

ISLAMIC REVIVALISM IN INDONESIA: CONTESTATION BETWEEN SUBSTANTIVE AND FORMALIST MUSLIMS

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Abstract

Indonesia in the late 1970s saw a rejuvenation of Islam among Muslim communities just as it occurred elsewhere in the Muslim world. Islam gradually became a popular source of Indonesian social, ethical and spiritual life. As a result, Indonesia witnessed the proliferation of mosques, religious schools, and devotional programs, the emergence of a vast market of Islamic books, magazines, and newspapers has developed, and a well- educated Muslim middle class that had begun to raise questions about modern issues, including on the role and rights of women, the challenges of pluralism, the merits of market economies, and most generally, the proper relationship of religion to the state. This paper aims at highlighting the dynamic Muslim communities in facing modern challenges. Using historical analytical method, this paper finds that Islamic revivalism in Indonesia was unique as was provided for the demands of a new style of religious and political activities. Muslim intellectuals arose with nontraditional training and unconventional concerns. New Muslim intellectuals were responding to the demands of the modern world and the threat posed by the West. Though traditionally trained Muslim scholars, who are considerably formalists, responded equally to the modern social and religious issues, the new Muslim intellectuals, who are considerably substantive Muslims, prevailed in the Islamic discourses in Indonesia.

Keywords: Islamic Revivalism, Substantive, Formalistic, Pluralism and Indonesia

Introduction

The term Islamic Revivalism has been used interchangeably with the words resurgence, re-awakening, revitalization, and reassertion by many Muslim as well as non-Muslim scholars.¹ It has been defined as “the desire to revive and return to fundamental teachings and precepts of the Islamic faith” (Mutalib, 1993, p. 1). Chandra Muzaffar (1986) asserts that Islamic resurgence implies three significant points. Firstly, many Muslims see the growing impact of the religion among its followers. Secondly, it suggests a phenomenon which has happened before. Finally, it carries the notion of a challenge or even a threat for other groups of different religious affiliation. John L Esposito (1984, p. 32) says Islamic revival denotes “a sense that something had gone wrong in Islam and diagnosis that decline in Muslim fortune due to a departure from the straight part of Islam.” Esposito (1984, p. 32) further says that “revivalist

¹ The terms are interchangeably used. However, Candra Muzaffar differentiated them by emphasizing that resurgence refers to “act of rising again”. Islamic resurgence means Islam is becoming important again, which is closely related to awakening (re-awakening). Re-assertion tends to refer to the absence of challenges to the existing social organisation. Finally, revivalism indicates the idea of returning to the past and a desire to revive what is antiquated (Muzaffar, 1986).

maintained that Islam had become corrupted through its historical accretions from foreign influences”.

On the same token, Azim A. Nanji (1996) defined Islamic revivalism as a situation which has been “characterized by consciousness that Muslims had strayed from the essential principles of their religion, and it advocated renewed attentiveness to the Qur’an, emulation of the Prophet in daily conduct, and strict adherence to the Shari’ah” (Azim A. Nanji, 1996, p. 35). This paper attempts to analyse Islamic revivalism in Indonesia. It argues that Islamic revivalism in Indonesia is a continuous process of Islamisation. This is reflected in the increasing piousness of Muslims. Finally, it draws on the nature and causes of the Islamic revivalism since its rupture in the 1970s.

Islamic Revivalism in Indonesia

Despite Indonesia being the largest Muslim-populated nation in the world, Islam in Indonesian politics, especially during the era of the Old Order (Sukarno era) and the early reign of Suharto, was considered an outsider. Being politically and economically restricted, Muslims reacted differently to the new developments of the New Order era (Hassan, 1982). Firstly, there were many young Muslims who joined the government as civil servants, from the university-based Islamic Student Association (HMI- Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam) and high school-based Indonesian Islamic Students (PII- Pelajar Islam Indonesia) association. These young Muslims were willing to cooperate with the New Order regime and work for change from within the system (Hefner, 1997b, p. 80). This was due to the collaboration between young Muslim students’ association and the military in combating the Communists upon the rise of the New Order era.

Secondly, there were also modernist Muslims included amongst the senior members of the Council of Indonesian Muslim Associations (Masyumi-Partai Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia), which constituted the ‘legalistic-formalistic’ Muslim groups, who had been sceptical of the government’s commitments to Western-oriented principles of constitutional government and separation of powers (Hefner, 1997b, p. 81). This group was committed to Islamist political ideals. As a matter of fact, after the defeat of political Islam, the senior supporters of Masyumi were called to concentrate their effort on *dakwah* to pave the way to revive the people’s mental and spiritual development. This led to the establishment of the Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia (DDII) under the leadership of the former leader of Masyumi, M. Natsir, in 1967 (Hefner, 2000). In fact, there were several *dakwah* organisations that sought to revive the people’s awareness about Islam such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Islamic Union (Persis- Persatuan Islam) and many others that preceded the DDII (Federspiel, 1970).

