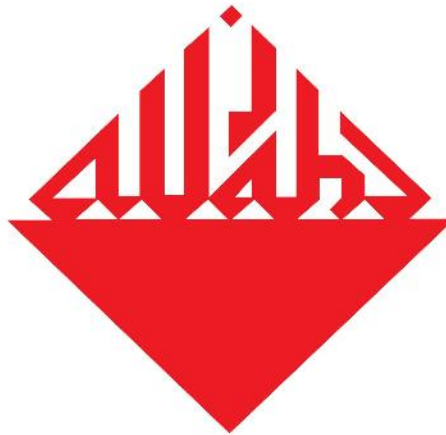


STUDIA ISLAMIKA

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Ali Munhanif & A. Bakir Ihsan

Ideas, Politics, and The Making of Muslim Democracy: An Historical Trajectory in Indonesia

Abstract: *Debates regarding the compatibility of Islam and democracy have thrived, with a focus on political moderation and post-Islamism to explain changes among Islamist groups. However, there's been little exploration into the historical evolution of their ideologies and political preferences in religious politics. This study examines the role of ideas and politics within Muslim organizations, political parties, and the state in Indonesia. It emphasizes the mechanisms behind both ideology and political motivations, showing how political Islam adopted pragmatic behavior before entering democratic politics. The interaction between the ideological renewals of Muslim thinkers in the 1970s and changes in the state's institutional arrangement under the New Order drove Islamic transformation. Political institutions shape Islamic political ideas and their manifestation, influencing cultural identity, political mobilization, and negotiation of group claims. Muslim leadership acts as agents in defining religious interests based on institutional markers.*

Keywords: Muslim Democracy, Ideology, Ulama Politics, Institutions, Indonesia.

Abstrak: *Debat tentang kesesuaian antara Islam dan demokrasi telah berkembang pesat, dengan fokus pada moderasi politik dan pasca-Islamisme untuk menjelaskan perubahan di kalangan kelompok-kelompok Islamis. Namun, ada sedikit eksplorasi terhadap evolusi historis dari ideologi mereka dan preferensi politik dalam politik keagamaan. Studi ini menguji peran ide dan politik dalam organisasi Islam, partai politik, dan negara di Indonesia. Ini menekankan mekanisme di balik kedua ideologi dan motivasi politik, menunjukkan bagaimana Islam politik mengadopsi perilaku pragmatis sebelum memasuki politik demokratis. Interaksi antara pembaharuan ideologis pemikir Muslim pada tahun 1970-an dan perubahan dalam pengaturan institusional negara di bawah Orde Baru mendorong transformasi Islam. Institusi politik membentuk gagasan politik Islam dan manifestasinya, mempengaruhi identitas budaya, mobilisasi politik, dan negosiasi klaim kelompok. Pemimpin Muslim bertindak sebagai agen dalam menentukan kepentingan agama berdasarkan penanda institusional.*

Kata kunci: Demokrasi Muslim, Ideologi, Ulama Politik, Institusi, Indonesia.

ملخص: وقد ازدهرت المناقشات المتعلقة بتوافق الإسلام والديمقراطية، مع التركيز على الاعتدال السياسي وما بعد الإسلاموية لتفسير التغيرات بين الجماعات الإسلامية. ومع ذلك، هناك نوع من استكشافات التطور التاريخي لأيديولوجياتهم وتفضيلاتهم السياسية في السياسة الدينية. تتناول هذه الدراسة دور الأفكار والسياسة داخل المنظمات الإسلامية والأحزاب السياسية والدولة في إندونيسيا. ويؤكد على الآليات الكامنة وراء كل من الأيديولوجية والدوافع السياسية، موضحًا كيف تبنى الإسلام السياسي سلوكًا عمليًا قبل دخول السياسة الديمقراطية. كان التفاعل بين التجديدات الأيديولوجية للمفكرين المسلمين في السبعينيات والتغيرات في الترتيب المؤسسي للدولة في ظل النظام الجديد هو الدافع وراء التحول الإسلامي. تشكل المؤسسات السياسية الأفكار السياسية الإسلامية ومظاهرها، وتؤثر على الهوية الثقافية، والتعبئة السياسية، والتفاوض بشأن مطالبات المجموعة. وتعمل القيادة الإسلامية كوكلاء في تحديد المصالح الدينية على أساس العلامات المؤسسية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الديمقراطية الإسلامية، الأيديولوجيا، علماء السياسة، المؤسسات، إندونيسيا.

