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Al Washliyah Ethical Democracy: Patterns, Challenges, and Prospects for Implementation

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Abstrak

Al Washliyah sebagai civil society Islam memiliki perspektif model demokrasi etis yang menjadikan maqashid syariah sebagai media menuju demokrasi etis. Penelitian ini akan mengkaji Al Washliyah dalam konteks model demokrasi etis yang memanfaatkan maqāsid al-syarī'ah sebagai media demokrasi etis. Adakah sintesis gagasan untuk model demokrasi etis berbasis Islam yang dapat dikembangkan melalui interpretasi nilai-nilai Islam? Bagaimana implementasi demokrasi etis Al Washliyah? Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian lapangan. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumen. Data dianalisis menggunakan triangulasi. Teori yang dipakai adalah demokrasi, civil society, dan maqashid Syariah. Penelitian ini menunjukkan Al Washliyah memberikan sintesis gagasan mengenai model demokrasi etis berbasis Islam melalui interpretasi nilai-nilai dasar Islam, terutama konsep maqashid syariah. Interpretasi ini menjadi fondasi untuk merumuskan prinsip-prinsip demokrasi yang selaras dengan etika Islam, seperti keadilan, kesetaraan, musyawarah, dan kemaslahatan. Implementasi demokrasi etis dalam konteks Al Washliyah berpotensi dijalankan melalui beberapa saluran strategis. Pertama, melalui jaringan pendidikan yang luas sebagai media internalisasi

demokrasi etis. Kedua, aktivitas organisasi yang dapat menguatkan prinsip kesetaraan. Ketiga, pendalaman praktik demokrasi di internal organisasi sebagai model bagi masyarakat. Keempat, pelaksanaan control sosial pada berbagai kebijakan publik. Kelima, terlibat dalam politik konstitusional, agar perjuangan politik tetap berada pada jalur hukum dan etika Islam.

Kata Kunci: Al Washliyah, Demokrasi Etis, Civil Society, Maqashid Syariah

Abstract

Al Washliyah, as an Islamic civil society, has a perspective on an ethical democracy model that utilizes the maqasid of sharia as a medium for ethical democracy. This study will examine Al Washliyah in the context of an ethical democracy model that utilizes the maqasid of sharia as a medium for ethical democracy. Is there a synthesis of ideas for an Islamic-based ethical democracy model that can be developed through the interpretation of Islamic values? How is Al Washliyah's ethical democracy implemented? This study uses a qualitative approach with field research. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documents. Data were analyzed using triangulation. The theories used are democracy, civil society, and the maqasid of sharia. This study shows that Al Washliyah provides a synthesis of ideas regarding an Islamic-based ethical democracy model through an interpretation of basic Islamic values, especially the concept of maqasid of sharia. This interpretation serves as a foundation for formulating democratic principles that align with Islamic ethics, such as justice, equality, deliberation, and welfare. The implementation of ethical democracy in the context of Al Washliyah has the potential to be carried out through several strategic channels. First, through a broad educational network as a medium for internalizing ethical democracy. Second, through organizational activities that can strengthen the principle of equality. Third, deepening the practice of democracy within organizations as a model for society. Fourth, implementing social control over various public policies. Fifth, engaging in constitutional politics to ensure that political struggles remain within the bounds of Islamic law and ethics.

Keywords: Al Washliyah, Ethical Democracy, Civil Society, Maqasid Sharia.

Introduction

Democratic developments in Indonesia have been very dynamic recently, highlighted by various demonstrations in many regions. In Jakarta, a Grab online motorcycle taxi driver was killed by a Barracuda tactical vehicle from the Mobile Brigade Corps (Brimob) of the Jakarta Metropolitan Police (Polda Metro Jaya) during a demonstration demanding the dissolution of the House of Representatives (DPR) on Thursday, August 28, 2025 (Girsang and Fajriadi, 2025). A demonstration against DPR

allowances in Makassar also resulted in the deaths of four innocent people (DetiksuSel, 2025). Demonstrations in Kediri resulted in the burning of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) building (Tempo, 2025). Meanwhile, in Jepara, demonstrations escalated into chaos, with the DPRD building being burned (Hidayat, 2025).

This fact shows that democracy is still marked by various events that cause setbacks for democracy itself. This decline is a result of various events that do not support the development of democracy in a more positive direction, such as restrictions on freedom of expression in public spaces, restrictions on expressing opinions, and criticism of the government. According to The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), Indonesia's Democracy Index score was 6.44 in 2024, down from 6.53 in 2023. This decline also occurred in 2022, when it was 6.71. In addition to the continued decline in score, Indonesia also experienced a three-rank drop from 56th in 2023 to 59th out of 167 countries (Muamar, 2025). Contributing factors include identity politics, declining electoral integrity, political dynasties, and weak institutional capacity, which is described as "Low-Capacity Democracy" (Huda, Muharam, Affandi, and Satmoko, 2025).

Democracy appears to be experiencing a decline in ethics that could restrain society and state officials from unlawful acts. In fact, the ethical values inherent in democracy should protect society and state officials from unlawful acts. Islamic thinker al-Mawardi emphasized that rulers must always adhere to the ethical and moral values outlined in the normative foundations of Islam, namely the Qur'an and Sunnah (Diana, Masruri, and Surwandono, 2018). In the Indonesian context, the application of Islamic values in politics has sparked a long debate. The compatibility of Islam with democracy, particularly the principles of freedom, pluralism, and equality, remains debated. On the one hand, Islamic politics can strengthen political ethics, but on the other hand, if not managed properly, it can lead to polarization. Civil society, as one of the pillars of democracy, is also responsible for the weakness of ethical values in democracy. The weak role of civil society can weaken democracy because it is a pillar of democracy.

