

# Islamic Perspective on the Nation-State : Political Islam in Post-Soeharto Indonesia \*

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## الملخص

تلقي هذه المقالة ضوءاً للعلاقة بين الإسلام والحكومة الاندونيسية بعد سقوط نظام سوهارتو حيث تتميز هذه الفترة الانتقالية بتبلور الروح الإسلامية في الساحة السياسية. فقد ظهرت الفرق الإسلامية المتطرفة مثل حركة الجهاد (لشكار جهاد) وجبهة ناصري الإسلام وحزب التحرير وقوة المجاهدين الإندونيسيين إلى غير ذلك من الفرق المؤيدة لنظام خلافة الإسلام في إندونيسيا. طالبت هذه الحركات بتغيير النظام العلماني وتبديله بالنظام الإسلامي المعروف بنظام الخلافة إلا أنها - كما يرى الكاتب - لا تستطيع أن تفرق بين الخلافة الأصلية الخالصة التي تتمثل في عصر الخلفاء الراشدين وبين المملكة الاستبدادية المتمثلة في عصور الدولة الأموية والعباسية والعثمانية. فهناك خلاف في أمر الخلافة بين أوساط العلماء المسلمين أنفسهم مثل السيد رشيد رضا وأبي الأعلى المودودي.

بحث الكاتب عن الجذور التاريخية المتصلة بعلاقة الإسلام مع الدولة فقد كان النقاش الأكاديمي حول أساس الدولة مستمرا قبل وبعد إعلان استقلال إندونيسيا وكان هناك اتفاق بين الفريق الإسلامي وبين الفريق الوطني العلماني

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على حل وسط هو أن الدولة الإندونيسية ليست دولة علمانية ولا دينية وإنما هي دولة تقوم على المبادئ الخمسة الأساسية (بنتشاسيلا) التي تعتبر الأديان كلها (وليس الإسلام وحده) في منزلة رفيعة، إلا أن بعض الفرق الإسلامية التي لم تقبل هذا الحل تحاول بالقوة إقامة الدولة الإسلامية عن طريق حرب العصابات، منها حركة دار الإسلام (الجيش الإندونيسي الإسلامي). هذه الأخيرة تتحرك في جاوا الغربية وأتشيه وسولاويسي الجنوبية، إلا أن نظام سوكارنو قضى عليها قضاءً نهائياً. ومنذ ذلك الحين حتى عصر سوهارتو تعاني السياسة الإسلامية من الضغوط ولم تتح لها فرصة النهوض من جديد.

والآن مع حلول عصر الانفتاح والحرية الذي مكن الشعب الإندونيسي من التعبير عن أفكارهم وآراءهم ظهرت الأحزاب والحركات النضالية الإسلامية إلا أنها فشلت في الانتخابات العامة السابقة حيث حازت على أقل من خمسين بالمائة بل أقل بكثير بالمقارنة مع الأصوات التي حصلت عليها الأحزاب الإسلامية في الانتخابات العامة التي سادتها الروح الديمقراطية عام ١٩٥٥. قام الكاتب بتحليل أسباب الفشل التي أصابت الأحزاب الإسلامية وانتهى أخيراً إلى التنبؤ بأن الأصوات التي ستحصل عليها في الانتخابات العامة المقبلة لا تزيد عما كانت عليه قبل، وإنما تنقص كثيراً، ذلك لأن المسلمين الإندونيسيين يبدو أنهم يميلون إلى "الإسلام الجوهري" أكثر منه إلى "الإسلام الرسمي". وهنا يطرح الكاتب سؤالاً "هل سيكون مستقبل السياسة الإسلامية باهراً بكثرة أعمال العنف التي قامت بها بعض الحركات الإسلامية؟"

## Abstrak

Paper ini menyoroti hubungan antara Islam dan negara setelah runtuhnya rejim Soeharto. Masa transisi ini ditandai dengan menguatnya kembali Islam politik. Kelompok-kelompok Muslim radikal bermunculan seperti Lasykar Jihad, Front Pembela Islam, Hizb al-Tahrir, Angkatan Mujahidin Indonesia dsb yang mendukung diberlakukannya sistem kekhalifahan Islam di Indonesia. Gerakan-gerakan ini menuntut perubahan sistem pemerintahan sekuler dan bentuk negara-bangsa menjadi "negara Islam" yang lebih dikenal dengan khilafah. Meski demikian, menurut penulis para pendukung sistem kekhalifahan ini telah gagal untuk membedakan antara kekhalifahan yang murni dan asli pada masa kekhalifahan Khulafa' al-Rasyidin dan Kerajaan despotik Umayyah, Abbasiyah, dan Turki Usmani. Para intelektual Muslim sendiri seperti Rasyid Rida dan al-Mawdudi berbeda pandangan mengenai sistem kekhalifahan.