Despite the fact that the DDII was newly-established, Indonesian Muslims felt its influences and missionary effects. Unlike other *dakwah* organisations, the DDII has been attributed with two significant characteristics. First, it has a belief in the superiority of democracy over the neo-patrimonial forms of rule adopted by the first two presidents, Sukarno and Suharto, and an almost paranoid obsession with Christian missionary effort as being a threat to Islam. Second, it has been very strongly-orientated towards the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia (Bruinessen, 2002, p. 123). As such, the DDII has been viewed as not purely spiritual but also political in its struggle (Crouch, 1978, pp. 167-171). According to Samson, as highlighted by Hefner, DDII leaders felt that the movement could bring about the cultural change required to restore political Islam to its proper place (Hefner, 1997b; Samson, 1973). The DDII was established five years after the establishment of the Islamic World League (*Rabitah al-‘Alam*

al-Islami) in which Natsir himself was one of the vice-chairmen. Consequently, the DDII has been one of the beneficiaries of Saudi Arabia's financial contributions (Bruinessen, 2002, p. 123).

The DDII uses its own media to convey its message to the masses. This included a weekly known as *Media Dakwah*. Since it was partly sponsored by the outside Muslim world, especially Saudi Arabia, the DDII also followed the developments in the Muslim world. As such, in the late 1980s, a committee was created in order to organise demonstrations of Indonesian Muslims' solidarity with Palestine, Bosnia, Chechnya, and so forth (Hefner, 2000, p. 110). This committee is known as the Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Islamic World (KISDI- Komite Indonesia Untuk Solidaritas dengan Dunia Islam). On the other hand, KISDI was also very concerned with external threats against Islam especially towards Indonesian Muslims. Its founders belonged to the most fundamentalist group of DDII, who were firm believers in the Western Jewish and Christian conspiracy to weaken and destroy Islam (Hefner, 2000). Therefore, they supported Suharto during his last years. They also extended their support for Habibie's transitional government and defended him from the leftist and non-Muslims threats who wanted to topple his government (Hefner, 2000).

It also should be noted that from the beginning of the 1980s, there were many books on Islam that were published, not only those authored by Indonesian scholars, but also translations from foreign works, especially from the Middle East countries such as Iran, Egypt, and other Arab countries (Tamara, 1986, p. 6). In 1982 a publishing house in Bandung was set up using an Iranian name 'Mizan' which emphasised Islamic teachings, including the *shi'iate* school of thought. The publishing house of the Institute of Technology Bandung (ITB- Institut Teknologi Bandung), Pustaka Bulan Bintang, and later on Gema Insani Pers, also publish Islamic books (Tamara, 1986).

The books from outside Indonesia that were translated include those such as the writings of Hassan al-Banna, Abu'l -A'la Mawdudi and several works of Syed Qutb.² Inevitably their thoughts have been influential among the Indonesian Muslims. Several works of Iranian intellectuals behind the Iran revolution such as Ali Shari'ati and Khomeini, whose writings were very popular during the revolution in Iran, and later, Mustafa Muthahari, were also translated into the Indonesian language. As such, discussions on Islam spread throughout the country. Publications on Islam easily sold out and thus Islam emerged to predominate the intellectual and cultural life of the Indonesian middle class. The Shiite school of thought also emerged in Indonesia, especially in Bandung, as a result of the publications.³

Upon Suharto's domestic political consolidation in 1978, the government introduced the *Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus* (Normalization of Campus Life, NKK) (Ridjal & Karim, 1991; Widjojo, 1999). It was used to control students' activities while emphasising that campuses should be places for studying and not an arena for political discussions. Nevertheless, the NKK had a significant and surprising side effect. Universities, in fact, were at the forefront of political discussion and activities. In the 1950s and 1960s Indonesian national universities were controlled by secular nationalist groups, whereas committed Muslims were the weaker of the factions in the student body. However, in the late 1970s, there was a rapid growth of several

² The books that were translated are, Hassan al-Banna, *Risalah* (Letter); Sayyid Qutb such *Ma'alim fi al-tariq* (Signposts on the Road), his *Ma'rakah at Taqaaliid* (Struggling Against the Blind Imitation); and Abu'a -A'la Mawdudi, *Understanding Islam*. These are being translated and published in the 1980s.

³ Jalaluddin Rakhmat was known as one of the Muslim scholars who have been associated with the spreading the Shiite teaching in Indonesia. He established the al-Mutahariyah in Bandung. Indonesia has been the most liberal Muslim country in the region, in which the government does not control religious thought. As such the Shiite has been to some extent, accepted by some Muslims in Indonesia.

religious discourses that led to the domination of Islamic activities in the students' organisation.⁴

Moreover, upon the policy of *Azas tunggal* (Pancasila as the only ideology for all mass organizations in Indonesia), Indonesian Muslims turned to mental and spiritual training. The *Salman* mosque at the ITB was known as one of the outstanding communities of Muslim activities that actively propagated Islamic discourses under the supervision of Imaduddin Abdurrahim, an Indonesian scholar who had successfully prepared Islamic module for youngsters on Islamic courses, including on Islamic creed, management and others (Rosyad, 1995; Abdurrahim, 1979). Thousands of young Muslims - most of them university-educated, had joined the courses. Probably, it was this period that invalidated the theoretical classification of Islam into *santri* and *abangan* in Indonesian politics, for the Muslim middle class had increased and the nominal Muslims had turned to becoming better and more committed Muslims (Geertz, 1960).

