

From Rejection to Accommodation: The Dynamics of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's Ideological Shifts on Pancasila

Zahrodin Fanani

Sekolah Tinggi Islam Al-Mukmin Surakarta

Email: fanani@stimsurakarta.ac.id

Abstract

The relationship between Islam and Pancasila remains a subject of ongoing debate within Islamic discourse in Indonesia, particularly when linked to the views of influential Islamic figures. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir is one such figure whose perspective on Pancasila has evolved over time rather than remaining static. This article aims to analyze the dynamics of Ba'asyir's changing views on Pancasila through a textual analysis of his publicly available statements. This study employs a qualitative approach using textual analysis. The data consist of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's public statements, including transcribed speeches and documented written statements. The analysis is conducted chronologically to identify patterns, directions, and contextual factors underlying the shifts in his views across different periods. The findings indicate that Ba'asyir's views on Pancasila have shifted in response to changing social, political, and legal contexts. These shifts demonstrate that the perspectives of Islamic figures on state ideology may evolve alongside broader societal dynamics. This study contributes to the discussion of Islamic political thought in Indonesia by highlighting the importance of analyzing public statements as a primary source for understanding ideological change.

Relasi antara Islam dan Pancasila merupakan isu yang terus diperdebatkan dalam diskursus keislaman di Indonesia, terutama ketika dikaitkan dengan pandangan tokoh-tokoh Islam yang berpengaruh. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir merupakan salah satu tokoh yang pandangannya terhadap Pancasila tidak bersifat statis, melainkan mengalami perubahan dalam berbagai periode. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dinamika perubahan pandangan Abu Bakar Ba'asyir terhadap Pancasila melalui analisis teks atas pernyataan-pernyataan publik yang tersedia. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode analisis teks. Data penelitian berupa pernyataan publik Abu Bakar

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*Corresponding Author: Zahrodin Fanani



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Ba'asyir, baik dalam bentuk pidato yang telah ditranskripsikan maupun pernyataan tertulis yang terdokumentasi. Analisis dilakukan secara kronologis untuk mengidentifikasi pola, arah, serta konteks yang melatarbelakangi perubahan pandangan tersebut pada berbagai periode. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pandangan Ba'asyir terhadap Pancasila mengalami pergeseran yang dipengaruhi oleh dinamika sosial, politik, dan hukum. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada kajian pemikiran politik Islam di Indonesia dengan menempatkan pernyataan publik sebagai sumber utama untuk memahami perubahan ideologis.

Keywords: Abu Bakar Ba'asyir; Pancasila; Changing Perspectives, Public Statements

Introduction

The relationship between Islam and Pancasila has long been a central theme in the discourse of religious and national thought in Indonesia. Since the early period of Indonesian independence, debates regarding the compatibility between Islamic teachings and the state ideology have continued to emerge in academic discussions, political debates, and religious movements.¹ Pancasila has been widely regarded as a national consensus designed to accommodate the pluralistic nature of Indonesian society while maintaining harmony among religious communities.² Nevertheless, its acceptance among Muslim groups has never been entirely uniform. Some Islamic thinkers consider Pancasila compatible with Islamic principles, while others question its theological legitimacy and its ability to represent Islamic political aspirations.³ Numerous studies have examined this issue through analyses of Islamic figures, Islamic movements, radicalism, and the relationship between Islamic ideology and the state.

Within this broader discourse, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir is one of the figures frequently discussed in academic studies. He is often portrayed as a prominent figure within radical Islamic movements in Indonesia and is widely associated

¹ Muhammad Adnan, Satria Aji Imawan, and Hendra Try Ardianto, "Pancasila Sebagai Piagam Madinah Indonesia: Peran Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Dalam Menjaga Kebinekaan Bangsa," *Pancasila: Jurnal Keindonesiaan* 4, no. 1 (2024).

² Ihsan and Ahmad Fatah, "Pancasila and Islamic Education: The Deradicalization Model of Madrasahs Based on Islamic Boarding Schools in Central Java," *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2021): 245–278.