Lebih lanjut, penulis menelusuri jejak sejarah hubungan Islam dan negara. Perdebatan mengenai dasar negara Indonesia sudah diperdebatkan secara akademis menjelang dan setelah proklamasi kemerdekaan Indonesia. Pertentangan antara kubu Islam dan nasionalis sekuler mengenai hal ini berakhir dengan suatu kompromi bahwa negara Indonesia bukanlah negara sekuler dan juga bukan negara agama dengan mendasarkan pada Pancasila yang menempatkan agama (tidak hanya Islam) dalam kedudukan yang terhormat. Namun, kelompok Muslim yang tidak puas dengan kompromi ini memanggul senjata untuk mendirikan negara Islam. Salah satu kelompok tersebut adalah gerakan DI/TII (Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia) yang bergerilya di daerah Jawa Barat, Aceh dan Sulawesi Selatan. Gerakan ini dapat dipadamkan oleh rejim Soekarno. Sejak saat itu sampai masa rejim Soeharto politik Islam sangat ditekan dan dimusuhi dan tidak diberi ruang dan kesempatan untuk bangkit kembali.

Kini, seiring dengan keterbukaan dan kebebasan yang diperoleh bangsa Indonesia untuk melontarkan ide dan gagasannya, muncul partai-partai dan gerakan militan Islam. Namun, partai Islam juga telah gagal karena secara keseluruhan memperoleh kurang dari 50 %, bahkan lebih kecil dari suara partai-partai Islam yang diperoleh pada pemilu demokratis 1955. Penulis kemudian mengemukakan analisa mengenai penyebab kegagalan partai Islam. Nampaknya, penulis memprediksi bahwa suara untuk partai-partai Islam tidak akan beranjak banyak bahkan mungkin merosot karena umat Islam Indonesia cenderung melaksanakan "Islam Substantif" daripada

"Islam Formalistik". Dengan maraknya gerakan-gerakan Islam di Indonesia yang seringkali diwarnai dengan kekerasan baik antar maupun intern umat, bagaimana prospek demokratisasi di Indonesia. Akankah lebih suram?

The coming the new millennium has brought not only euphoria among citizens of the world, but also hopes particularly among Muslims of better life especially in political and economic live. With the same token there is also a growing anxiety among Muslims to face the new millennium, which brings or, more precisely, gears up certain tendencies that have begun to gain momentum since at least the last decade of the twentieth century.

As Liddle and Mujani<sup>1</sup> rightly argue, one of the most evident tendencies in the post-cold period toward to the new millennium is the rapid growth of democracies, or at least, there is a strong tendency that increasing number of nation-states is becoming more democratic. This tendency, as both scholars further point out, seems not to be taking place in dominant or pre-dominant Muslim states in the Islamic world as a whole. As a result, the old question about Islam and democracy; whether or not Islam, for instance, could play a more positive role in the new wave of democracy, once gain becomes a subject of heated discussion both from within Muslims and without.<sup>2</sup>

The discussion and debates on the relations of Islam and democracy, has once again come to the forefront in Indonesia in the aftermath of the fall of Soeharto. This has a lot to do with the rise of "political Islam" which appears to be one of the most visible political development in the post-Soeharto Indonesia. This can be clearly observed in several tendencies. First, the establishment of a great number of "Islamic parties" which mostly adopt Islam as their basis replacing Pancasila that used to be the sole basis of any organization; second, the increasing demands from certain groups among Muslims for the official adoption and implementation of shari'ah; and third, proliferation of Muslim groups considered by many as radicals like the Lasykar Jihad (Jihad Troops), the Front Pembela Islam (FPI, Islamic Defense

<sup>1</sup>See William Liddle & Saiful Mujani, *Islam, Kultur Politik, dan Demokrasi : Sebuah Telaah Komparatif Awal*, unpublished paper, 2000.