Indonesian civil society began as a religious organization, with the establishment of a grassroots Islamic movement in the early twentieth century that provided schools, hospitals, orphanages, and other social services (Walden, 2016). Al Washliyah is one such civil society organization in Indonesia. Faisal Riza argues that Al Washliyah is obligated to prioritize and implement Islamic moral teachings. However, practical political control and political power are inherently attractive (Riza, 2014). Riza added that Al Washliyah University bridges and develops Islam and nationalism. The integration of Islam and nationalism is a formula for building a nation and a generation. Islamic universities promote democratization and nationalism, as well as creating social cohesion (Riza, 2021).

Al Washliyah embraces democracy, the concept, and the implementation of elections. Its goal is to advocate Islam as the foundation of the state. Consequently, Al Washliyah supports the Masyumi Party and is a special member of this party. Ja'far argues that, in a democratic context, Islam is advocated by civil society, in this case Al Washliyah, through the acceptance of the concept and implementation of elections. The goal is to advocate Islam as the foundation of the state. Al Washliyah is also involved in political education and actively conducts training in preparation for general elections (Ja'far, Syahnan, and Asrul, 2023). Meanwhile, civil society can play a role in diagnosing state weaknesses, state oppression of human rights, and even ideological indoctrination (Rinenggo, 2021). Al Washliyah also strengthens civil society through programs that increase social and political participation (Siddik and Rosnita, 2013). Meanwhile, development of ethical democracy can be done by developing an inclusive Islamic ethical framework (R. Hefner, 2024).

Based on the discussion presented by the researchers above, it is clear that there has been little discussion of the ethical democracy model offered by civil society, in this case Al Washliyah. Researchers are still limited to examining the role of civil society, while Al Washliyah's ethical democracy model remains understudied. This research will examine Al Washliyah in the context of an ethical democracy model that utilizes the

maqasid sharia as a medium for ethical democracy. Is there a synthesis of ideas for an Islamic-based ethical democracy model that can be developed through an interpretation of Islamic values? The implementation of Al Washliyah's ethical democracy is likely to be carried out through a broad educational network, strengthening equality, deepening democracy, exercising social control, and engaging in constitutional political struggle?

Theoretical Framework

The Concept of Civil Society from the Perspective of Political Philosophy

Civil society has a complex role. It can act as a counterbalance to the state, a partner to the state, or even an antithesis to it. Civil society has diverse characteristics, including autonomy, self-reliance, self-management, fraternity, and others. John Locke (1632-1704) and J.J. Rousseau (1712-1778) shared views on society and politics. Locke defined civil society as a political community. It confronts the natural conditions of a social group. For Locke, there is a distinction between government and society. Nevertheless, both elements are still considered part of the political form of the state that emerges from the social contract. Similarly, Rousseau leaned toward the social contract (Setiadi, 2021).

Alexis de'Tocqueville (1805-1859 AD) stated that civil society tends more towards counterbalancing state power. Meanwhile, for Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937 AD), civil society is an ideological element in the form of a dominant class dominating other classes. Hegemony is a term used to refer to the existence of superiority and a subordinate class (Setiadi, 2021).

In 1821, G.W.F. Hegel published a work that became the foundation of political philosophy. He defined civil society as a sphere of ethical life located between the family and the state (Widyasari, Anggia Dewi, and Mayasari Sri Rengganis, 2022). Meanwhile, Larry Diamond (1994) argues that civil society is a realm of social life that is organized, voluntary, independent, and self-sufficient, bound by a legal order or set of shared rules. It confronts and controls the state (Yaman, 2002).

In Indonesia, civil society was defined by Muhammad AS. Hikam as a society that occupies a public space independent from the state. Due to this independence, civil society can become a partner for the state. In the context of an increasingly modern society, civil society can also exert control over the state because it is independent and autonomous from the state.

Islamic Civil Society

Azyumardi Azra refers to Islamic civil society in the Indonesian context as an Islam-based community (Setiadi, 2021). Islamic civil society has strong historical roots. It began with the establishment of grassroots movements that established various schools, hospitals, orphanages, Islamic boarding schools, and social services (Walden, 2016). This movement has been ongoing for a long time, even before Indonesian independence.

Civil Islam, a term used by Robert W. Hefner, describes the tendency of Islamic politics in Indonesia. It is widely considered by some to be compatible with electoral democracy and religious pluralism (R. W. Hefner, 2000). Civil pluralism for civil Islam can be justified through Islamic scriptures and philosophy.

Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), as moderate Islamic organizations, including Al Washliyah, can play a role and collaborate in combating radical Islam, preserving diversity, and advancing democracy. Muhammadiyah, founded in 1912, and NU, founded in 1926, have strong experience and large memberships. Similarly, Al Washliyah also has a large community as an organization founded in 1930. This organization plays a crucial role in preserving Islamic beliefs, values, and traditions, as well as promoting citizenship, tolerance, and democracy (Walden, 2016).

The crucial role of Islamic organizations in Indonesia has led scholars to argue that democracy in Indonesia cannot develop without Islam. Islam, in this context, is not merely a teaching, but also encompasses Islamic organizations with a broad mass base. Islamic organizations are key to the success of democracy in Indonesia because they disseminate democratic concepts, provide voter education, and oversee elections. There is a link between Islam and the strengthening of civil society (Mursyid, 2020).

Civil society plays a crucial role in democracy. JJ. Rousseau stated that democracy is a stage or process that a country must go through to achieve prosperity (Thalhah, 2009). Civil society plays a crucial role in realizing this. Democracy is not merely defined as an electoral system, but rather as an idea and a way of life that prioritizes equal rights and obligations, as well as equal treatment for all citizens.