In the 1980s, the Muslim students' activities were motivated to socialise Islam through an intellectual and cultural approach. *Dakwah* groups emerged in university campuses which came to be known collectively as the *tarbiyyah* movement.⁵ Later these groups created the Campus Dakwah Institute (LDK- *Lembaga Dakwah Kampus*), a loose umbrella organisation for the dakwah groups (Diedersich, 2002, p. 103; Azra, 2022, p. 169). This process of education basically took the form of *halaqah* (study circle) which convened in campus mosques and *usrah* (family), which are discreet discussion groups that usually met in the houses of their members. These groups were usually influenced by the *Ikhwan Muslimin* from Egypt and focused their discussions on the writings of Sayyid Qutb such as his *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* (Signposts on the Road). One of them even named itself as *Ikhwan Muslimin* and claim to be the Indonesian branch of the Brotherhood. Most students of this group were inward-looking and apolitical; their primary concerns were on moral self-improvement. The emphasis of discussion was on personal morality and piety, discipline, and an inner rejection of the Pancasila state (state based on Pancasila) and un-Islamic practices in modern Indonesia (Bruinessen, 2002, p. 133).

Usrah groups are often affiliated with such discussion as on the militant Muslims' aims of establishing an Indonesian Islamic state and Indonesian Islamic Army (NII- *Negara Islam Indonesia* / TII- *Tentara Islam Indonesia*) as attempted in the in the Sukarno's era (Horikoshi, 1975; Dijk, 1981; Awwas, 2007). There was also a group which was heavily influenced by the puritan Islam of *Wahhabi* or Salafi movement in the Arabian Peninsula. This group was assisted greatly by the Saudi-financed Institute for Islamic and Arabic Studies (LIPIA- *Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab*) in Jakarta (Bruinessen, 2002, p. 134).

Notwithstanding the absence of political Islam, there was a resurgence of Islamic ideas, on politics, economics as well as social and legal systems (Tamara, 1986). It was an Islamic renewal that called on Muslims to seek a revival of "cultural" Islam.⁶ This group was also led by young Muslims of the '66' generation, most of whom were the junior supporters of Masyumi. The most well-known Muslim scholars who propagated Islam as a cultural

⁴ Throughout 1970s, Islamic liberal was the dominant trend among committed Muslims in the student movement, especially when Nurcholish Madjid became the chairman of HMI. However, the fundamentalist Muslims appeared controlling the student movement in 1980s (Bruinessen, 2002).

⁵ *Tarbiyyah* basically means education. It was adopted as the major aim of this religious discourse.

⁶ Cultural Islam refers to cultural approach in socialisation of Islam, especially its relations with the state. In the Muslim world, Islamic discourse has dominantly been in political approach, Islam and the state. In Indonesia, the relations between Islam and the state was antagonistic and thus, difficult in socialisation of Islam. This group attempts to socialise Islam through the social transformation without emphasising Islamic ideology (Effendy, 2000).

discourse are Nurcholish Madjid with his theme “Desacralisation”; Abdurrahman Wahid with his own language of nationalisation (*pribumisasi*) or Islam as the complementing factor; Dawam Rahajo with his expertise on ‘village society’ development through the Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*); and Munawir Sjadzali with his call on looking at Islam from the Indonesian context (Effendy, 2000). Nurcholish Madjid, Harun Nasution, Djohan Effendy, Ahmad Wahib, Munawir Sjadzali gave theological foundations on the new “cultural” Islam. Their colleagues, Dawam Rahardjo, Abdurrahman Wahid, and Adi Sasono on the other hand, contributed to the sociological foundations for those involved in politics (Ali & Effendy, 1986).

With the emergence of cultural Islam, the Suharto government implemented two inter-linked approaches: Firstly, supporting the religious institution and encouraging the Muslims community to think of political participation in terms of developing programs rather than religious affiliation (Watson, 1994). As such, the development of religious institutions through the Ministry of Religion was taken care of by the New Order government. Under the Old Order government, this ministry was accused of lacking professionals (Noer, 1978). Under the New Order, greater emphasis was given to modern professional skills and accordingly reorganised. The ministry has been entrusted to manage the administration and management of hajj (Noer, 1978).

In terms of social programs, the New Order government implemented what became known as the ‘neo-association’ policy, almost in the same way that Snouck Hurgronje designed the association policy during the colonial era (Watson, 1994). If Snouck Hurgronje had advised the Dutch governor to establish an education system that gradually integrated the culture of the Indonesian people with the Western, especially Dutch, culture, Suharto in his early leadership adopted the policy of seeking to turn people away from the emphasis on Islamic ideology and urged them to contribute to national development by joining the development programmes of the New Order government (Suminto, 1985).

The government subsidised many religious institutions such as mosques and Islamic schools from the primary and higher learning institutions such as the National Islamic Religious Institution (IAIN- *Institut Agama Islam Negeri*). Some of the institutes have been transformed into the National Islamic University (UIN- *Universitas Islam Negeri*). This policy was manipulated and propagated in every electorate campaign, whereby the Golkar tried to persuade Muslims to vote based on the government’s performance rather than religious sentiments (Suminto, 1985). Secondly, a new strategy of employing political rhetoric to gain people’s support for the New Order government was put in place to assimilate all Indonesians under Suharto’s leadership, whereby Suharto himself was known as ‘father of development’ (Suminto, 1985, p. 180). If the Old Order government used revolution as part of its political rhetoric, the New Order government used development.