<sup>2</sup>John L. Esposito & John O Voll, *Islam and Democracy*, (New York : Oxford University Press, 1996), Dale F. Eickelman & James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1996).

Front), the Hizb al-Tahrir (Party of Liberation), the Angkatan Mujahidin Indonesia (the Jihad Fighter Group of Indonesia), etc.

The three developments —by no means exhaustive— to some appears to represent the return of the idea of Islamic state in Indonesia, and this could supposedly bring the future of democracy and pluralism in Indonesia into question. I would argue, however, that despite the seeming recent tendencies among Indonesian Muslims to cling to political and formal Islam, it remains difficult to imagine that Indonesia would and could be transformed into an Islamic state. The three new tendencies could be very alarming for those who are concerned with the future of democracy in this country, but one should not overestimate them since there is also a number of factors that are working in Indonesian society which make the realization of an Islamic state in Indonesian remains a remote possibility only.

This paper attempts to discuss all these complex development. One of the most important questions to answer is the feasibility and viability of the idea of Islamic state in Indonesia. Not least important is of course the discussion on the future of democracy in the country in relations with all the recent tendencies towards political and formal Islam.

### **Caliphate versus Modern Nation-State**

Before going any further, it is fair to make it clear that any discussion of Muslim politics should avoid any sweeping generalization. In fact there is no single Muslim politics; in other words Islam as a political reality and Muslims are not a monolithic phenomenon. Hefner has persuasively argued that there is no single, civilization-wide pattern of Muslim politics, but a variety of competing organizations and ideals. In his opinion, the modern era's nation making and market globalization have, if anything, only increased the pluralism and contestation of politics in the Muslim world. As a result, the most significant "clash of cultures" today and the new millennium is not that between distinct civilizations, but rival political traditions within the same Islamic country.<sup>3</sup>

The contest and rivalry among a variety of Islamic political traditions are even becoming increasingly complex with the contemporary Islamic revival. The so-called revival of religion including Islam that has swept many

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<sup>3</sup>See Robert W. Hefner, "Islam and Nation in the Post-Soeharto Era", in Adam Schwarz & Jonathan Paris (eds), *The Politics of Post-Soeharto Indonesia* (New York : Council of Foreign Relation, 1999), p.41.

parts of the globe since the last two decades at least revives the old debates on relations of Islam and politics. Both at the theoretical and practical levels Muslim intellectuals, scholars, *ulama*, and leaders have entangled in such issues as the compatibility or incompatibility between Islam and contemporary ideas and practices of democracy, civil society and human rights. Again, there is no single and monolithic answer to these questions. One thing to be sure is that majority Muslims have accepted albeit tacitly the modern form of nation-state. But one can also be sure that there is a great deal of differences among Muslims, for instance, on the kind and level of democracy that would and could be implemented in their respective country.

While Islamic revival is continually gaining momentum, there are signs that many secular nation-states in the Muslim world have failed to deliver their promises. This failure has not only eroded the credibility of secular regimes in the eyes of ever-growing number of Muslim, but also has created strong skepticism of the viability of modern nation-states. This is evident from attempts carried out by certain Muslim movements, regarded by many as radicals such as the Hizb al-Tahrir, Gama'ah Tafkir wa al-Hijrah and other splinter groups of the Ikhwan al-Muslimun, to replace secular regimes and nation-states with the classic model of "Islamic state", better known as the caliphate (*al-khilafah*), or in contemporary discourse among these movements is called "universal caliphate". The proponents of the universal caliphate believe that this kind of Islamic political entity led by a single caliph is the answer and the only solution to resolve Muslim disunity and powerlessness vis-à-vis the Western powers.<sup>4</sup>

The contemporary revival of the idea of a single and universal caliphate, undoubtedly, is quite problematic. I would argue that the idea is mostly based on historical and religious romanticism as well as misconception of not only the very meaning of the caliphate but also of historical development of the caliphate itself in the post-Prophet Muhammad period. Supporters of the caliphate have confused and have failed to distinguish between the original and genuine caliphate during the Rightly Guided Caliph (*al-khulafa' al-rashidun*) and the despotic monarchies of the Umayyads, Abbasids

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<sup>4</sup>R. Hrair Dekmejian. *Islam in Revolution : Fundamentalism in the Arab World*, Second edition (New York : Syracuse University Press, 1995). See also Ibrahim M. Abu Rabi, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World*, (New York : State University of New York Press, 1996), Bruce B. Lawrence, *Shattering the Myth : Islam Beyond Violence*, (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1998).

