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Islam and Modern School Education in Journal *Pengasuh*: Review of the *Kaum Muda - Kaum Tua* Dichotomy

Hiroko Kushimoto

'Ties that would Divide': Explaining the NU's Exit from Masyumi in 1952

Ali Munhanif

From Kitab Malay to Literary Indonesian: A Case Study in Semantic Change

Peter G. Riddell

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Religion in Public Spaces in Contemporary Southeast Asia

Dina Afrianty

enter for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta in cooperation with the Embassy of Canada in Indonesia held an international conference "Religion in Public Spaces in Contemporary Southeast Asia" on March 13-14th 2012 in Jakarta. This conference is conducted to celebrate 35 years of Canada-ASEAN anniversary and 60 years of Canada-Indonesia relations.

One of the most prominent debates on the role of religion in Southeast Asian countries over the last two decades concerns the issue of increasing presence of religion in public space. However, a key assumption made by much of the public debate remained the same: the degree of inclusion and exclusion of religion in public space—especially in the political system of the nation-state—will determine their level of moderation, as they learn to engage in the process of public administration and governance. These assumptions all underline the fundamental concern with the increasing presence of religion in public space in Southeast Asia. It is consequently surprising that very little attention has been paid to the variety of cultural expression of religious believes in this particular region.

Religion is among the most overlooked factors in the development of nation-states in Southeast Asia. Some reasons for this include a bias emphasizing religious ideology in the study of anti-colonial organizations that dates to the origins of the politics of state formation; the influence of many ideas on the patterns of modern elite formations that stress the need for religion to shape national constitutions, and the fact that religion is difficult to neglect in shaping the behavior of masses in the region. Nevertheless, an early observation to the behavior of nations in Southeast Asia holds that religion influences the politics in public space varies from one country to another.

In countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, and to some important extent in the Philippine, religion influences the worldviews of many decision makers and their constituents and shapes the environment in which decision makers govern their countries. In Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam and Cambodia, religion becomes a source of legitimacy for political decisions and actions, although it is only embedded in their political structure of the state, not in the national constitution. In these countries, religion has been an important part in national curricula. In Brunei, religion is an issue that crosses borders in many ways, including national identity and constitution with the structure of the traditional interest of the Sultanate. Equally significant are domestic religious movements that operate in Southeast Asia. Many religious movements and political organizations with strong orientation to establish "religious order of the state" operate actively in Southeast Asia, but behave differently. These different patterns of the strong presence of religion in public space underscore the need to better understanding on the role of religion in the study of the way how conflict and resolution between religion and the modern state of Southeast Asia have been imposed.

It is in this context of celebrating the relations between Canada and Southeast Asian countries that, a conference of the religion in public space becomes our priority in order to better understand the variety of the politics of public space in modern Southeast Asia. Our main goal is to promote a multicultural society and to disseminate inter-faith dialogue; a goal that has been so imperative in many countries. It is expected therefore that through this conference, we try to acknowledge the role of religion in our foreign policy in Southeast Asia, but at the same time to oversee the possibility admitting the

respect for religious freedom, human rights and the promotion of multiculturalism.

Observing the role of religion in the developed-West, there have been cases where government manages to preserve cultural and religious diversity without creating tension among the society. However, most empirical observations and theoretical discussions of multiculturalism have been with reference to "land of melting pot" of the United States of America, to "the civic nationalism" of French, to "ethnic cultural diversity" of Germany, to the "pluralist democracy" of the Netherlands, and to other countries with the strong state presence in the society. It is interesting to note that although Canada has emerged as one of the most important models for a cultural society within the universe of modern state, in Southeast Asia analysts and policy makers are alike inclined to neglect Canada from the discussions on multiculturalism.

In comparative politics, Canada has been placed as among the earliest country to become thoroughly pluralistic and multi-religious—in guiding philosophy as well as the obvious fact of a culturally diverse population. This Canadian philosophy of religious freedom is expressed through its national charter on freedom and human rights. And Canada's commitment to establish multicultural society has been illustrated through its policy on anti-racial, ethnic and cultural discrimination. What is important to note is the fact that the evolution of multiculturalism in Canada provides us with a fascinating experience of the state-initiated transformation of an idea for "cultural reform" based on the premise of equality of opportunity for individuals regardless of biological inheritance or ancestral history.

It is for the above reason that PPIM UIN Jakarta organized this international conference with the objective to create a forum for scholars, politicians, activists and academia to engage in a discussion on how to challenge the increasing diverse and complex society. Canada has been at the forefront in promoting multicultural society and has proven to be successful in preserving the country's cultural harmony.

This conference presented an opportunity for comparative analysis of the role of religion in public spaces in contemporary Southeast Asia. The diversity of ethics, culture and unique political development in particular countries in Southeast Asia would be explored through comparative cases from countries in Southeast Asia. At this conference we

considered several of the challenges that are potentially raised on the future of religion in all walk of lives, in economics, politics, and social. Issues to be considered include the character of history of the role of religion in the creation of nation-building in Southeast Asian countries, the nature of political development in post-colonial period and the role of civil society organizations including the religious groups.

We invited scholars who have knowledge on the issues to contribute to the discussion. We also had activists and politicians to share their experiences related to the topic. At the end, this conference is expected to give valuable insights for policymakers so that they could draw a better policy in promoting multicultural society. For the activists it is expected that this event will equip them with valuable insights so that they can exercise it into their society.

The conference was opened by keynote speeches given by Professor Jacques Bertrand of Toronto University, Canada that presented 'Liberalism, Communitarianism, and the problem of Religion in Public Space'. In the plenary session, Professor Kishore Mahbubani of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS, Professor Azyumardi Azra of School of Graduate Studies, UIN Jakarta, and Professor Tim Lindsey of University of Melbourne discussed the issue of how modern nation states resolve the problem of religious identities in the formulation of their constitution.

On the second day, the conference is divided into three sessions. The first session discussed addressed the issue of how the constitution is being implemented at the level of state-society relations such as religion in public education, religion in economic sectors, and how religious based civil society groups manage their engagement with the state. The second session discussed on how the modern-nation state can promote the freedom of religion without neglecting the local context such as the presence of minority groups. And the last session discussed the issues which include the public role of religion, religious pluralism and the way the state promote inter-religious harmony.

It is expected that the conference can serve as a baseline study in order to form a policy recommendation to policy makers in Southeast Asian countries. The conference offered valuable insights to better understand the recent development of the role of religion in public lives. It is because we cannot ignore that in places such as Southeast

Dina Afrianty, Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM), Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta.

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Submission of Articles

Southeast Asian Islamic studies. The aim is to provide readers with a better understanding of Indonesia and Southeast Asia's Muslim history and present developments through the publication of articles, research reports, and book reviews from Indonesian and international scholars alike.

Submission is open to both Indonesian and non-Indonesian writers. Articles will be assessed for publication by the journal's Board of Editors and will be peer-reviewed by a blind reviewer. Only previously unpublished work should be submitted. Articles should be between approximately 10,000-15,000 words. All submission must include a 150-word abstract and 5 keywords.

Submitted papers must conform to the following guidelines: citation of references and bibliography use Harvard referencing system; references with detail and additional information could use footnotes or endnotes using MLA style; transliteration system for Arabic has to refer to Library Congress (LC) guideline. All submission should be sent to studia.islamika@uinjkt.ac.id or studia.ppim@gmail.com.

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آغوس إيسوانتو