³ Robert W. Hefner, *Islam and Citizenship in Indonesia: Democracy and the Quest for an Inclusive Public Ethics* (London: Routledge, 2023), <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781032629155/islam-citizenship-indonesia-robert-hefner>.

with the development of jihadist ideology in Southeast Asia⁴. His role in organizations such as Jemaah Islamiyah and Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia has attracted considerable scholarly attention, particularly in studies related to terrorism, radicalization, and Islamic political movements.⁵ However, most of these studies tend to focus primarily on historical developments, macro-ideological frameworks, or normative critiques of radicalism. As a result, they often overlook the dynamic evolution of Ba'asyir's own views over time.

Nawaffani et al. examined the transformation of Ba'asyir's preaching rhetoric, tracing a shift from outright rejection of Pancasila toward limited acceptance.⁶ Using critical discourse analysis of sermons and public statements, the study identifies changes in Ba'asyir's rhetorical framing of religious arguments and his communication strategies with broader audiences. The authors argue that this transformation reflects both ideological reorientation and strategic adjustment in response to evolving political and social pressures. Their findings demonstrate that rhetorical change plays a significant role in shaping public perceptions of religious authority. However, the study's focus remains primarily on *communication strategy* rather than on substantive ideological change concerning Pancasila itself.

Adnan et al. positioned Ba'asyir as a central figure in the organizational dynamics of the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) during the post-Reformasi era.⁷ Their historical analysis examines MMI's development and Ba'asyir's leadership role within the organization, highlighting his influence in shaping the group's ideological orientation and strategic decisions. While this study provides valuable insights into the institutional dimensions of Islamist activism, it treats Ba'asyir primarily as an *organizational actor* rather than as an intellectual figure whose personal views may have evolved independently of organizational imperatives.

⁴ Nurrohman Syarif, "Islamism, Totalitarianism and Democracy; Revisiting Abu Bakar Ba'asyir Ideology of Jihadism," *Wawasan: Jurnal Ilmiah Agama Dan Sosial Budaya* 1, no. 1 (2019), <http://journal.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/jw>.

⁵ Afton Zuhri Adnan, Intan Muthoharoh, and Bukhori Abdul Somad Masruchin Masruchin, "Abu Bakar Ba'asyir Dan Perannya Dalam Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI)," *Ta'lim: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 5, no. 2 (2023).

⁶ Gilang Fajar Septian, "Viral, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir Akhirnya Mengakui Pancasila," *Liputan6.Com*, last modified 2022, <https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/5031812/video-viral-abu-bakar-baasyir-akhirnya-mengakui-pancasila>.

⁷ Adnan, Muthoharoh, and Masruchin, "Abu Bakar Ba'asyir Dan Perannya Dalam Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI)."

Wakhid et al. adopted a macro-historical approach, mapping the ideological networks of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia across generations.⁸ By tracing continuity between earlier radical movements—such as those led by Kartosuwiryo—and contemporary figures including Ba'asyir, the study highlights the persistence of radical ideological narratives. This perspective, while illuminating the structural resilience of Islamist ideology, tends to treat Ba'asyir as a *representative figure* within a broader tradition, thereby paying insufficient attention to the internal dynamics of his individual intellectual development or the possibility of significant ideological shifts.

Setiadi and Hannah employed a critical philosophical approach, evaluating Ba'asyir's concept of jihad through the lens of Albert Camus' philosophy of absurdism.⁹ Their study offers a normative critique of the ideological foundations of jihadist thought, contributing to theoretical debates on the ethical dimensions of Islamist ideology. However, this philosophical-normative approach does not examine Ba'asyir's views on Pancasila specifically, nor does it explore the possibility of ideological transformation over time.

In contrast to these tendencies, this study specifically positions the changing views of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir on Pancasila as its primary object of analysis by examining the texts of his public statements. By focusing on textual evidence drawn from speeches, interviews, and written statements, this research attempts to provide a more systematic and empirically grounded analysis of Ba'asyir's intellectual transformation. Such an approach allows scholars to trace the patterns, directions, and contextual influences that shape the evolution of his views. Moreover, the use of textual analysis enables a deeper understanding of how ideological positions are articulated and reframed within public discourse.

In summary, while existing scholarship has illuminated important dimensions of Ba'asyir's public role (his rhetoric, his organizational leadership, his place in historical continuity, and the philosophical underpinnings of his jihadist thought) it has largely neglected the question of how his views on Pancasila have changed over time. This omission is significant because Pancasila represents the ideological cornerstone of the Indonesian state, and Ba'asyir's evolving stance on it offers a unique window into the broader phenomenon of ideological moderation (or its limits) among Islamist figures in contemporary Indonesia. The present study addresses this gap by providing the

⁸ Ali Abdul Wakhid et al., "Tracking Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia: From Kartosuwiryo to Abu Bakar Ba'asyir," *KnE Social Sciences* 9, no. 2 (2024).