and the Ottomas. While at least the first two caliphs i.e. Abu Bakr and Umar ibn al-Khattab were elected on their merit, the subsequent "caliphs" in the post-*al-khulafa' al-rashidun* period were essentially kings (*muluk*) with all their uncontested rights and privileges over all other Muslims. Therefore, modern thinkers of the caliphate such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, Rashid Rida, Sayyid Qutb, and Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi have all refused to recognize the credibility and legitimacy of those Muslim kings as "caliphs".<sup>5</sup>

One should be aware, however, these thinkers proposed different, if not conflicting ideas, on some main themes of the caliphate. Al-Kawakibi and Rida, for instance, insisted that the caliph should be an Arab of the Quraysh tribe. Al-Mawdudi on the other hand strongly refuses this idea; to him the caliph should be democratically elected among all Muslims based on merit by a special electing body called "*ahl al-halli wa al-aqd*", or *Majlis al-Shura*. According to al-Mawdudi the lofty position of the caliph must not reserved for the Arab, since they have no special privileges over other non-Arab Muslim.<sup>6</sup>

Despite all conceptual and practical problems surrounding the feasibility and viability of the caliphate today and in the new millennium, the ideas seems to have continually attracted certain elements of Muslims throughout the world. In Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia, the idea of the caliphate has been put into circulation by such organizations as Hizb al-Tahrir and Jamaah Tarbiyah since 1990s as least. It is important to note that during the Soeharto New Order, these movements had been very careful not to invite the regime to take firm actions against their activities. As a result they survive the Soeharto harsh rule and make themselves more pronounced in the post- Soeharto period.

### Indonesian Case : The *Pancasila*

As mentioned earlier, polemics and debates among Indonesian and foreign observers on the relations of Islam and politics, and Islam and democracy in the nation-state of Indonesia have once agains come to the forefront in Indonesia in the aftermath of the fall of Soeharto. This has a lot to do

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<sup>5</sup>Azyumardi Azra, *Pergolakan Politik Islam : Dari Fundamentalisme, Modernisme hingga Post-Moderisme*, (Jakarta : Paramadina, 1996), p. 153.

<sup>6</sup>Lukman Thaib, *The Islamic Polity and Leadership*, (Petaling Jaya, Malaysia : Delta Publishing, 1995), p. 79-80.

with the rise of “political Islam” which appears to be one of the most visible political developments in the post- Soeharto Indonesia. Many believe that the rise of political Islam represented by so many “Islamic parties” would bring serious political repercussions to the future of Indonesian state which is until today based on Pancasila.

In that regard, it is worth pointing out that despite the fact that the first pillar of Pancasila is the belief in the One Supreme God, many foreign observers view this Indonesian basis of state as basically secular. This argument is further supported by the fact that Indonesia does not adopt any religion —particularly Islam as the religion most Indonesia adhere to— as the official religion of the state.

On the other hand, majority of Muslims would love to argue that Indonesia is neither secular not theocratic state. For them Pancasila is in accord with Islamic belief and teachings. The first pillar of Pancasila, for instance, in their opinion, is simply another reformulation of the Islamic belief in the One Supreme God (tawhid). The case is also the same with the other four pillars of Pancasila : just and civilized humanity; unity of Indonesia; democracy which is guided by the inner wisdom of its leaders; social justice for the entire people of Indonesia.<sup>7</sup>

In spite of Muslim acceptance of Pancasila, one should admit, however, that certain Muslim groups, had in the past attempted to replace Pancasila with Islam as the basis of Indonesian state. In the 1950s the Masjumi Party, for instance, struggled in the national parliament to replace Pancasila with Islam. Then came the Darul Islam (Islamic State) rebellions under the leadership of Kartosuwirjo in West Java, and Daud Bereueh in Aceh which attempted to establish the Indonesian Islamic State (NII, or Negara Islam Indonesia). But as already know, all these efforts-legally and illegally-failed. It is important to note that suspicions among non-Muslim groups, mainly Christians and secular circles remain there; there is still strong suspicions among them that Muslims would continue their struggle to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia at the expense of other groups of citizens.<sup>8</sup>

As a result, Indonesian regimes, both Soekarno and Soeharto, took

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<sup>7</sup> See Tarmizi Taher. *Aspiring for the Middle Path : Religious Harmony in Indonesia*, (Jakarta : Center for the Study of Islam and Society (Censis), 1997), Pp. 1-16.