As such, Indonesia in the late 1970s saw a rejuvenation of Islam among Indonesian just as it occurred elsewhere in the Muslim world. Islam gradually became a popular source of Indonesian social, ethical and spiritual life. As a result, many Indonesian Muslims, as highlighted by William Liddle (1999, p. 174), looked for a new understanding of their religion that gave them a more realistic set of guidelines, a real code of ethics for private and family life, and for dealing with the outside world.

Robert W. Hefner (1997a, p. 5) observes that in the 1970s, Indonesia witnessed the proliferation of mosques, religious schools, and devotional programs, the emergence of a vast market of Islamic books, magazines, and newspapers has developed, and a well- educated Muslim middle class that had begun to raise questions about modern issues, including the role and rights of women, the challenges of pluralism, the merits of market economies, and more generally, the proper relationship of religion to the state. To Hefner (1997a), Islam in Indonesia

was unique as it provided for the demands of a new style of religious and political activities. Muslim intellectuals arose with nontraditional training and unconventional concerns. New Muslim intellectuals were responding to the demands of the modern world and the threat posed by the West.

With the revival of cultural Islam among the Muslim community, there were also attempts by the political elite to change their own personal behaviour and attitudes. It was evident during the 1990s that the Islamisation process had penetrated the middle class and the central power based on the New Order government. The government began to take sides with Muslims' aspiration and interests in the late 1980s onwards (Effendy, 2003). Naturally, the change in the government's perception and attitude towards Islam had been doubted by some Muslim activists, for it was within a short period that Suharto changed his stance towards Islam. Many Muslim activist and scholars were surprised with Suharto's accommodative attitudes. Some political analysts even argued that the shift was motivated by the coming presidential election in 1993 (Liddle, 1996).

In the 1980s, the Muslims community turned to spiritual development. Muslims were becoming more educated and professional (Hefner, 1993). Many young Muslims are graduates and some are even Ph.D. holders, awarded from various universities; locally as well as abroad such as Middle Eastern, European and American universities.⁷ This phenomenon is partly related to the government's program of mass education, by which the government directed all students to undergo religious education. In neutralising Islamic political tendencies, the government adopted the policy of sponsoring Islamic institutions and the establishment of mosques to compensate its 'containment' policy of separating religion from politics.⁸ This policy aimed at gaining Muslims' support and participation in national development (Watson, 1994).

It could also be argued that in the late 1980s Suharto was interested in courting a base support beyond the armed forces. Political analysts note that the president's anxiety about Murdani, the most powerful Catholic general and a former Minister of Defense and Commander of the Armed Forces, was the only influence on his policy towards Muslims (Liddle, 1996). Hefner, however, criticised this analysis as being bias, as he had found from his own interviews with several of Suharto's ministers that Suharto was already aware of and genuinely concerned about the growing Islamic resurgence. He and his advisors reflected regularly on the Islamic revivalism in Iran and Algeria. According to Hefner (1997b), Suharto saw Muslims as a potentially significant force in the near future.

It might be true that in the beginning Suharto made his rapprochement with Muslim community partly because of his worsening relationship with Murdani, who had dared to question him about his family's corrupt business activities. As such Suharto, launched a ruthless campaign to neutralise Murdani's influences in the armed forces and sought to counterbalance the military power with that of the Muslim community. However, Suharto at that particular time has also changed his personal image and perception towards Islam. In the early 1990s, Suharto successfully replaced the Catholic general Benny Murdani as head of the Armed Forces with

⁷ The emergence of educated Muslims from various universities was considered as an outcome of the government's policy, sending young Muslim scholars to study Islam at universities in the Middle East, the United States, and Western Europe, through making collaborations between the Department of Religion under the Ministry of Religion and several high learning institutions such as Azhar University in Egypt, Chicago University in the United States, Mac Gill university in Canada, and Leiden University in the Netherlands. For further reading on this Muslim graduates (Abaza, 1993; Hefner, 2000; Federspiel, 2006).

⁸ These programs were under the Ministry of Religion. However, Suharto himself under the auspices of a presidential foundation for the support of Islamic initiatives, the Amal Bakti Muslimin Pancasila, constructed 4000 mosques and provided support to one thousand Muslim proselytizers (*dai*) (Hefner, 1997).

another general he regarded as more sympathetic to Islam, such as General Feisal Tanjung, and reshuffled other key positions by 1992 (Vatikiotis, 1993; Hefner, 2000). The Islamisation of Indonesian politics came to be known as '*ijo royo-roy*' (literally means all greens) in the armed forces. Many middle-class Muslims, meanwhile, especially from the alumni of HMI, joined Golkar and gained certain significant positions in the government. Consequently, the Islamisation penetrated the ruling party along the same lines as the 'greening' process within the army (Hamayotsu, 2002, p. 370).

This significant shift from a perception of antagonistic Islamic political tendencies to offering political patronage to the Muslim community can also be explained by the changing personal behaviour and attitudes of the elite. Suharto's personal life changed from being an *abangan* to a practising Muslim. As his confidant, and later successor, Habibie himself queried Suharto on these suspicions. As Vatikiotis (1996, p. 132) notes, Suharto answered by saying, "I was born a Muslim, I will struggle for the Muslim cause." By reasserting his faith, Suharto seemed to be marking a fundamental break with the New Order's disregard for mixing religion with politics. This is again supported by his intention to call on his family to perform the *umrah* and *haji* to Makkah in 1991 and his increasingly frequent calling on appearing at Islamic festivals (Tebba, 2001).