Ethical Democracy

Democracy is often defined as government of, by, and for the people. This is because democracy originates from the Greek words *demos*, meaning people, and *kratein*, meaning to rule. Democracy is then interpreted as “power by the people” (Prayitno and Prayugo, 2023). Although many figures and scholars have defined democracy, substantially, democracy allows everyone to participate in decision-making, both actual and potential. Meanwhile, ethical democracy is understood not merely as a political procedure or system, but as an ethical and moral idea that animates the life processes of society within the nation and state. Ethical democracy rests on morals, which must be the basis and goal of every political and governmental action.

John Dewey (1859-1952) once stated that ethical democracy has a broader meaning than just politics. For Dewey, democracy itself is an ethical idea that animates the ongoing process of life. Democracy is essentially a moral idea that animates life (Mulyatno, 2011). Democracy allows not only for shared interests but also for the reliance on the recognition of shared interests as a factor in social control. Dewey also emphasized the need for free social interaction and the continuous adaptation of various social customs to meet new situations created by diverse relationships (Tusriyanto and Karsiwan, 2021).

According to John Dewey, three ethical values are at the core of democracy. First, freedom. This freedom is the freedom to act based on freedom of thought. This freedom is known as the Dewey principle of freedom. Second, the principle of equality. Every member of a group, in a democracy, is equal. No one deserves privilege over another (Tusriyanto and Karsiwan, 2021). Third, brotherhood. Humans are social creatures; the

realization of freedom occurs in the process of community life, characterized by strong brotherhood. Freedom is the fruit of truth. These three ethical values symbolize ethical ideas that form the basis and purpose of humankind (Mulyatno, 2011).

Political ethics is strongly linked to democracy, as it plays a role in realizing moral values in a democratic society. Various policies must be based on shared moral values. Moral foundations predict action above and beyond the influence of political ideology, religiosity, and demographics, although variables in this category also exhibit unique influences on action and partially explain the relationship between moral foundations and action (Nilsson, Erlandsson, and Västfjäll, 2020).

The Concept and Element Maqashid Sharia

Civil society is viewed specifically within the religious community, namely Muslims, who utilize the maqashid sharia as a path to prosperity. The term maqashid sharia was first used by Imam Al-Juwayni and Imam Ghazali. Imam al-Syatibi (790 AH) later continued the use of the term (Yakin, 2015). Allal al-Fassi defined maqashid sharia as the goals desired by sharia and the secrets established by Allah in every law. It aims to realize goodness while avoiding evil, or to attract benefits and repel harm (Jalili, 2021).

Yusuf al-Qaradawi stated the purpose of the maqashid sharia in every command, prohibition, and permission, which must be implemented in the lives of individuals who have reached puberty, whether personally, within families, groups, or at the community level as a whole. Meanwhile, Al-'iz bin 'Abd al-Salam argued that the maqashid sharia aims to provide benefits and prevent harm (Jalili, 2021). In conclusion, the essence of the maqashid sharia is to achieve *maslahah* (goodness) and avoid harm (evil) in human life. Although each scholar has a different focus, they agree that Islamic law is not merely literal but also has a profound purpose and intent.

Al-Syatibi stated that within the maqashid sharia, there are five essential elements. These five elements are safeguarding religion (*hifz al-din*), safeguarding the soul (*hifz al-nafs*), safeguarding reason (*hifz al-aql*), safeguarding descendants (*hifz al-nasl*), and safeguarding property (*hifz al-mal*) (Herdiansyah, 2019). Safeguarding religion here

means efforts to maintain religious practices and resist when Islam is insulted or humiliated. Furthermore, safeguarding the soul means we must protect ourselves and safeguard our own souls. Allah strictly forbids His servants from harming themselves or even committing suicide, this is because one of the primary rights considered in Islam is the right to life. Islam protects humans to safeguard the safety of their souls for any reason. Meanwhile, regarding the third element, safeguarding reason, we must safeguard our reason and guard our thoughts. This is because Islam respects the role of reason in learned people who use their reason to reflect on holy verses. Next is preserving descendants. The emphasis in this maqasid sharia is on the continuity of human generations and preventing their extinction by focusing on worldly and afterlife benefits. Finally, safeguarding wealth. The meaning of safeguarding wealth is that we are required to seek wealth to maintain its existence and increase material wealth. Furthermore, humans must not create barriers between themselves and their wealth. Crucially, the wealth must meet three requirements: it must be obtained through lawful means, used for lawful purposes, and spent for worship and to benefit others.

Meanwhile, the maqasid sharia classifies its objectives into three levels. First, maqasid dharuriyah (primary needs), encompassing the five objectives of sharia. These include safeguarding religion (*hifz al-din*), safeguarding the soul (*hifz al-nafs*), safeguarding the intellect (*hifz al-aql*), safeguarding descendants (*hifz al-nasl*), and safeguarding wealth (*hifz al-mal*). Second, maqasid hajiyah (secondary needs), namely things needed to simplify life and eliminate difficulties. Third, maqasid tahsiniyah (tertiary needs), namely various things related to beauty, perfection, and noble morals. According to Al-Syatibi, understanding maqasid al-shariah is crucial for a scholar who wishes to conduct *ijtihad*. In the modern context, this understanding is key to conducting contextual *ijtihad* that is responsive to the challenges of the times (Herdiansyah, 2019).