<sup>8</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Islam and Christianity in Indonesia : The Roots of Conflict and Hostility*, paper presented in International Conference on “Religion and Culture in Asia-Pacisif : Violence or Healing ?”, RMIT University, Melbourne, 22-25 October 2000.

harsh measures not only against any potential Muslim group that subscribed to the idea of Islamic state, but also against any dangerous manifestation of political Islam. Thus, the period from the last years of President Soekarno in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and followed by much of the Soeharto era was marked by the demise of political Islam. Therefore, for more than forty years, Islamic political forces were subjects of state repression and manipulation. The New Order regime of Soeharto, in particular, provided no room for political Islam to breathe. Soeharto in fact carried out systematic depoliticization of Islam, the peak of which was the forced implementation of the Pancasila as the sole ideological basis of any organization.<sup>9</sup>

The opposition to the forced implementation of Pancasila as the sole ideological basis of any organization came of courses not only from many Muslim organizations; most, if not all, Christian organizations opposed the move even more bitterly. But given their past history, Muslims became the main subject of suspicions. Therefore, potential Islamic political forces remained under tight control even after their adoption of Pancasila as the sole ideological basis.

The retreat of political Islam during much of the New Order period, however, provided a momentum for the rejuvenation of cultural Islam. This began with Soeharto's more accommodative and reconciliatory attitude towards Islam and Muslims in the period after the implementation of Pancasila as the sole ideological basis. This is evident, for instance, from the enactment of 1989 law of Islamic Court; 1989 Law of National Education which recognized the existence of Islamic educations on participation with "secular" education. Then followed the establishment of ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia/All Indonesian Muslim Intellectual Association) chaired by BJ Habibie, then Minister of Research and Technology; the founding of Islamic banks (Bank Muamalat Indonesia/BMI, and Bank Perkreditan Rakyat Syariah/BPR-Syariah), and the like.

Soeharto undoubtedly had miscalculated and underestimated far-reaching implications of the so-called "cultural Islam". Not unlike Snouck Hurgronje, the most prominent Islamic Advisor of the Dutch Netherlands Indies government, who advised the Dutch to allow "Islam as cultural phenomenon" to express itself more freely at the expense of political Islam that

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<sup>9</sup>See Baktiar Effendy, *Islam dan Negara : Transformasi Pemikiran dan Praktek Politik Islam di Indonesia*, Cet. I (Jakarta : Paramadina, 1998).

must be suppressed by any means necessary, in the final analysis, Soeharto had slowly been seemingly contained and even dictated by the growing political repercussions of the cultural Islam. There was a lot of discussion in public of courses whether or not Soeharto with his Newly found Islamic leaning was in order for him to co-opt Islam, or even reversely that it was Soeharto who had been co-opted by Muslims.

The most widely discussed example of the political repercussions of the "cultural Islam is of courses the ICMI. Even though the ICMI is formally an association of "Muslim intellectuals" only, there is no doubt that it had played a significant political role since its establishment in 1990. By way of Habibie-often called the "super minister -the ICMI had allegedly engineered the increase in number of Muslim ministers in the latest two Cabinets of Soeharto at the expense of the Christians. The ICMI had also been assumed to play a great role in high rank government appointment such as provincial governors and the like. The end result of all these new revelations was what some observers called as the "honey moon" between Soeharto and Islam.

Having considered the role of Habibie in the ICMI political maneuvers, it is not surprising that many Muslims considered Habibie and the ICMI as representatives of Islam dan Muslims. Habibie's personal piety had only added to this sentiment. Therefore, when Soeharto resigned himself from the presidency and was replaced by Habibie following monetary, economic, and political crises that Indonesia experienced since the end of 1997, President Habibie was defended by certain Muslim groups from attacks coming from his opponents who questioned his legitimacy for having been handed over the presidency in unusual way.