⁹ Neng Hannah and Yudistira Ananda Setiadi, "Konsep Jihad Abu Bakar Baasyir Dalam Perspektif Filsafat Absurdisme Albert Camus," *Jurnal Al-Aqidah* 14, no. 1 (2022).

first systematic, diachronic textual analysis of Ba'asyir's public statements on Pancasila, tracing the trajectory of his views from rejection toward limited accommodation, and identifying the contextual factors that shaped this transformation.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach using textual analysis as its primary research design. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the objective of this study is to understand the dynamics of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's changing views on Pancasila as reflected in his public statements. Rather than measuring attitudes or perceptions quantitatively, qualitative research allows the researcher to interpret meanings, contexts, and patterns embedded in textual data.¹⁰ Through this approach, the study seeks to explore how Ba'asyir articulated his views on Pancasila and how those views evolved over time within particular social and political contexts.

Textual analysis is employed as the main analytical framework because it enables researchers to systematically interpret meanings within written or spoken texts. According to Krippendorff in Bowen, textual analysis allows scholars to examine patterns¹¹, themes, and discursive structures in communication texts in order to understand broader ideological positions. In addition, the approach adopted in this study also draws upon insights from critical discourse analysis, which emphasizes the relationship between language, power, and social context.¹² By applying these analytical perspectives, the study aims to identify the discursive patterns through which Ba'asyir expressed his views on Pancasila and the ideological implications embedded within those statements.

The data sources in this study consist of publicly available statements made by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir. These include both transcribed oral statements and documented written statements. The public statements were obtained from various sources such as religious sermons, media interviews, official declarations, and written materials that are publicly accessible through digital media, online archives, and published reports. The selection of data is based on several criteria. First, the statements must originate directly from Abu Bakar

¹⁰ John W. Creswell, *Research Design Pendekatan Metode Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, Dan Campuran* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2019).

¹¹ Glenn A. Bowen, "Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method," *Qualitative Research Journal* 9, no. 2 (2009): 27–40, <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>.

¹² Lexy J. Moelong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya, 2014).

Ba'asyir or be verifiably attributed to him through credible sources. Second, the statements must contain explicit references to Pancasila, the Indonesian state ideology, or the relationship between Islam and the Indonesian state. Third, the statements must be publicly disseminated and accessible to the broader public. These criteria are applied to ensure that the data used in this study accurately represent Ba'asyir's publicly articulated views.

Data were collected using a documentation technique. Documentation is widely used in qualitative research to gather textual data from existing sources such as documents, recordings, or published materials). In this study, the researcher identified, traced, and compiled public statements made by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir that are relevant to the focus of the research. The collected statements were then organized and catalogued based on their date and context of publication. This chronological classification allows the researcher to observe the evolution of Ba'asyir's views over time. By arranging the data according to historical phases, the study aims to identify shifts, continuities, and turning points in his perspective toward Pancasila.

The analysis of the collected data was conducted through several stages.¹³ First, the researcher performed data reduction by selecting public statements that demonstrate substantive relevance to Ba'asyir's views on Pancasila. Data reduction is an essential step in qualitative research because it helps focus the analysis on the most relevant and meaningful information. Second, the selected statements were organized chronologically in order to map the development and transformation of Ba'asyir's views across different periods. This chronological arrangement enables the identification of phases in which his perspective appears to change, remain consistent, or be reformulated.

Third, textual analysis was conducted by examining the meaning, emphasis, and context underlying each statement. Particular attention was given to the language used by Ba'asyir, the arguments presented, and the broader socio-political context in which the statements were delivered. Through this analytical process, the researcher seeks to identify patterns, themes, and discursive strategies that indicate shifts in Ba'asyir's views on Pancasila.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study employs source triangulation. Source triangulation involves comparing information obtained from different sources or time periods in order to verify the consistency and reliability of the

¹³ M. B. Miles, A. M. Huberman, and J Saldana, "Cross-Case Data Analysis," in *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. (Arizona: Sage, 2014).

data¹⁴. In this research, public statements obtained from various media platforms and publications are compared to ensure accuracy and contextual consistency. In addition, the study also considers the broader social, political, and legal contexts surrounding each statement. Understanding these contexts is important in order to avoid ahistorical interpretations and to ensure that each statement is interpreted within the circumstances in which it was originally expressed.