The concept of maqasid sharia is also used by civil society. Al Washliyah uses this concept to address legal issues (*fiqihyah*). Al Washliyah resolves social problems within society related to law by examining the books of the Shafi'i school of thought. Maqasid

sharia is used as a barometer to ensure whether the legal opinions obtained align with the objectives/intent of sharia or contradict them. Al Washliyah makes maqashid sharia not only as a reference, but also as a barometer to measure whether the established opinion is obtained based on excavation of the text, and then in accordance with the rules of ahkam.

The Correlation of Ethical Democracy with Maqasid Sharia

Ethical democracy and Maqasid Sharia share a fundamental common ground. This is evident in the orientation of democracy and Maqasid Sharia, whose goal is the common good and welfare (*maslahah*). Democracy is based on the principles of freedom, equality, brotherhood, mutual respect, and the common good. Maqasid Sharia, on the other hand, is the goal of Sharia, encompassing freedom of religion, freedom of thought, and expression, as enshrined in the principles of *hifdz al din* (the principle of morality) and *hifdz al aql* (the principle of reason). This indicates that freedom of religion, thought, and expression are fundamental rights in Islam, just as the right to freedom is inherent in democracy.

In the context of equality, both democracy and Maqasid Sharia demand equal treatment and justice for all citizens. The goal is *maslahah*, the common good. Meanwhile, within Maqasid Sharia, brotherhood encompasses *hifdz al nasl*, which is closely related to social cohesion, solidarity, and shared responsibility within society. Furthermore, there is mutual respect for human dignity and life, both in democracy and in the maqasid of Sharia, as outlined in *hifdz al-nasf*. All of this, both in democracy and maqasid of Sharia, is oriented toward public welfare.

For Al-Shatibi, maqasid of Sharia is oriented toward the well-being of humanity in this world and the hereafter. This refers to *maslahah*, or the common good, which is the core of the discussion of maqasid of Sharia. Meanwhile, John Dewey's ethical democracy also has a similar orientation: the collective good, not the individual or group. From this, it can be understood that maqasid of Sharia and ethical democracy have an equal

standing in the concept of the common good. Yusuf al-Qaradawi expanded the inventory of maqasid to include sharia goals such as dignity and human rights.

Based on the discussion above, it can be understood that the correlation between ethical democracy and the maqashid of Sharia can be seen from the characteristics, namely, a strong moral foundation, orientation towards maslahah, recognition and protection of basic rights, deliberation, and balance between rights and obligations.

Method

This research is a field study. Field research was conducted to directly ascertain the latest developments in the research topic. The research approach used was qualitative. The research location was Jakarta, specifically at the AI Washliyah Executive Board (PB AI Washliyah) at Jl. Ahmad Yani No. 41, South Rawasari, Central Jakarta. The research subjects were representatives of PB AI Washliyah who have in-depth knowledge of AI Washliyah's traditional Islamic values, particularly the AI Washliyah Fatwa Council.

Data were obtained from original sources. Primary data for this study came from indirect observation, unstructured interviews, and documents such as reports, meeting minutes, and media archives. Secondary data for this study consisted of books, journals, articles, magazines, newspapers, and other sources that discussed and related to the research topic.

Data collection techniques were indirect observation, unstructured interviews, and documents. The interviewees included representatives of PB AI Washliyah, the AI Washliyah Fatwa Council, Muslimat AI Washliyah, and AI Washliyah office management staff. Data validity was tested using triangulation techniques. Data processing uses Miles and Huberman's data analysis theory, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

Result and Discussion

Al Washliyah as an Islamic Civil Society

Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah (Al Washliyah means “reuniting”) was founded on October 26, 1930, in Medan, North Sumatra. Initially, this organization aimed to achieve Indonesian independence. The name Al Washliyah was given by Sheikh Haji Muhammad Yunus. The founders of Al Washliyah were Abdul Rahman Syihab, Ismail Banda, M. Arsyad Thalib Lubis, Yusuf Ahmad Lubis, and Adnan Nur Lubis (Admin, 2025).

The chairman of PB Al Washliyah for 2021-2026 is Dr. H. Masyhuril Khamis, SH., MM., with Dr. Ir. H. Amran Arifin, MM., MBA as the secretary general. Meanwhile, the treasurer of PB Al Washliyah is Drs. H. Rijal Naibaho, MM (Munthe, 2025) Al Jamiyatul Washliyah's vision is to be a high-quality, productive organization that reaches all regions of Indonesia, achieving *hablum minallah wa hablum minannas* (prosperous and just) and creating a nation that is *baldatun thayyibatun wa rabbun ghafur* (prosperous and just). Meanwhile, Al Jamiyatul Washliyah's mission is to foster and build an Indonesian community, society, and nation with noble morals, high-quality human resources, and capable of practicing piety to Allah SWT in their lives. The Al Washliyah Executive Board (PB) office is located in Jakarta, Jl. Jenderal Ahmad Yani No. 41, RT. 13/RW. 2, Cemp. Putih District, Central Jakarta City, Special Capital Region of Jakarta 10510 (Washliyah id, 2025).

Al Washliyah is present in 32 provinces in Indonesia, from Aceh to West Papua. It is spread across 382 regencies/cities. Meanwhile, Al Washliyah has eight representatives from overseas. Seven sub-organizations fall under Al Washliyah’s umbrella. Al Washliyah operates 704 elementary schools (SD) through high schools (SMA). The organization also has 10 universities spread across several regions, nine orphanages, and two business entities. Al Washliyah also has councils and institutions that strengthen its role as an organization. These include Muslimat Al Washliyah, the Al Washliyah Youth Movement, the Al Washliyah Girls' Generation, the Al Washliyah Student Association, the Al Washliyah Student Association, the Al Washliyah Graduate Association, the Al Washliyah Teachers and Lecturers Association, the Al Washliyah Sharia Raskyat Financing Bank, the

Al Washliyah Zakat, Infaq, and Sedekah (Al-Washliyah Zakat), the Al Washliyah Scouts, the At-Tijarah Al Washliyah Cooperative, and the Al Washliyah Halal Product Processing Assistance Institute (Washliyah id, 2025).