### **The Rise and Fall of Islamic Parties**

Despite his relatively short interregnum, one of the most significant contributions of Habibie was the liberalization of Indonesia politics. Following his appointment, Habibie freed not only most of political prisoners, abolished restrictions to press freedom, lifted the forced implementation of Pancasila as the sole ideology, but also abandoned the three-party system of Indonesian politics represented by Golkar, PPP, and PDI. This last policy as one might expect has led to the rise of a great number of "Islamic political parties". The abolition of the 1985 Mass-Organization Law that made it obligatory for all organizations to adopt Pancasila as the sole ideology has only added further momentum for euphoria of political Islam. Without such a legal obligation, it was reasonable to expect that many Muslims would seek

a return to Islam for their political parties.<sup>10</sup>

The extent of political euphoria among Muslim can be clearly seen in the proliferation of Islamic parties. There were some 40 "Islamic parties" among all 141 parties that formally registered with the Ministry of Justice in the lead-up to the June 1999 general election. After a selection by the Team of Eleven (Tim 11), the committee entrusted with selecting the political parties that would contest the election, 48 parties — of which around 20 were Islamic — were found eligible to take part.<sup>11</sup> This was far more than the 10 Islamic parties that had participated in the 1955 general election.

There have been a lot of discussions of what "Islamic parties" meant to be. I would propose that there are at least two major elements that identify a party as "Islamic". First, in their documentation, many such parties have officially adopted Islam as their ideological basis.

Examples include the United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan/PPP); the Moon and Crescent Party (Partai Bulan Bintang/PBB); the United Party (Partai Persatuan/PP); Indonesian Islamic Political Party of Masyumi (Partai Politik Islam Indonesia Masyumi/PPIIM); Indonesian Islamic Association Party of 1905 (Partai Syarekat Islam Indonesia 1905/PSSI 1905); Islamic Nation Party (Partai Umat Islam/PUI); and New Masyumi Party (Partai Masyumi Baru).

There is one party that is the KAMI party that adopts the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad as its basis. Taken together, there are ten parties adopting Islam or the original sources of Islamic teachings, instead of Pancasila, as their sole ideological basis. This group of Islamic parties, as Fealy proposes, might also be best categorized as "formalist Islamic parties" since those parties have formally Islam or the Qur'an and the Sunnah as their sole ideological basis.<sup>12</sup>

Second group of "Islamic parties" are Muslim parties that have retained Pancasila as their basis but, at the same time, employ obvious Islamic symbols such as Arabic scripts, the star and crescent, the ka'bah (cubicle build-

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<sup>10</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Islam Substantif : Agar Umat Tidak Jadi Buih*, Cet. I (Bandung : Mizan, 2000)

<sup>11</sup> Arskal Salim, *The Idea of Islamic State in Indonesia*, Paper Presented at The University of Wisconsin-Madison and Northern Illinois University Student Conference on Southeast Asia, DeKalb, (Illinois, March 3-4, 2000), p. 7-8.

<sup>12</sup> Greg Fealy, "Islamic Politics : A Rising or Declining Force ?" Paper presented to Rethinking Indonesia Conference", (Melbourne, 4-5 March 2000), p.3.

ing in the Mecca which is the direction of Muslim in their prayers), and other symbols that widely associated with Islam. While these parties seems to be "pluralist parties" by adopting Pancasila, they are in fact Muslim-based parties for, in some cases, they are supported mostly by members of certain non-political Muslim organizations such as the NU and Muhammadiyah.

The parties included in this group are the National Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa/PKB) supported by the NU; the National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional/PAN), the members of which are mostly coming from Muhammadiyah background; Fathers of the Orphans Party (Partai Abdul Yatama); New Indonesia Party (Partai Solidaritas Uni Indonesia /Partai SUNI); the Peace-Loving Party (Partai Cinta Damai/PCD); Democratic Islam Party (Partai Islam Demokrasi/PID); and Indonesian Muslim Nation Party (Partai Umat Muslimin Indonesia/PUMI). To this group, one might add two "splinter" parties among the NU members, Party of Nahdlatul Ummat (PNU/Nation Awakening Party) and Partai Kebangkitan Ummat (PKU/Nation Awakening Party).

Both parties have Pancasila and Islam as their ideological bases. According to Fealy, all of the parties included in this group might be best described as "pluralist Islamic parties".<sup>13</sup>

Several months before the June 1999 election,<sup>14</sup> I have predicted that the prospect of these Islamic/Muslim parties was very doubtful. The prediction was mainly based on at least three arguments: First, these parties have only caused acute political fragmentation, schisms, and conflicts among both Muslim leadership and the masses. They have created confusion and tension among the Muslims at the grass-root level. As a result, there have cases of open fighting among fanatic supporters of the Islamic parties, even members of the NU supporting different parties.