Result and Discussion

An analysis of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's public statements indicates that his views on Pancasila have undergone significant changes throughout the course of his life and ideological activities. These changes did not occur in a linear manner but rather emerged in several phases that were closely related to the social, political, and legal experiences he encountered.

Early Rejection during the Pancasila Single Principle Policy (1970s–1990s)

During the New Order period, particularly after the implementation of the Pancasila single principle policy (*asas tunggal Pancasila*) in the mid-1980s, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir expressed open rejection of Pancasila as the ideological foundation of the state. In several sermons and statements that were later documented in legal proceedings against him, Ba'asyir argued that adopting Pancasila as the sole ideological principle for organizations constituted a deviation from the principle of *tawhid*. According to his view, sovereignty should not be placed in a human-made system but solely in the law of God.

In some of his statements, Ba'asyir suggested that systems not governed by Islamic law fall into the category of systems that are incompatible with Islam. He even used terms that implied theological rejection of the legitimacy of the state ideology.¹⁵ Textually, Ba'asyir's arguments during this phase were constructed upon a dichotomy between “the law of God” (divine law) and “the law of humans” (man-made law). Pancasila was positioned as a product of human political consensus and therefore lacked normative authority within the theological framework he adhered to.

His rejection of the practice of flag-saluting ceremonies in the Islamic boarding school he managed also demonstrated the consistency of his symbolic

¹⁴ Norman K. Denzin (ed) and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (SAGE, 2005).

¹⁵ Hannah and Setiadi, “Konsep Jihad Abu Bakar Baasyir Dalam Perspektif Filsafat Absurdisme Albert Camus.”

stance, which stemmed from this theological construction. Within his argumentative logic, acts of reverence toward national symbols were considered potentially excessive forms of loyalty that should only be directed toward God.

When these statements are placed within the broader context of the single principle policy, Ba'asyir's rejection can be understood not merely as a political stance against the New Order regime but as a normative and theological rejection of a state ideology that was not explicitly grounded in Islamic law. In this phase, his perspective can therefore be categorized as a total ideological rejection of Pancasila, based on a rigid and dichotomous interpretation of *tawhid* that strictly separates Islam from the national state system.

Activities in Malaysia with Jemaah Islamiyah (1990s–2000)

During his period of exile in Malaysia, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's public statements later documented in various sources demonstrated the continuation of his ideological stance rejecting the legitimacy of a nation-state based on Pancasila. In several sermons and transnational religious forums, he emphasized the necessity of implementing Islamic law comprehensively and criticized governmental systems that did not adopt Islamic law as their constitutional foundation.

Textually, the discourse constructed during this phase no longer framed Pancasila merely as a domestic political policy issue. Instead, it was presented as part of the broader nation-state system, which he considered incompatible with the concept of sovereignty under Islamic law. Within the emerging narrative, the national state system was often depicted as a product of colonial modernity that required correction through the ideological struggle of Muslims.

His association with networks later known as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) reinforced the transnational orientation of his thinking. During this phase, the dichotomy between Islam and the national state became increasingly pronounced. Whereas earlier rejection had focused primarily on the single principle policy, his critique in the Malaysian period expanded conceptually toward a broader challenge to the legitimacy of the nation-state itself. Chronologically, this phase reflects both continuity and intensification in his oppositional stance. There is little indication of moderation in his views toward Pancasila. Instead, the available statements reveal ideological consistency in rejecting political systems that are not based on Islamic law.

Return to Indonesia and the Establishment of Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (2000)

After returning to Indonesia following the collapse of the New Order regime, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's public statements in various forums and

congresses indicated a shift in the tone of his articulation regarding the state and Pancasila. Through the establishment of Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) in 2000, he continued to emphasize the importance of formally implementing Islamic law within the state system. However, in several statements during this period, criticism of Pancasila was no longer expressed through direct or confrontational rejection of state symbols. Instead, it was articulated through normative arguments regarding the necessity of adopting Islamic law as the primary legal foundation of the state.