Alwashliyah adheres to at least nine traditional Islamic values. First, Sunni theology (Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah) (Nurul Hikmah Awaliyah Asspihan Family, 2023). which adheres to the Ash'ariyah creed (Ja'far, 2015). Second, the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence adhered to and upholds the tradition of the Yellow Book (Zebua, 2019). Third, the practice of Sufism (Rozali, 2016). Fourth, traditional Islamic education maintains the madrasah system and the teaching of the Yellow Book (Nurul Hikmah Awaliyah Asspihan Family, 2023). Fifth, it emphasizes moderation in religion, namely a "middle" attitude, rejecting extremism, both right-wing, namely fundamentalism, extremism, and left-wing, such as liberalism and secularism (Batubara et al., 2023). Sixth, the tradition of ulama, by respecting ulama and maintaining the sanad of knowledge (Ja'far and Asrul, 2023). Seventh, practicing traditional practices. Eighth, using a cultural approach in preaching, and being accommodating in viewing local culture and sharia (Rozali, 2016). Ninth, prioritizing religious nationalism by balancing religious interests with state interests, and supporting the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila (Basic Statutes/Bylaws, Decision of the XXII Congress of Al Jamíyatul Washliyah for the 2021-2026 Period, 2021).

The above values are reflected in various aspects of Al Washliyah's activities. First, religious education and general education. Al Washliyah integrates education, combining religious education and general education within its system. This is realized through three educational models: home education (informal), madrasah/university (formal), and community education (non-formal). However, in formal education, the Al Washliyah curriculum is dominated by religious studies (Nisa and Harahap, 2023). Second, Al Washliyah carries out da'wah with traditional values. The da'wah methods used by Al Washliyah tend to uphold traditional values, similar to those of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Al Washliyah maintains the da'wah tradition in accordance with the ideals

of its founder. Third, Al Washliyah is active in social charity activities, providing educational institutions, da'wah, social and economic activities, and directly and indirectly, serving as a source of livelihood for its members. Fourth, Al Washliyah maintains the tradition of ulama with traditional values (Nisa and Harahap, 2023). Although there are critics who consider Al Washliyah not yet proactive enough in developing new ulama (Islamic scholars) (Yazid, 2023), respect for ulama is a tradition of Al Washliyah.

Al Washliyah occupies a crucial position as an actor in the social, cultural, and political landscape, not only in North Sumatra but also in Indonesia. This is due to Al Washliyah's ability to combine traditional Islamic values with efforts to confront modernity (Riza, 2014). Modern issues such as tolerance, social justice, and sustainable development pose unique challenges for Al Washliyah. Furthermore, Al Washliyah also faces another challenge: the demand to adapt to modern democracy. It faces the growing demand for flexibility and a more progressive approach in addressing strategic national issues. Yet, Al Washliyah firmly rejects communism and sects like the Ahmadiyya, which it considers heretical (Ja'far, 2019).

Al-Washliyah's Ethical Democracy Model

Al-Washliyah plays an active role in raising political awareness among Muslims. Al-Washliyah operates a charitable organization, primarily in educational institutions, totaling more than 1,050 units, from kindergartens to universities. The organization's constituents number between 11 and 15 million people. All adhere to the Shafi'i school of thought. Al-Washliyah is one of the Islamic organizations most responsible for the spread of the Shafi'i school of thought in the archipelago, particularly in North Sumatra, where its charitable activities are based (Ja'far, 2016).

Al-Washliyah has followed various procedures and structures within the democratic framework during the Old Order. Al-Washliyah leaders have been involved in the republican government system, including political party activities, elections, campaigns, and holding public office at both the local and national levels. Several Al-

Washliyah cadres have served as members of the legislature and the Constituent Assembly. Others have worked as civil servants in two ministries: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. However, they continue to fight for Islam as the foundation of the state and hope for the implementation of Islamic law in Indonesia. Therefore, they support the Masyumi Party, which they believe represents their political ideals. Unlike Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), which firmly rejects democracy, Al-Washliyah embraces the democratic system (Syahnan and Ja'far, 2021).

Al-Washliyah accepts democracy as a system of government in Indonesia, as long as it does not conflict with Islamic values (Yazid, 2025). Modern democracy demands the active involvement of all levels of society. Al-Washliyah acts as a vital link between the government and society. It does this through various activities such as advocacy, political education, and participation in solving social problems. Al-Washliyah plays a role in building a more legally literate, just, and independent society. Furthermore, its impartiality towards political interests allows Al-Washliyah to remain focused on strengthening the role of civil society in an objective and constructive manner.

Al-Washliyah is not only the face of civil society championing religious principles, but also a key driver of inclusive and participatory democracy. Its role is expected to be further strengthened in realizing a civilized, just, and democratic society, in line with the aspirations of the Indonesian people. Al-Washliyah's views on democracy are frequently expressed in various official speeches, particularly at congresses (Yazid, 2025). Directly or indirectly, this represents Al-Washliyah's accommodation of democracy.

Al-Washliyah views democracy as a means to uphold justice and public welfare while upholding Islamic faith and sharia (Yazid, 2025). Al-Washliyah, while not a political party, continues to contribute to the development of modern democracy by participating in education, including political education for the younger generation. Al-Washliyah also provides access to empowerment and participation for women in democratic life. This is evidenced by the presence of Muslimat Al-Washliyah. Through this organization, women can contribute to the development of modern democracy.