Suharto evidently had improved his relationship with the Muslim community. Suharto's policies also began to reflect Muslim aspirations and interests. It was only in 1989 that the DPR approved the establishment of the Islamic court, and, in 1991, the compilation of Islamic laws. The Presidential Decree No. 1 Year 1991 that covered three areas, namely, marriage, inheritance (*Mirath*), and endowment (*Waqf*) was undertaken despite non-Muslim protests (Effendy, 2003). As a matter of fact, the proposal for the Islamic court had been forwarded to the government during the Guided Democracy of the 1960s. Under the New Order government, the proposal was again shelved due to unsympathetic attitude towards Islam as noted above. At the same time, laws that recognized the establishment of private Islamic schools were approved by the government, thus helping to further the process of Islamisation by giving increased educational opportunities for young Muslims (Effendy, 2003).

Certification of halal food was also approved in the late 1980s. The *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (MUI) collaborated with the Ministry of Religion and Ministry of Health to allow the inspection of the ingredients of products before the endorsement of the product as *halal*.⁹ Since then, food, drink and cosmetics ingredients are ensured their permissibility before being sold to the public. Later on, the government agreed to establish the first bank based on Shari'ah in Indonesia known as *Bank Muamalat Indonesia* (BMI) in 1991 (Tebba, 2001).

In fact, the Muslim community had proposed the Islamic bank since the 1970s. The Islamic Development Bank (IBD) endorsed this proposal but it was rejected by the New Order government due to the conflict of interest between conventional banks and Islamic banks. The reason was that the New Order government did not yet want to accommodate Islamic aspirations. The emergence of BMI in 1991 led to other Islamic projects, such as *takaful* as an alternative to conventional insurance, and the Islamic credit system (BPR- *Bank Perkreditan Rakyat*) for small projects based on the Profit and Loss Sharing Scheme (PLS). BMI has been successful in attracting Muslim customers. This was due to its reliability and its ability to weather through the 1997 economic crisis. As a result, there have been increased research and studies on the Islamic economic and banking system in Islamic universities and high schools (Tebba, 2001).

⁹ Halal mark is an indication that foodstuffs, drinks, and cosmetics were examined and being certified as halal (lawful) products to be consumed by Muslims.

The culmination of the accommodative policy towards Islam is remarked by the establishment of the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI- Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia), which is composed of diverse social and cultural forces (Fauzi, 1995; Uchrowi & Usman, 200). ICMI is different from other Islamic organizations and movements as it has been backed up by various Muslim groups such as government bureaucrats and technocrats, moderate Muslims groups and non-government Muslim leaders (Schwarz, 2000). However, this association has been severely criticised by many officers in the military as well as conservative Muslim scholars, such as those in the NU led by Abdurrahman Wahid (Ramage, 1995; Schwarz, 2000).

With the establishment of ICMI, Modern Muslims have been given further opportunity to express Islamic voices. The Muslim newspaper *Harian Republika*, for instance, was given a license in 1992 due, undoubtedly, to the support of Suharto. On the other hand, the *Monitor*, a weekly *tabloid* owned by Catholic-Gramedia publishing group, which also publishes the well-read newspaper, *Kompas*, was closed down after it published the results of a readers' poll of the most admired public figure. In the findings, Suharto was placed as the most popular public figure, while Prophet Muhammad SAW was voted as being in the eleventh place. This severely annoyed the Muslim community, which led to the government to cancel its license (Ramage, 1995).

As a Muslim organisation that was looked upon as enjoying the president's favour, many nominal Muslim bureaucrats and Golkar cadres joined ICMI, thus, the Islamisation that took place in the state and society. This was evident in the increased number of Muslim members of Cabinet and high-ranking military officers after Suharto was re-elected in 1993. In his cabinet, 99 percent of the 38 ministers were Muslims, as opposed to the earlier Cabinet which was composed of only 60 percent Muslims (Suryadinata, 1998). Since 1993, furthermore, Suharto had deployed other think tank groups. Previously the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) was known as the centre where input on the government decision-making, especially in the area of government political, control was studied (Anwar, 1999). After the establishment of ICMI, Suharto deployed another think tank made up of Muslim experts, the Center for Information and Development Studies (CIDES) (Anwar, 1999).

Nevertheless, Habibie's ICMI has successfully contributed to the building of Islamic awareness among the New Order government officers and the establishment of positive perception of Islam. Islam during the early New Order had been labelled as an extremist and radical when it was associated with Darul Islam (DI). As such, many Muslims, especially among the bureaucrats, were afraid of implementing Islam publicly. To some extent, they did not even want to be seen as practising Muslims (McVey, 1983, p. 200).

But in the 1990s, Islam was finally given the opportunity to enjoy the good relationship and strong patronage of Suharto's government. This patronage was perceived by non-Muslims and some nominal Muslims, especially from the NU, as the result of 'sectarian Islam' - which is seen as seeking the establishment of an Islamic state (Schwarz, 2000). This revivalism has, to some extent, contributed to the fall of Suharto. As Islamisation penetrated the government body, many groups of the senior non-Muslim and nominal Muslim army officers who supported Suharto during the early period of political consolidation were neglected, especially after the establishment of the ICMI. This analysis may partly explain why Suharto failed to maintain his power (Singh, 2001). At the demise of the Suharto government, some Muslim groups who defended Suharto expressed the belief that Suharto's fall was due to a political conspiracy of Chinese-Catholic-Zionists aimed at the destruction of Islam in Indonesia (Hefner, 2000).