Textually, the discourse constructed during this phase reflects a more systematic and communicative strategy of articulation. Pancasila was not always explicitly mentioned as a system that should be rejected. Rather, it was positioned as an ideological framework that had not yet fully represented the law of God. As a result, Ba'asyir's opposition shifted from symbolic confrontation toward argumentative ideological critique.

The more open political climate of the Reformasi era provided greater space for ideological expression without the repressive pressures characteristic of the New Order period. This context influenced the style of Ba'asyir's public statements, which became more politically open and discursive. Nevertheless, in terms of substance, his statements continued to question the legitimacy of the state ideology from an Islamic perspective. Chronologically, this phase demonstrates a transformation in the form of expression rather than in ideological substance. His stance toward Pancasila remained critical, although the mode of articulation became more pragmatic and structured.

Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, in the early phase of his thought, constructed a rejection of Pancasila through a framework of total theological delegitimization. In his discourse, Pancasila is represented as a deviation from *tawhid*, as reflected in statements such as "*Pancasila is shirk*" and "*to adopt anything other than God's law as a foundation constitutes polytheism.*" This formulation demonstrates the use of a theological labeling strategy aimed at normatively discrediting the state ideology.

Discursively, Ba'asyir develops a clear structure of binary opposition between "God's law" and "man-made law," in which the former is positioned as the sole source of legitimacy, while the latter is reduced to a form of deviation. This is evident in his statement that "*a state that does not implement God's law is a taghut state,*" thereby placing the state itself within a delegitimized category.

Furthermore, this discourse extends to a critique of modern democracy through the rejection of the concept of popular sovereignty, as expressed in the statement "*sovereignty in the hands of the people contradicts the sovereignty of God.*" From

a critical discourse analysis perspective, this construction reflects an attempt at ideological closure, namely the restriction of alternative interpretations by asserting the singular supremacy of divine authority.

In addition, Ba'asyir engages in epistemic delegitimization of Pancasila by asserting that¹⁶ *“Islam is already perfect; there is no need for another ideology”* and *“Pancasila is not derived from revelation; therefore, it cannot serve as a foundation.”* These statements emphasize that only revelation-based systems are considered legitimate, while the state ideology is positioned outside this framework of legitimacy. This reflects a total rejection at both the conceptual and normative levels, including the implication that state law is not considered binding if it does not conform to Islamic law.

Overall, the corpus in this phase exhibits a discourse pattern that is absolute, exclusive, and non-compromising, in which Pancasila is not only politically rejected but also delegitimized simultaneously on theological, epistemological, and normative grounds. This pattern aligns with the characteristics of radical Islamist discourse, which tends to construct social reality through binary oppositions and the delegitimization of alternative systems.

Imprisonment and the Pledge of Allegiance to ISIS (2010–2014)

During the period of imprisonment following his arrest in 2010 and his 15-year prison sentence in 2011, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's public statements conveyed through legal representatives, open letters, and media reports continued to reflect a rigid ideological stance toward the national state system. The state was consistently portrayed as a political entity that had not fully implemented the law of God.

The peak of ideological articulation in this phase occurred in 2014, when Ba'asyir pledged allegiance (*bay'ah*) to Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi as the leader of ISIS. Textually, this pledge symbolically represented affiliation with the idea of a transnational caliphate. From the perspective of discourse analysis, this act was not merely a personal declaration but also carried ideological messages emphasizing preference for a political system based on the caliphate rather than the nation-state.

If earlier phases demonstrated adaptations in communication strategies, this phase reflects a reaffirmation of ideological positions in a more explicit form. Pancasila and the national state system were implicitly framed as political structures that failed to meet the ideal standards of Islamic law. The discourse

¹⁶ Septian, “Viral, Abu Bakar Baasyir Akhirnya Mengakui Pancasila.”

constructed during this period was highly exclusive and emphasized a dichotomy between divine law and man-made law.

Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, in the context of his association with support for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), was reported to have administered *bay'ah* (oath of allegiance) to a number of terrorism convicts within a correctional facility. According to statements from the Indonesian Ministry of Law and Human Rights, "*there were 23 terrorist inmates who pledged allegiance,*" indicating his direct involvement in the process of ideological legitimation of the group. This event reportedly took place on "*18 July 2014*" and was conducted "*in their room within the residential block,*" rather than in a formal place of worship, suggesting that it emerged from internal inmate dynamics.

