the act of torture was shown in court (Detik, 2019b) and the court finally sentenced Bahar to three years in pris-

on in July 2019. However, Yusanto linked Bahar's arrest with the hate speech case of Bahar who was reported to the police by netizens in November 2018 (but not investigated by the police), who called Jokowi a "sissy" president and "traitor to the nation" for "enriching the Chinese people, infidels, and Westerners" (Detik, 2018b). By stating that "sissy statements are a form of criticism", Yusanto called for Bahar to be released and "if this discrimination and injustice continues, don't blame the public if they say that this regime is indeed an anti-Islamic regime" (Yusanto, 2018). In other words, Yusanto has linked two different cases to support his sectarian claim, namely that the Jokowi government is anti-Islamic.

Another HTI figure, Felix Siauw, actively propagated the importance of establishing the khilafah, and the rejection of democracy and nationalism. In his 2016 speech, for example, Siauw said, "There should not be any ally of God in terms of creation, law, and governance. As sure of every promise of God and the Messenger of Allah, such is that we believe in the return of the *khilafahala minhaji-nubuwwah*, together with the people, to establish the *khilafah*!"(Siauw, 2016). On May 9, 2017, Siauw issued a statement that the Jokowi government was indicated to be anti-Islamic (Illahi, 2017). In his lecture on Youtube 2018, Siauw mentioned that the Jokowi government "was acting unfairly to Muslims; allowing cases of blasphemy [religion]; supporting efforts to secularize Indonesia". But he also stated that replacing the president would not bring significant change as long as the democratic system was not transformed into an Islamic caliphate (Siauw, 2018a). On December 18, 2018, the same day that Bahar bin Smith was detained by the police for child abuse, Siauw wrote a status on facebook stating that "The current ruler doesn't want Islam to influence the people's life, and they consider anyone that wants to establish an Islamic system as radical." He used the hashtag #kriminalisasiulama [criminalization of the clerics] and #baharbinsmith (Siauw, 2018b)

HTI activities cannot be viewed as a local movement because Hizb ut-Tahrir is in fact a transnational network. The track record of Hizb ut-Tahrir in various countries shows that this organisation carries out sectarian politics. Hizb ut-Tahrir is estimated to be active in 40 countries and although they do not use violence in conveying their political ideas, they try to seize power by triggering a rebellion. As a result, many governments have subsequently banned the activities of this party, including in Uzbekistan in the early 2000s (with accusations of

Hizb ut-Tahrir being involved in mass demonstrations in the city of Andijon), Germany in 2003 (with accusations of Hizb ut-Tahrir spreading anti-Semitic propaganda), Bangladesh, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey (Hasan, 2017).

In a Podcast discussion, Dr. Dave McRae, an academic from Melbourne University stated that "...Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), [is] the local branch of an Islamist organisation that seeks to replace democratic governments with an Islamic caliphate through non-violent means." His discussion partner, Sidney Jones, Director of the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, also emphasised HTI as a 'non-violence' movement and considered that the dissolution of HTI was related to "HTI's involvement in anti-Ahok [the Christian governor of Jakarta] demonstrations". But Jones also acknowledged that HTI was part of a transnational network that received command from the central network. Jones said, "... one of the big questions is where did the HTI money come from? Because HTI is part of an international organisation with highly classified leadership, it is believed to be based in Jordan, but no one knows for sure, and there is a 'central direction' and 'central funding' for HTI operations in Indonesia, and the Indonesian branch of Hizb ut-Tahrir is the largest branch of these organisations. "In addition, Jones also informed that there were several HTI ex-members who joined ISIS, including Bahrun Naim (McRae, 2017).

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Bahrun Naim went to Syria in 2014 to join ISIS. Previously, since 2011, HTI had been very active in voicing support for the overthrow of Libyan President Moammar Qaddafi and Syrian President Bashar Assad. HTI's view of the conflicts in Libya and Syria shows that the assessment that HTI is a 'non-violence organisation' needs to be further studied in depth.

The main actor in the overthrow of President Qaddafi in 2011 was Al Qaeda's affiliation in Libya, the Libyan Islamist Fighting Group (LIFG). Their action received open support from Al Qaeda's leader, Abu Yahya al-Libi, and also from the Muslim Brotherhood cleric, Qatar-based Yusuf Qaradhawi, who issued a fatwa on the killing of Qaddafi. LIFG members state that their focus is to enforce sharia law in Libya (Spencer, 2011). At almost the same time, namely in February 2011, HTI through its spokesman Ismail Yusanto published a statement containing a call to Muslims in Libya to subvert Qaddafi and enforce the Khilafah. When Qaddafi was finally killed, HTI expressed their congratulations for the overthrow of the 'tyrant regime' (Sulaeman, 2017).

