

Between Religious Nationalism and Democratic Potential: Religious Forces in Indonesia and Germany

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Religious authorities shape political landscapes worldwide in different ways: While in Indonesia over the past two decades, socially conservative religious forces have gained political influence and contributed to a growing religious nationalism, other religious actors continue to contribute to democratic education and emancipatory participatory processes.

Drawing on extensive research on the changing discourses on Islam in Indonesia in the post-1998 electoral democratization period and analysis of the mechanisms through which conservative religious movements grew and built alliances with nationalists, this presentation discusses both the challenges and opportunities that religious forces present for democratic societies. While the first part examines the structural and societal conditions that led to the political strengthening of conservative religious actors in Indonesia, the second part turns to the democratic potential of religious communities both in Indonesia and Germany.

The presentation argues that religious actors can provide important resources for democratic education. These insights are contextualized within a new practice-oriented research group on civic education and religion that focuses on Germany while building on experiences gained in Indonesia.