In subsequent clarifications conveyed through relevant officials, it was stated that the act did not originate from his initial intention but occurred under pressure, as reflected in the statement "*I did not agree, but I was continuously pressured... eventually I agreed to administer the oath.*" Thus, this corpus suggests that the *bay'ah* to ISIS occurred under situational constraints shaped by internal prison dynamics, while still representing a form of participation in reinforcing ideological affiliation with ISIS within the prison environment.

In later developments, Ba'asyir demonstrated a shift in his stance regarding support for ISIS. Terrorism analyst Sidney Jones noted that he "*had once pledged allegiance as a follower of the movement calling itself ISIS*" during his imprisonment. However, this support was not sustained, as in subsequent phases he was described as "*no longer pro-ISIS.*" This shift has been analytically linked to the influence of his immediate social environment. In particular, family influence appears to have played a significant role, as his two sons, Abdul Rochim and Abdul Rosyid, "*did not support ISIS,*" which "*could influence their father*" to distance himself from the movement.

This indicates that changes in ideological positioning are not solely the result of individual reflection, but are also shaped by relational factors and social pressures within close networks, particularly the family. Consequently, this process contributed to the weakening of Ba'asyir's ideological affiliation with ISIS in subsequent contexts. From a broader analytical perspective, this pattern reflects the fluidity of ideological alignment within extremist networks, where personal, social, and situational factors intersect to shape trajectories of support and disengagement.

From a chronological perspective, this phase suggests that previous changes were not necessarily substantive transformations but rather contextual adaptations. The experience of imprisonment and broader global political

dynamics, including the rise of international caliphate discourse, also influenced the articulation of his ideological stance.

Release from Prison and Contextual Change (2021–2022)

After being fully released from prison on 8 January 2021, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's public statements circulating in 2022 indicate a significant change in the way he interprets Pancasila. In several documented statements that gained widespread attention in the media, he acknowledged that in the past he had considered Pancasila to contain elements that could potentially lead to *shirk* (associating partners with God). However, in this most recent phase, he stated that the ulama and the founding fathers of the nation could not possibly have formulated a state foundation that contradicts the principle of *tawhid*. He also affirmed that the first principle of Pancasila *Belief in the One and Only God* does not contradict Islamic teachings.

Textually, this phase demonstrates a shift in the construction of meaning. Whereas Pancasila had previously been placed in theological opposition to Islam, in this phase it is reinterpreted as a state ideology that can still be accommodated within the framework of *tawhid*. Pancasila is no longer positioned as a symbol of secularism that must be rejected, but rather as the result of a collective *ijtihad* that can be understood contextually.

From the perspective of discourse analysis, this change indicates a transformation at the level of meaning rather than merely a shift in communication strategy. The structure of the argumentation used is no longer based on the dichotomy between “the law of God versus the law of humans,” but rather on a reinterpretation of the substance of the first principle of Pancasila. This suggests an ideological repositioning that is more accommodative toward the nation-state.

When placed within a chronological framework, this phase represents the clearest turning point in the dynamics of Ba'asyir's views on Pancasila. Unlike earlier phases that demonstrated ideological continuity with variations in strategy, this phase reveals a more substantive shift in how he interprets the relationship between Islam and state ideology.

Dynamic Discussion

When all of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's public statements are examined chronologically, it becomes evident that his views on Pancasila did not evolve in a linear manner. Instead, they followed a fluctuating pattern influenced by social, political, and personal experiences. These changes can broadly be categorized into three major patterns: a phase of ideological rejection, a phase

of consolidation and radical reaffirmation, and a phase of theological reinterpretation.

In the early phase (1970s–1990s), Pancasila was constructed within his discourse as a symbol of state secularism that contradicted Islamic law. The language used was strongly dichotomous contrasting the law of God with the law of humans thereby positioning Pancasila in theological opposition to Islam. During the Malaysian period and his involvement with networks associated with Jemaah Islamiyah, this construction remained largely unchanged and even intensified within a transnational ideological context that viewed the nation-state as a system that was not fully compatible with Islamic principles.

Entering the Reformasi period and the establishment of Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), a shift occurred at the level of articulation, although not yet at the level of ideological substance. Criticism of Pancasila remained present but was expressed in a more systematic and organizationally structured argumentative format. This indicates a communicative adaptation to a more open political environment while still maintaining his earlier ideological position.