Contestation of Formalistic and Substantive Muslims

Muslims in Indonesia experienced a polarisation due to the formalistic and substantive Shari'ah approach that had ruptured from the previous Geertz's *abangan* and *santri* polarization. The 'formalistic' articulation of Islam refers to Muslim political idealism and activism in which Islam is deployed as a political ideology. They aim at establishing an Indonesian Islamic state in which Islam is adopted as the state ideology or religion, along with all its socio-political ramifications. This idealism and activism had been kept intact since the years of independence up to present days.

There are at least two factors that lead to the continuity of this idealism in Indonesia: international factors and domestic factors. The international factor suggests that this continuity is due to the emergence of Islam as a potential political power in other Muslim countries, especially in the Middle East. The indirect impact of the Middle East has probably been of paramount importance to this revivalism. As noted by Mehden, the Iranian Revolution was a milestone to the Islamic revivalism in Indonesia. "The revolution of Iran has been perceived by many Indonesian Muslims as an example of anti-imperialist, anti-establishment, anti-secular victory of Islam," said Mehden (1993, p. 101).

The 1979 Iranian revolution bears witness to the fact that it is not impossible for Islamic political forces to merge with the government. It also yields a moral shield against the "attack" of western "anti-values". Finally, it acts as an anchor for individuals and social groups caught in the tempest of the magnitude, relativism, and identity crises (Choudhury, 1994). Furthermore, the political and socio-economic plight of Muslim world provides an ideal breeding ground for its rapid spread, which resulted in the victory of the *mujahidin* of Afghanistan over the armed forces of the Soviet Union, and the formation of Sudan's Islamic government in the 1990s (Choudhury, 1994).

In Algeria, the electoral victory of the Islamic government forced the traditional bastions and proponents of parliamentary democracy to invoke individual human rights as universal principles of an order "higher" than the will of the majority, thus justifying their open support for the military coup. In Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Syria, Iraq, Jordan and other Muslim countries, politicized Islam remains an important force to be reckoned with (Rahmena, 1994, p. 1).

Islamic idealism is also the result of contact with new ideas that have formed the basis for the worldwide Muslim resurgence. Exchanges of contemporary Islamic thought during such times as the hajj in Makkah, and in Middle Eastern universities such as Azhar University in Cairo, the University of Baghdad in Baghdad, and Islamic University in Medina have occurred. A wide range of contemporary Muslim literature found its ways into Indonesia. The works of Shariati, Maududi, Qutb, and other have reached books stores, religious schools, Muslim students' organisation and universities (Mehden, 1993).

Furthermore, this formalistic idealism was driven by a negative encounter with Western colonial power, especially the Dutch in Indonesia. Undoubtedly, the long and penetrating process of colonial control had a devastating impact on Islamic idealism. As a result, as Bahtiar Effendy (2003) highlights, the venture of the country's political Islam during the early days of independence played a crucial role in the evolution of a highly strained relationship between political Islam and the Indonesian government. This group was being represented by the modernist Muslims who continued the spirit of Masyumi such as members of the DDII and its allies.

The substantive articulation of Islam refers to the embedding of Islam's essence in Indonesian politics and society rather merely in form, such as the Islamic state. This endeavour began with

the emergence of a new Islamic intellectualism led by a new generation of Islamic thinkers and activists who, since the early 1970s, have sought to develop a new format for political Islam in which substance, rather than form, serves as the primary orientation.¹⁰ Domestically, after political Islam was oppressed during the early phase of the New Order government, Muslims cadres turn to greater introspection (Watson, 1994, p. 186). As a result, many Muslims involved with the religious discourse saw it as a period of moral rearmament. This activity rose as a response to a strong feeling of malaise throughout the country, which can be construed as a reaction both to blatant corruption in official circles and to grosser forms of materialism (Watson, 1994).

Intellectually, there has been cooperation between the Ministry of Religion and other Western universities to send Indonesian Muslim students to study Islam. As such, liberal Islam also spread throughout the country. Fazlur Rahman's thought, as noted by Bruinessen (2002), became very influential in Indonesia due to the facts that several Indonesian scholars had studied with him in Chicago and became the propagators and defenders of his ideas. Undoubtedly due to them, many Indonesian young scholars developed his ideas further.¹¹

Both formalistic and substantive Muslims are in agreement with the democratic system. In fact, senior supporters of Masyumi were the proponents of the western democratic system during the Sukarno era. With the demise of Suharto's government that marked "reform" and democratisation, Muslims have again been given wider space in Indonesian politics. The formalistic legalistic Muslim groups gradually formed Islamic movements whose basic ideology have been based on Islam, Qur'an and Sunnah. This group was sometimes called 'radical' and 'fundamentalist'. Radicalism, thus, does not refer to one particular religion in a particular place but is a universal occurrence that can happen in all religious traditions. According to the social sciences, radical social movements, regardless of whether there is a religious impute or not, can be seen as movements of defiance (McAdam, 1999). This is because their attitudes, views, and social behaviours are markedly different from those of mainstream society.