Second, these Islamic/Muslim parties have mostly been trapped in romanticism of Islamic politics and "illusion" of numerical majority of Muslims among Indonesian population rather than in political realism. Many Muslim political leaders have based themselves in religious idealism and normativism that all of some 87 Muslims of Indonesian total population would automatically support them, and would cast their votes for their parties in the election.

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid, p.4

<sup>14</sup>See Azra, *Islam Substantif*.

Third, they seemed to have underestimated both the PDI-P and Golkar. Many Muslim political leaders believed that Megawati's PDI-P would not get much votes for several constrains; Megawati's gender issue, her unproven capability and her seemingly influence mostly comes only from the charisma of the father, Soekarno, and predominance of non-Muslim and secular figures in the PDI-P leadership. All these proved wrong. They were not able to stop Megawati's PDI-P from winning the election, in spite of appeals from many Muslim ulama and leaders to Muslims not to cast their votes to PDI-P. On the other hand, the Golkar had also been underestimated because of its past strong connection with the Soeharto regime. Since the fall of Soeharto, the Golkar has come under continued attacks as the status-quo party which should be disbanded. The fact is that while most of the Islamic parties have struggled to establish their branches in many parts of Indonesia, the Golkar was able to maintain most of political machine intact. As a result, to surprise of many, the Golkar became the second winner of the election, second only to the PDI-P.

All of these arguments could perhaps explain why Islamic parties have been defeated in the June 1999 election. Taken together, all 20 Islamic parties could only take 37,1 percent of the total votes. This is significant decrease compared with the result of the 1955 election, when Islamic parties won 43,9 percent of the total national votes. In contrast, the PDI-P and Golkar were able to win more than half of the total votes, respectively 33,76 percent and 22,46 percent and, thus became the winners of the election. Worse still, of the 20 Islamic parties, only four that could meet the required minimum threshold of two percent of parliamentary seats (precisely ten seats); they are PPP, PKB, PAN, and PBB.

Now, with this dismal result, what is the prospect of Islamic parties, or even political Islam? How viable is the idea of stronger and formal connections between Islam and the Indonesian nation-state?

First of all, the result of the 1999 election once again confirmed that Islamic parties have never been very popular among Indonesian Muslims. One of the most important reasons for this is that most of the Muslim population are leaning more toward what I call "substantive Islam" rather than towards "formalistic Islam."<sup>15</sup> Though there is a continued tendency among Muslims to undergo some kind of "santrinization", this seems to have more

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*

to do with ritualistic or cultural Islam at best rather than with the political Islam or Islamic parties. The tendency among Muslims to become more devout (*santri*), at least formally, therefore has not been necessarily translated into a more Islamic political orientation. To put it in a more simple way, belief and rituals is one thing, and political behavior is something else.

Therefore, at the levels of political behavior and political praxis, there is no convincing signs of Muslims, as represented by Islamic parties, support the idea of formal Islamic politics. Again, this attitude is hardly surprising, since even no one among Muslim prominent political leaders subscribes to the idea and aim to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia at the expense of Pancasila. Prominent leaders of Muslim politics such as Abdurrahman Wahid, Amin Rais, Yusril Ihza Mahendra, Deliar Noer, Ahmad Sumargono, Muhaimin Iskandar, Nur Mahmudi Ismail, AM Fatwa, Salahuddin Wahid, and many others have declared openly that they and their political parties do not aim at establishing Indonesian Islamic state.<sup>16</sup> To this list one might also add the leaders of Muslim largest social-religious organization, such as KH Hasyim Muzadi (general chairman of the NU) and Ahmad Syafii Maarif (chief national leader of Muhammadiyah), who also dismiss the idea of establishing an Islamic state in Indonesia.