Al-Washliyah understands democracy as a means to realize deliberation, equal rights, and popular oversight of power. This aligns with the principle of *syura* (*wa amruhum syura bainahum*) (Yazid, 2025). This means that in certain contexts, Al Washliyah accepts democracy; even democratic values already exist and are part of Islam, such as *syura*. However, there are still other aspects that are inconsistent. These include freedoms beyond the boundaries of sharia, equality beyond the boundaries of sharia, and various aspects that contradict Islamic law.

Al Washliyah plays a significant role in the context of modern democracy. This is because it fulfills its function as a civil society, including as a partner to the state. Al Washliyah manages an extensive educational network, ranging from Early Childhood Education (PAUD), Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), Al Washliyah Junior High School (SMP), Senior High School (SMA), and universities. These educational institutions owned by Al Washliyah serve as a vehicle for the development of citizen awareness and character. In line with Antonio Gramsci's theory of "cultural hegemony," Al Washliyah serves as an organization that raises awareness and shapes the character of the community through the educational institutions it establishes.

Al Washliyah plays a crucial role in promoting democratic values, including tolerance, pluralism, and active participation in various fields. It serves as a platform that integrates Islamic values with nationalism and prepares superior human resources for development. This is evidenced by the number of institutions it operates: 704 elementary and middle schools, 10 universities, 9 orphanages, and 2 business entities. The number of institutions under Al Washliyah's auspices demonstrates Al Washliyah's role as an independent, self-sufficient, and self-managed civil society, making it a valuable partner for the state.

Al Washliyah plays a key role in promoting moderate Islam that aligns with democratic values. It provides religious guidance through education and da'wah (Islamic outreach). This is evident in the educational institutions it establishes and its da'wah programs. Promoting moderate Islam can be seen as a form of building a civil society

that embraces the spirit of plurality and diversity, grounded in the Islamic community. Furthermore, this can create a civil society that is not only diverse but also understands Islamic and democratic values.

Al Washliyah supports various policies that prioritize the interests of the people and the nation, and encourages its members, especially Al-Washliyah cadres, to participate in the political process (Yazid, 2025). Al Washliyah's political struggle is conducted constitutionally. Although Al Washliyah is an Islamic community organization, it does not pursue politics through extreme politicization of religion. Instead, Al Washliyah adheres strictly to the constitution. Nevertheless, it maintains independence in determining its political actions. Al Washliyah cadres in the legislature also actively participate in promoting moderate Islamic values and advocating for public policies that foster social justice. Therefore, it is understandable that Al Washliyah, as stated by AS. Hikam, is a civil society independent of the state. It is not bound by the state, although the state retains the ability to control civil society.

In the context of modern democracy, Al Washliyah contributes to strengthening national harmony and unity. This is evident in Al Washliyah's activities, which utilize a peaceful approach, prioritizing dialogue and tolerance. This step is considered to be a strong foundation for upholding Indonesian democracy, which is full of diversity and unity.

Maqashid sharia serves as an important ethical framework for Al Washliyah. Its application can address legal issues (*fiqhiyah*). Al Washliyah utilizes Maqashid sharia as a medium for resolving social problems in society by studying the texts of the Shafi'i school of thought. Furthermore, Al Washliyah's ethical democracy is closely linked to maqashid sharia. This is because the maqashid sharia orientation is evident in Al Washliyah's decisions, such as its rejection of communism and the Ahmadiyya sect as a form of *hifdz al din* (the principle of unity of God). Various other potential issues in political engagement are inseparable from the evaluation of the five essential elements of maqashid sharia.

Al Washliyah, in implementing ethical democracy, uses Islamic values as its foundation. Freedom, equality, and brotherhood are interpreted through the lens of moderate Islamic teachings. This is Al Washliyah's hallmark as a *washliyah* (moderate) Islamic organization. Al Washliyah prioritizes the public good, better known in Islam as *maslahah*. The welfare of the people can be realized through social, educational, and political activities directed towards the good of the people and the nation. Thus, the ethical democracy demonstrated by Al Washliyah is not focused on individual or group interests, but rather on the common good by upholding the welfare of the people.

In its organizational decision-making process, Al Washliyah utilizes the principle of *shura* as a deliberation mechanism. This process involves democratic political participation. Although this is implemented within a religious community organization, this does not mean that such a model cannot be implemented in the context of other institutions or organizations. Furthermore, Al Washliyah balances Islam and nationalism, as Riza (2021) points out, stating that Al Washliyah higher education bridges and develops Islam and nationalism as the right formula for nation-building (Riza, 2021).

The Challenges of Al Washliyah's Ethical Democracy

Al Washliyah faces significant challenges in the context of modern democracy. "Al-Washliyah's ethical democracy" confronts strategic national issues such as equality, pluralism, liberalism, and human rights. However, for Al Washliyah, equality is nothing new. Al Washliyah supports the principle of equality before the law and before Allah SWT, including gender equality. This support, of course, is contingent on the requirement that gender equality align with the values of Islamic law (Yazid, 2025). Al-Washliyah views gender equality from an Islamic perspective as an effort to achieve justice for men and women, not simply absolute equality. Therefore, for Al Washliyah, the basis for recognizing gender equality must be based on Islamic law.

Al-Washliyah accommodates gender equality by encouraging women's active involvement in education, *da'wah*, and social activities. The accommodations provided remain within the bounds of Islamic law. This organization provides opportunities for

women to serve as leaders, teachers, and community leaders, without neglecting their natural roles as mandated by religion. Imam Yazid noted that at the Al Washliyah educational institution, many principals or heads of madrasas are women. Even more broadly, Al Washliyah also provides opportunities for women to lead in certain areas (Yazid, 2025). This demonstrates Al Washliyah's long-standing culture of accommodating women.