According to the modern political approach, radical movements, as noted by Jamhari, are rebellious, but should be rather seen as a natural movement consisting of individual political goals (Jamhari, 2003, p. 19). Radical Muslims movement as one form of the Islamic revivalism is best explained by anthropologists. For them, it is a movement which is inspired by cultural and religious factors and is a response to an external power – such as colonialism or the introduction of a foreign culture. It uses cultural and religious symbols in opposition to the symbols used in mainstream society. As such this movement is a form of struggle against and rejection of foreign cultural and power (Jamhari, 2003).

In the modern era, the majority of people are pre-occupied by the materialist and hedonistic lifestyle, and their lives, thus, have been wrongly-directed. The religious groups who perform their religious practices and enjoin people to do good and forbid them from doing evil have been labelled as 'radical' or 'fundamental'. But since these religious practices are carried out only by a small number of people, and the Islamic revivalism is always precipitated by a small

¹⁰ This was basically advocated by the proponent of Cultural Islam led by Nurcholish Madjid. In this model, Madjid introduced the notion of religious renewal, political reform and social transformation (Effendy, 2003).

¹¹ These are graduates from the Western universities and propagated the Islamic liberal which was characterised as rationalist, secular, pluralist. Harun Nasution, Nurcholish Madjid and others introduced the reformation of the Islamic ideas, especially on socio-political issues in Indonesia. Their writings are used as guidance on how the Muslims should endeavour in order to realise the socio-political objectives of Islam in this modern world (Effendy, 2003).

group of people who seek to re-orientate the society towards Islam, they are often considered as radicals or fundamentalists (Marty & Appleby, 1991; Akhtar & Sakr, 1982).

After the fall of the New Order government, there have been many fundamentalist groups. In Indonesia, there have been four fundamentalist groups that aim at the implementation of Shari'ah and have Islam as the basic ideology of their movements. These include Islamic Defenders' Front (FPI- *Front Pembela Islam*), *Laskar Jihad*, *Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia* (MMI), and *Hizbut Tahrir*. The FPI was established 'to combat the evil and fornication'. This movement is led by Habieb Mohammad Rizieq Syihab known as Habieb Rizieq, an Arab descendent who was born in Jakarta. This movement was initiated by the incident of Tanjung Priok September 1984, but the formation of this organisation only took place on 17 August 1998. Since then, there have been many activities of 'enjoining good and prohibiting evil' conducted by its members. The activities include protests and demonstrations against the government, calling on it to close nightclubs in the city, harassing people who committed adultery, consumption of alcohols and the like. Furthermore, this group also aims at the implementation of Shari'ah in their private as well as public life (Jamhari, 2003).

Another fundamentalist Muslim group emerged when the religious conflict took place in the Islands of East Indonesia, Maluku where the Christian and Muslims communities fought each other in 1999. This tension killed many Muslims as well as Christians. The root cause of this conflict was widely believed to have been due to the economic inequality between the two groups. Due to this incident, the Muslim community established the so-called 'Laskar Jihad', other Islamic groups that were ready to wage holy war were formed in early 2000 by the *Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah* Communication Forum (*Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah*), which was led by Ja'far Umar Thalib (Davis, 2002). This movement was dissolved when the Maluku conflict ended in 2003 (Jamhari, 2003).

The MMI was formed in at the same year as *Laskar Jihad* in Yogyakarta, on August 2000. This group is led by Abu Bakar Baasyir, one of the founders of Ngruki Islamic boarding school and alleged as being one of the leaders responsible for the Bali and W J. Marriot bombings, respectively, in 2002 and 2003. This group aims at the implementation of Islamic Shari'ah (Jamhari, 2003)

Finally, *Hizbut Tahrir* is a political party whose ideology is based on Islam but has not registered as an Islamic political party that participates in the national election. In fact, it was established to seek the restoration of the caliphate and to be ruled by God's laws. This group does not agree with liberal democracy. *Hizbut Tahrir* was established in 1953 in Arab countries such as Lebanon, in response to the injunction "Let there be among you a group that invites to the good, orders what is right and forbids what is evil, and they are those who are successful" (Qur'an: 3:104).

Its activities have been directed to promote the Islamic way of life and to convey the Islamic *dakwah* to the world. *Hizbut Tahrir* attempts to shape people's behaviour in such a way that their affairs in society are administered according to the Shari'ah rules and under the leadership of the Islamic state headed by a caliph. Although Suharto accommodated Muslims' aspirations and interests and implemented a more open political system in the 1990s, Islamic political parties were not yet formed. Upon the demise of Suharto, the demand for reformation was voiced at all levels by pro-democracy advocates, both Muslim as well as non-Muslim. The emphasis of the reformation was democratisation, demilitarisation of politics, and abolishment of Suharto's influences, including Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism (KKN- *Korupsi, Kolusi, dan Nepotisme*).