Furthermore, LIFG figures had left for Libya to help the formation of jihadi militias that would move to overthrow President Assad, including those who were members of the Free Syrian Army and Liwaa Al-Ummah (Fitzgerald, 2012). HTI also expressed support for Syrian jihad. Hafidz Abdurrahman, Chair of the Tsaqafiyah DPP HTIstated, "Hizb ut-Tahrir continues to work hard to guard the Islamic Revolution until it reaches its goal, namely the overthrow of the Bashar kufr regime, then replacing it with the Khilafah." 'as was done with Qaddafi' (Sulaeman, 2017).

HTI Spokesperson, Ismail Yusanto, acknowledged that members of his organisation were involved in jihad in Syria "personally" and "institutionally", Hizb ut-Tahrir had also taken oaths of loyalty with many of the mujahidin groups in Syria including the Jabah al-Nusrah Mujahideen, to ensure that jihad in Syria is an effort to uphold Islamic law under the auspices of the Islamic Khilafah" (Global Muslim, 2013). In addition, HTI also showed support for the Ahrar Al-Sham jihadi militia. On September 9, 2014, the HTI website posted condolences for the death of Ahrar Al-Sham's "jihadist" leader (hizb-indonesia.info).

Jabhah Al-Nusrah and Ahrar Al-Sham are jihadi affiliated militias. Al Nusrah has been included in the list of terrorist organisations by the United Nations since 2012, while Ahrar Al has yet to be included in the list due to US rejection. But the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, said on June 28, 2016, *"From Orlando to San Bernardino to the Philippines and Bali, we've seen pictures and we've heard testimony of shocking crimes committed by al-Qaida, by Boko Haram, by Jaysh al-Islam, by Ahrar al-Sham, by al-Shabaab, Daesh, other groups against innocent civilians, against journalists, and against teachers particularly"* (Kerry, 2016).

HTI's support for some jihadi groups in Libya and Syria shows that HTI ideologically supports violence in the overthrow of a government. This was also seen in the sentence of the British Hizb ut-Tahrir spokesman, Imran Waheed, in his BBC interview, "We want to discard these rulers [of Libya, Egypt, Pakistan] to the dustbin of history" (Hasan, 2017).

How Should Indonesia Deal with the Radical Transnational Network?

By using the categorization of actors who want to destroy the democracy of a country as proposed by Mietzner (2018), it could be concluded that HTI is a "mass movement that propagate changes in the state's

shape". Unfortunately, the fact that antidemocratic groups in Indonesia are part of the RTN was not discussed by the observers who had considered Jokowi to have committed undemocratic actions in the face of antidemocratic Islamist groups. If Jokowi's action to dismiss HTI is categorised as 'repression', Plotke (2006) has provided an opportunity for repression, which must meet the two conditions mentioned earlier. Firstly, HTI has been allowed to spread their narratives and have freedom of expression. From this freedom, the public knows that they have openly rejected democracy and wanted to change the foundation of the country (Pancasila). They have actively spread sectarian narratives ever since Jokowi became president, which was also carried out very openly. Even though they did not carry out acts of violence in Indonesia, their support for the network of "jihadists" in Libya and Syria have proven that they agree on armed coups and this ideology endangers the sustainability of democracy.

For the second condition, repression must be carried out within the legal corridor and Jokowi has fulfilled this by revoking the legal entity decree of HTI. HTI was even given the opportunity to challenge this decision at the State Administrative High Court. After PTUN rejected all HTI lawsuits, they filed an appeal with the Supreme Court, which was also rejected. Thus, focusing only on the democratic procedures in dealing with the undemocratic forces of RTN is not enough because there is a greater interest that must be protected, namely the interests of pro-democracy citizens who want to maintain the government they have chosen, security and national unity. In the case of HTI, as explained, their attachment to the pro-violent radical transnational network is a danger that threatens not only democracy, but also the integration of the Indonesian nation. Therefore, the author agrees with the third option proposed by Plotke, namely "incorporation", which invites HTI members to join in the democratic processes in Indonesia; but at the same time, the Indonesian government must also act to enforce the law in the face of actions which are strongly indicated to destroy democratic practices.

Conclusion

The result of the 2019 Indonesian presidential elections demonstrate a division of support based on identity and religion in a number of regions in Indonesia. The division is drawn between the regions with a minority voter base and Muslim voters. By examining the sectarian

narratives spread before the election, the authors argue that the main actor for causing the strengthening of the sectarian narrative is the Islamist antidemocratic groups. Hizbut Tahrir is one of the prominent forces of these antidemocratic groups and by tracking their support for sectarian wars in Libya and Syria, the authors conclude that HTI is part of the RTN. Pluralist-nationalist organisations and the government have been made aware of the danger brought by HTI towards Indonesia's democracy and unity and this has led to the dissolvement of HTI. However, a number of observers assessed this decision as an authoritarian act of Jokowi. This assessment seems to have forgotten or ignored the fact that HTI is part of the RTN, thus the incorporation strategy option suggested by Plotke is the better choice. Therefore, concurrent with opening the door for HTI to join democratic processes, Jokowi's administration has also rejected their anti-democratic projects by revoking the legal status of the Hizb ut-Tahrir.

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