Al Washliyah schools specifically incorporate the Al Washliyah curriculum, starting with Ibtida'iyah, then Tsanawiyah, and then Aliyyah. The implementation of this curriculum does not discriminate between boys and girls (Yazid, 2025). All students have equal opportunities. This demonstrates that Al Washliyah has provided equal opportunities for women, evident from the elementary school level.

To strengthen the position of Muslim women, Al-Washliyah established a women's wing on November 12, 1935, called Al-jam'iyatul Washliyah Afdeeling Putri (Riza, 2016). Furthermore, Al-Washliyah also established Muslimat Al Washliyah and Angkatan Putri Al Washliyah (Bastian, 2025). Muslimat Al Washliyah (MA) was founded on January 12, 1935 (Syamsir, 2022). It was founded before independence, so MA played a crucial role in participating in the struggle for independence. This also proves that Al-Washliyah's stance is not anti-gender issues. Nor is it anti-emancipation. MA is a concrete manifestation of openness to these issues, where MA programs aim to advance women's education, strengthen women's economics, and women's involvement in accordance with Islam (Yazid, 2025).

In the contemporary era, the Islamic Senior High School (MA) plays a role as a guide and protector for Muslim women, participates in building civilization, and contributes to a positive impact on society (Kominfostan, 2023). Through the MA, Al-Washliyah has taken seriously the role and position of women in social and religious aspects. Women in the Al-Washliyah organization provide input for the organization's development. It goes beyond women's activities to encourage women's empowerment and active involvement in social life (Amel, 2025).

The MA has its own perspective on gender equality. It conducts its organizational activities based on an Islamic framework that recognizes fundamental equality between men and women. It respects and upholds their rights. This is again based on Islamic teachings that place men and women on equal footing, namely, that both are created by Allah SWT with equal standing before Him (Oktoviasari, Abubakar, and Firdaus, 2024). The MA also supports women in pursuing higher education and pursuing careers (Yazid, 2025). Furthermore, the Supreme Court emphasizes that everyone has equal access to various resources and knowledge, and is not discriminated against based on inherent characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and so on. The Supreme Court carries out its activities by combining traditional Islamic values with the need for gender equality, a challenge facing modernity.

Through its women's wing, Al-Washliyah not only creates opportunities for participation but also provides a platform for developing the potential and leadership of Muslim women. This demonstrates Al-Washliyah's ability to harmonize traditional Islamic values with the needs of the times, which emphasize inclusion and gender equity, without deviating from Islamic teachings. Therefore, Al-Washliyah embraces the concept of equality, meaning the rights and obligations of men and women, implemented within certain boundaries (Yazid, 2025).

Al-Washliyah understands gender equality as fairness in placing rights and obligations in accordance with the natural rights of men and women. The equality sought by Al-Washliyah is not absolute equality, thus ignoring stark differences, as men and women are indeed physically different (Yazid, 2025). Al-Washliyah acknowledges these physical differences but remains grounded in justice as a right and obligation that must be enjoyed by both men and women.

Meanwhile, in the context of pluralism, Al-Washliyah emphasizes the principle of tolerance (*tasamuh*) in national and religious life. The Al-Washliyah organization highlights the importance of coexisting amidst religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity. However, Al-Washliyah's understanding of pluralism is social pluralism, not theological

pluralism. This means that Al-Washliyah remains steadfast in the truth of Islamic teachings while respecting the existence and rights of other groups. In matters of worship, Muslims are required to be exclusive. This is because, in matters of faith, Muslims are prohibited from mixing faith and worship with the teachings and practices of followers of other religions.

For Muslim communities living side by side with adherents of other religions (religious diversity), Muslims maintain an inclusive attitude in social matters unrelated to faith and worship. This means continuing to interact socially with adherents of other faiths as long as they do not harm each other (Wahid, 2018). Thus, Al-Washliyah's stance on pluralism emphasizes the importance of tolerance in social life, while maintaining the purity of Islamic faith and worship. This approach reflects the balance between the principles of faith and social openness in a pluralistic society.

Meanwhile, liberalism also presents a challenge faced by Al Washliyah. Liberalism, in this context, refers to the concept of broad individual freedom, respect for human rights, freedom of expression, and democratic principles that prioritize diversity. However, these views often conflict with Islamic teachings, which emphasize the need for limits on individual freedom and emphasize moral and ethical values established by religion. In some situations, liberalism is considered a threat to traditional values and the Islamic identity of a society (Mubarok, Awaliya, and Afifah, 2024). However, Al Washliyah takes a critical stance against liberal thinking, especially those that conflict with Islamic principles.

According to Al Washliyah, personal freedom must be monitored by religious and legal norms, so that it does not become unlimited freedom that conflicts with religion and ethics. In this regard, Al Washliyah still values freedom of opinion and self-expression, but with responsibility and Islamic morality as the boundaries that must be adhered to. In this way, Al-Washliyah's view of liberalism demonstrates an effort to balance individual freedom with adherence to Islamic values. Freedom is considered

important, but it must be exercised within a moral framework and religious teachings. However, this is considered part of human rights.

In the context of human rights, Al-Washliyah supports human rights principles as long as they do not conflict with Islamic teachings. This view aligns with the concept of rights and obligations in Islam, which upholds human dignity as a creature created by God. Regarding legal issues, including those related to the social dimension, Al-Washliyah's articles of association (AD/ART) state that if a problem in society can be traced to the rulings of the Shafi'i school of thought, that law will be cited. Conversely, if no specific law is found on the issue, Al-Washliyah has a fatwa council that examines issues in society, including Islamic jurisprudence. These fiqh issues tend to use the maqashid sharia approach (Yazid, 2025).