As a response to the reformation, Habibie announced that the chief priority was to root out the KKN and to create a clean government. On the political front, he highlighted five fundamentals of the political system, namely, the DPR (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* or House of Representatives), the MPR (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* or People's Consultative Assembly), political parties, regional administration and elections. To be more democratic, the laws on subversion, which used as a means to suppress political opponents, was revised immediately (Pratiknya, Juoro & Samego, 1999; Singh, 2000). Despite his short-lived presidency, Habibie did his best to implement the above, but time did not allow him to complete his mission. However, he successfully established significant alterations to the political system, including the abolishment of the *azas tunggal* (Laws of the Mass Organisation), the conduct of the 1999 election, increased freedom of the press and upholding human rights, and the reduction of the number of the military as political representatives, especially in the DPR.

Upon the abolishment of the *azas tunggal* policy, Indonesia witnessed the emergence of hundreds of political parties, many of them were established along religious lines (Singh, 2000). Nevertheless, only 48 parties were qualified to participate in the 1999 election. The classification of Islamic and non-Islamic political parties was not as easy as for the previous political parties.¹² Presently, the Islamic political parties are recognised from their basic ideological foundation, name, and symbol. Thus, of the 48, only 19 are Islamic political parties (Ananta, Nurvidya & Suryadinata, 2004).

Out of the 19 Islamic parties, only a few parties gained significant support in the 1999 election; PPP, the long-established Islamic party, secured 11% of the votes. The Crescent and Star Party (PBB- Partai Bulan Bintang), which was claimed as Masyumi's successor, gained only 2%; the Justice Party (PK- Partai Keadilan), which represented what was known as the LDK, secured only 1.5 %, and the other Islamic parties received even less vote. Nevertheless, the National Revivalism Party (PKB- Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa) and National Trust Party (PAN- Partai Amanat Nasional) which were also known as the nationalist party though led by prominent Muslim leaders secured 13% and 7% of the votes respectively. The rest of the votes were accumulated by the two other New Order parties: Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI-P- *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia*) under the leadership of Megawati which won the most votes with 35% and Golkar, which won 23% of the votes (Ananta, Nurvidya & Suryadinata, 2004).

In the latest election of 2004, the Islamic parties were defeated. It is, however, interesting to note that the Justice and Welfare Party (PKS- Partai Keadilan Sejahtera), previously known as PK, gained more votes compared to during the 1999 election. It is partly because of its elected members of the house were perceived as being 'clean' by people. As a matter of fact, the rest of the Islamic parties, except PPP, secured fewer votes and were, thus, unqualified to participate in the next election. PKB and PAN secured more or less the same result as the 1999 election. Golkar won more votes than PDI-P. On the other hand, the new party called Democrat Party (PD- Partai Demokrat) surprisingly secured more votes, partly due to its presidential candidate, a charismatic general whom people admire for his intellect and determination.¹³ It

¹² In the Old Order era, Islamic parties were based on Islam. It could be seen from its ideological and basic foundation of the parties such as Masyumi, the NU, Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (PTI), and Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia (PSII). In the early New Order there were NU, PTI, PSII and Partai Muslimin Indonesia (PMI), which later on fused in the United Development Party (PPP- Partai Persatuan Pembangunan). The basis of the respective party was Islam except PPP which later on based on Pancasila and thus the Islamic political party did not exist totally since early the 1980s.

¹³ For the very beginning this party selected Bambang Susilo Hudoyono as presidential candidate and then became the elected president in 2004.

was even clearly evident that in the 2009 election, Islamic political parties secured more or less the same votes as the previous elections. Despite the fact that the 1999, 2004, and 2009 elections did not reside with Islamic parties, it gave the Muslim middle-class control over the parliament.

This series of elections to some extent depicted the scenario of Indonesian Muslims. Though there was an Islamic awareness among people, this awareness is limited to the substance, not formal-legalistic, of Islam. Secondly, the failure of Islamic parties in the previous elections shows that Muslims in Indonesia are substantive groups. They want Islamic values to be applied in their politics, but they do not support the formalistic Muslim groups. This is evident in the decision-making processes in the DPR. Nurcholish Madjid shared the same view with Azyumardi Azra, a well-known Muslim scholar and the former rector of Islamic State's University Syarif Hidayatullah, on the lack of relevancy of formality and symbols of political Islam in present Indonesia. Azra (2003) argues that most Indonesian Muslims are leaning towards what he calls "substantive Islam" rather "formalistic Islam".

Conclusion

With the increasing number of the Muslim middle class, Suharto began to accommodate the Muslims' aspirations and interests through his domestic policies. Among remarkable accommodative policies was his blessings to the establishment of ICMI in December 1990. With the rise of ICMI in Indonesian politics, Islamisation penetrated the New Order government, including the military and Golkar. On the other hand, with the decline in support from the secular nationalist army, which was heavily influenced by nominal and Christian generals, Suharto reshuffled the high-ranking army officers and appointed Muslim generals. As a result, Suharto offered the special patronage to Muslim groups. During the post-Suharto era, Islamic political force was more discernable with the proliferation of Muslim fundamentalist groups and Islamic political parties.

However, the so-called cultural Islam proponents who pursue the substance of Islamic values have dominated Indonesian Muslims as evident in the previous elections in which Islamic political parties got very little support from the Muslim constituents. The substantive Muslim groups played crucial roles in the decision-making process in the DPR. Indeed, the Islamic revivalism obviously influenced the Indonesian politics in the 1990s and post-Suharto era. As an extension to this context, the contestation between formalist and substantive Muslims could also occur in other Muslim countries in Southeast Asia and beyond.

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