The period of imprisonment and the pledge of allegiance to ISIS demonstrated a stronger reaffirmation of his ideological stance. Discursively, affiliation with the idea of a global caliphate indicated a preference for a supranational political system rather than the nation-state model. At this stage, opposition to the national system continued to be maintained both symbolically and ideologically.

However, the most significant transformation emerged after his release from prison in 2021. In several public statements made in 2022, a shift in the construction of meaning regarding Pancasila became evident. Whereas Pancasila had previously been regarded as potentially leading to *shirk*, in this phase it was reinterpreted as a product of consensus among ulama and national leaders that does not contradict the principle of *tawhid*, particularly through the first principle of *Belief in the One and Only God*. Textually, this represents a transition from a discourse of opposition toward a discourse of reinterpretation and accommodation.

Therefore, the dynamics of Ba'asyir's changing views cannot simply be understood as ideological inconsistency. Rather, they should be interpreted as responses to evolving historical contexts and the social-political experiences he encountered. A chronological analysis of his public statements demonstrates that these changes reflect the interaction between theological beliefs, structural pressures, legal experiences, and both national and global political realities.

These findings reinforce the theoretical assumption that Islamic political thought is inherently dynamic and contextual. Attitudes toward state ideology are not always fixed but may undergo shifts in meaning through processes of reinterpretation. Consequently, understanding figures such as Abu Bakar Ba'asyir requires a textual and chronological approach that treats public statements as the primary source of analysis, rather than relying solely on normative interpretations or static ideological labels.



Building on this shift, Ba'asyir's evolving position toward Pancasila can be interpreted not merely as a personal change of opinion, but as part of a broader process of discursive transformation within Islamist thought. While his earlier stance was characterized by theological absolutism and total rejection, this later phase reflects what scholars describe as ideological moderation without full ideological disengagement. His acknowledgment that *“previously I considered Pancasila to be shirk, but now I do not”* signals a form of doctrinal reassessment; however, the continued emphasis that Pancasila is acceptable only *“as long as it does not contradict Islam”* indicates that the primacy of sharia as the ultimate normative framework remains intact.

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, this shift can be understood as a process of reframing rather than replacement, where the object of rejection (Pancasila) is not entirely abandoned but instead reinterpreted within an Islamic theological framework. The reinterpretation of the first principle (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*) as being *“consistent with tawhid”* exemplifies a strategy of discursive accommodation, allowing previously contested concepts to be incorporated without fundamentally altering the core ideological structure.

This pattern aligns with broader trends observed in Indonesian Islamism, where actors adjust their rhetoric in response to changing political and social contexts, particularly in the post-Reformasi era, which provides greater space

for ideological negotiation. Rather than indicating a complete ideological shift, shaped by external pressures, social environment, and the need for broader legitimacy.¹⁷

Therefore, Ba'asyir's acceptance of Pancasila should be situated within a framework of conditional ideological alignment, where acceptance is contingent upon compatibility with Islamic principles. This reinforces the argument that the transformation observed in his discourse represents a shift in mode of articulation and legitimation, rather than a substantive transformation of ideological foundations.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's views on Pancasila are dynamic and contextual rather than static. In the early phase, his rejection of Pancasila emerged from a rigid ideological framework and the influence of radical networks, particularly when Pancasila was established as the sole ideological principle. During his period of exile in Malaysia and his involvement with the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) network, this rejection remained consistent. Ba'asyir's return to Indonesia and the establishment of Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) marked a shift toward a more pragmatic approach, followed by a period of imprisonment and symbolic affiliation with ISIS that reflected a reaffirmation of his opposition to the nation-state. After his release from Gunung Sindur Prison in 2021, Ba'asyir demonstrated an adaptation in his views toward Pancasila, emphasizing that the first principle is compatible with the concept of *tawhid* and that Pancasila was formulated by ulama who would not have intentionally committed acts contrary to Islamic teachings. These findings reinforce the argument that changes in the views of Islamic figures are not merely rhetorical fluctuations but responses to evolving social and political contexts as well as different legal experiences over time. Therefore, the thought of figures such as Abu Bakar Ba'asyir should be understood historically, contextually, and dynamically rather than as a fixed ideological position.

¹⁷ Septian, "Viral, Abu Bakar Baasyir Akhirnya Mengakui Pancasila."

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