Maqashid sharia is used as a barometer to determine whether a legal opinion obtained or established is in accordance with the maqashid sharia or contradicts it. For example, maqashid shari'ah is not merely a reference tool, but also serves as a barometer to measure whether the established opinion is derived from examining texts or using the principles of the ahkam council. A legal determination is then reached, and Al-Washliyah then verifies it (Yazid, 2025).

In various da'wah and social activities, Al-Washliyah strives to protect the rights to life, education, religious freedom, and the right to justice. Al-Washliyah also actively rejects acts of violence, oppression, and human rights violations committed in the name of religion or power. However, in certain contexts, Al-Washliyah maintains its own views. For example, regarding the fatwa on deviations from Ahmadiyya teachings, Al Washliyah, through its fatwa council, issued a fatwa in 2020 that firmly rejects Ahmadiyya teachings because they are considered to deviate from the teachings of Ahlusunnah Wal-Jama'ah. There are at least two grounds for this rejection. First, the recognition that Ahmadiyya figures are prophets. Second, if this understanding is allowed to persist, it will lead to the ummah's misguidance (Yazid, 2025). This means that although Al

Washliyah pays attention to human rights, for Al Washliyah, recognition of human rights must still adhere to Islamic teachings.

Imam Yazid stated that Al Washliyah considers human rights and accepts them as long as they do not conflict with sharia values. Human rights are taken into consideration. Al Washliyah does not reject human rights because it believes that human rights are part of Islamic teachings (Yazid, 2025). Therefore, the basis and acceptance of human rights remain based on Islamic teachings.

Al Washliyah's Ethical Democracy Prospects

Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah (Al Washliyah) is an Islamic organization founded in Medan in 1930. It has demonstrated a commitment to democratic values, human rights, pluralism, and gender equality. As an Islamic civil society, Al Washliyah occupies a strategic position in strengthening substantive democracy in Indonesia.

Al Washliyah's role in various strategic national issues can be seen in the context of various issues, such as human rights and gender equality. As an Islamic civil society, Al Washliyah, in certain contexts, demonstrates its compatibility with human rights. Through the maqasid sharia (the principle of *hifdz al-nafs*) and *hifdz al-karamah* (protection of dignity), universal human rights align with Islamic values. Even in certain contexts, Al Washliyah remains steadfast in its adherence to sharia in responding to various human rights issues. Al Washliyah also has an extensive educational network. This can serve as a medium for instilling pluralistic education, which is also a strategic issue in democracy.

Hifdz al-nasl and the principle of justice (*'adalah*) are also essential components of the maqasid sharia. Al Washliyah plays a significant role in women's empowerment through its organizational structure, which accommodates women's involvement in the organization. It also provides equal religious education for women and advocates for women's rights within the family and public sphere.

Al Washliyah has over a thousand charitable organizations. Its constituents are estimated at between 11 and 15 million supporters. It has also been involved in various

procedures and structures within the democratic framework during the Old Order. It has been involved in the republican government system, including political party activities, elections, campaigns, and holding public office at both the local and national levels. In this context, it is clear that Al Washliyah synthesizes democratic procedures with the ethical values of Islam. One of the moral principles of Islam can be seen through the maqasid sharia implemented by Al Washliyah. Its goal is to achieve the public good (*maslahah ámmah*) and justice (*ádalah*), implemented through a deliberative mechanism (*shura*) in decision-making.

Al Washliyah has a strong theological foundation through a reinterpretation of the maqasid sharia (the principles of Islamic law). The organization also has a well-established tradition of science and education. Furthermore, it has a strong spirit of nationalism and diversity, which are essential elements of modern democracy. Based on these facts, Al Washliyah's ethical democracy has the potential to thrive in Indonesia, a democratic and pluralistic nation. This is further enhanced by Al Washliyah's involvement as an Islamic organization that adheres to moderate Islam, a mercy for all mankind.

Nevertheless, Al Washliyah's ethical democracy still faces challenges. These challenges must be addressed through innovation, particularly in determining its communication strategy. Furthermore, as a civil society, Al Washliyah needs to be more responsive to current political developments. It also needs to conduct internal consolidation to address various threats, including the possibility of fragmentation within the organization. As an Islamic civil society, Al Washliyah has the ability to balance religious values with those inherent in modern democracy. However, this still depends on Al Washliyah's ability to conduct contemporary *ijtihad* and engage various stakeholders within Al Washliyah and the younger generation to respond to their aspirations.

Conclusion

Al Washliyah provides a synthesis of ideas regarding an Islamic-based ethical democracy model through an interpretation of fundamental Islamic values, particularly the concept of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. This interpretation serves as the foundation for formulating democratic principles aligned with Islamic ethics, such as justice, equality, deliberation, and welfare.

The implementation of ethical democracy in the context of Al Washliyah has the potential to be implemented through several strategic channels. First, through a broad educational network as a medium for internalizing ethical democracy. Second, through organizational activities that can strengthen the principle of equality. Third, through deepening the practice of democracy within the organization as a model for society. Fourth, through implementing social control in various public policies. Fifth, through engaging in constitutional politics to ensure that political struggles remain within the legal and ethical lines of Islam.

This study is limited in the availability of empirical data related to the practice of ethical democracy within the organization, thus preventing a complete analysis of Al Washliyah's ethical democracy implementation. Future research is expected to supplement this data so that a more comprehensive Al Washliyah ethical democracy model can be formulated.

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