To discuss it in a bit detailed manner, such prominent leader as Amien Rais, former chief leader of the Muhammadiyah who is now the Speaker of the MPR, has long before the euphoria of political Islam considered the idea of Islamic state as having no precedent in Islamic history. Therefore, he argues, there is no religious obligation for Muslims to establish one. Nur Mahmudi Ismail, president of the Justice Party (Partai Keadilan/PK) considered to represent new spirit of Islamic contemporary political revival, also maintains that the most important in Islam is the substance, not the label or formalism. Therefore, he accepted the Pancasila as the sole foundation of the Indonesian state. He recognizes that his party is indeed based on Islam, but this does nor necessarily mean that it would lead to the struggle of establishing an Islamic state.<sup>17</sup>

## Conclusion

The failure of Islamic parties, again, is a clear indication of the unpopularity of formal Islam among Indonesian Muslims. The case is almost

<sup>16</sup> Arskal Salim, *The Idea of Islamic State*, p. 10

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*

the same with the growing appeals among certain groups of Muslims to the application of the *shari'ah*, Islamic law in Indonesia. The idea and appeal of the application of the *shari'ah* is of course not a new idea. It can be traced back to the days surrounding Indonesian independence during which Indonesian leaders formulated Indonesian constitution better known as the 1945 Constitution. At the initial stage of the formulation of the constitution, Muslim leaders introduced to the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution a phrase stating that "the Indonesian state is based on the belief in the One, Supreme God with the obligation the adherents of Islam to implement the *shari'ah*. This stipulation is known in Indonesia as "the seven words" of the Piagam Jakarta (Jakarta Charter).

Before long this stipulations was however dropped because of objections of Christian leaders and secular Nationalists. They argued that the national constitution should not give preferential treatment to any religious group. Furthermore, the constitution should maintain the integration of national plurality. Because of these reasons, Muslim leaders agreed to omit the "seven words" of the Jakarta Charter.<sup>18</sup> However, the debate on the "seven words" or the Piagam Jakarta on the application of the *shari'ah* continued. Muslim leaders once again brought their case in the Constituent Assembly in 1959 stating the return of Indonesia to the 1945 Constitution. This means that the Piagam Jakarta, the basis of the application of the *shari'ah*, should be abandoned.

It is clear that the issue is far from being resolved. The issue of the application of the *shari'ah* comes up again in both post-Soekarno and post-Soeharto era. The sessions of the MPR-S in 1966 and 1967, following the fall of Soekarno, were tense with the rumors of Muslim proposals to bring forward the Piagam Jakarta into deliberation. But as one might expect, this aspiration was suppressed by the army-backed Soeharto regime. In the period of the post-Soeharto, some of the newly-founded Islamic parties discussed above-once again demanded the legalization of the Jakarta Charter as an integral part of the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution.<sup>19</sup>

The appeal for the application of the *shari'ah* was gaining momentum with the adoption during the Habibie presidency of Islamic law in the Aceh province as an integral part of the proposed solution of the Aceh unrest.

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<sup>18</sup>Tarmizi Taher, *Aspiring for the Middle Path*, pp. 38-9

<sup>19</sup>Arskal Salim, *The Idea of Islamic State*, p. 13-14.

There are at least three main reasons behind this move are; firstly, that the majority of the population of Aceh province—as well as Indonesia as a whole—are Muslims; and secondly, it is the *shari'ah* that would be able to resolve the breakdown of law and order in the post-Soeharto era; thirdly, it is only the *shari'ah* that could overcome the increase of social ills in Indonesian society such as drug abuse, crimes, and the like.

The peak of the moves for the application of the *shari'ah* was taking place in the period surrounding the 2000 annual session of the MPR this year. Certain Islamic parties, particularly the PPP, have openly declared their intention to reintroduce the Piagam Jakarta in the MPR session, thus would allow the application of the Islamic law. It seems not necessary to provide detailed accounts of the debates surrounding this. What is important is that the move is strongly opposed by majority of the MPR members, and the issue of the application of the *shari'ah*, once again, failed in the Indonesian highest political institution. Despite the ill-fated response, the aspiration of Islamic law appears to continue to attract certain circles of Muslims. In late October this year, some Muslims in South Sulawesi province appealed for the *shari'ah* in their region. With all these negative responses, the application of the *shari'ah* in Indonesia, I would argue, remains a remote possibility only.

The case is the same with the worrisome phenomenon of the Lasykar Jihad and other similar groups which seem to seek also for the application of Islamic law. Worse still, in the name of Islamic law they attack night clubs, discotheques, and houses allegedly used for prostitution. I believe that the rise of these groups has more to do with the failure of the government to enforce the law, thus providing them with a *vista* or *raison d'être* to take law into their own hands. Therefore, as long as the government is weak, these groups would hold sway in certain time and place to do what they call as "*amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*"—enjoin good, prohibit evil in their own way.

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