Recent wave of political reform that swept across the Muslim world, especially in the Middle East and Southeast Asia since the past decades, shows that struggle for democracy and political Islam constitute the twin parallel trends driving the reform process and outcomes in Muslim countries (Ayoub 2007, 7–20). The conventional wisdom is that if democracy is to take root in those countries, Islamists of various types (at least a majority of them) will have to bring their ideologies and conduct in conformity with democratic norms. This involves changes in religious ideas, political actions and by extension the overall behaviour of a diverse array of actors identified as Islamists. Yet, religious-political transformation is not simply an issue related to Islam and democratic politics. The evolution of political Islam is a subset of the wider question of the politics of the modern nation-state, which has gained attention during the wave of democratization as debate on the compatibility between religion and democracy resurfaced.

This article examines the relationship between the long processes of change in ideas and political preference where Muslim organizations, political party and the state interact in Indonesia. Focusing on their prominent leaders and intellectuals, we highlight both ideological and political underpinnings of why and how political Islam moved to pragmatic behaviour before entering democratic politics. We adopt historical-institutional method to trace the *longue duree* of moderation after long period of the struggle for Islamic state. In Indonesian context, most of Islamic political parties has undergone with ideological framework and action aspiring for Islamic constitution and applying Islamic law. But following their decisive break from the older generation of Muslim leadership, since the early 1970s the new forms of politics were set out to pursue a strategy for the integration of Islamism into Indonesian political system. This article provides narrative on the extent to which Muslim leaders and thinkers in that period have contributed to a strong push in the struggle for Indonesian democracy.

Scholarly works on Islam and democracy have flourished in the past two decades. Those works focused on the issue of moderation. Schwedler (2006), Wickham (2004), Browsers (2005) and others employed the inclusion-moderation perspectives to explain moderation among Islamist groups in the Arab world. Others such as Ashour (2007; 2011) and Bayat (2006) have used the notion of post-Islamism and de-radicalization in an effort to explain how certain radical Islamist groups abandoned the

path of armed struggle. While de-radicalization argument focuses on the Egyptian jihadists who declined their religious views to adopt moderate politics, post-Islamism is used to explain an ideological evolution whereby Islamists abandon their signature narrative of the need for an Islamic state. By examining the Islamic Republic of Iran since the 1990s, Bayat demonstrates how old fashion of Islamist politics has begun to emphasize broader agenda of political development, human rights, and the limit of ulama authority in state institutions.

However, the bulk of this work suffers from two shortcomings. First, the inclusion-moderation thesis is the most vogue among scholars seeking to understand how Muslim radicals moderate. One of the reasons is the fact that it has been replicated from the literature on democratization especially in western contexts with regards to Christian movements and the Leftist parties in Europe shed their radical ideas and embraced institutionalized politics. Second, the inclusion-moderation argument fits well within the recent findings of research on democracy and Islam, where the debate has moved beyond normative argument to explain how Islamists—when provided space by authoritarian regimes engaging in limited liberalization—tend to modify their ideas and actions. It is therefore natural for scholars of contemporary politics to apply it making sense of what appeared to be similar behavioural adjustment in the Muslim landscape.

As this article is concerned with the historical trajectory of political change in religious community, we examine the long-term dynamic of Islam-state relations in Indonesia. Exploring the late period of the New Order, we present how the dynamics of conflict and settlement between the state and Islamist politicians and intellectuals in the process of state formation were instrumental for ideological changes that led to the emergence of Muslim democracy. We situate the Islamic ideas and actions as a contest over constitutional struggle for Islamic state challenging other political groups, particularly between the state power and Islamist actors. We show how the Islamist political transformation has been shape and reshaped within the ongoing processes of the institutional construction of Indonesian state.

Islam, Politics and Indonesian Democracy

Political Islam¹—also called Islamist politics—is a contested concept (Burke and Lapidus 1988). In this article the term is defined as political

ideology claiming that Muslims are religiously obliged to organize their political, economic, legal and cultural affairs according to *al-Shariah* (Islamic law). While it is crucial for society to recognize and accept this obligation, the actual implementation of what most of Islamists called as *al-daulah al-Islamiyah* (Islamic state) requires political power. In Indonesian context, ideology of Islamic state thus embodies both a social vocation and a programmatic political project (Ayoob 2007). This ideology emerged as one of several potential political models during the process of state formation in the late colonial period. Although there is no single issue or structure, whether in terms of program or action, that characterizes all Islamist movements, they all nonetheless share one overarching feature as regards the nature and scale of their goals: the establishment of an Islamic state (Effendy 1995, 7–11).

Mobilization of Islamic state reached its peak after the Indonesian independence during the 1950s. Major Muslim organizations such as Muhammadiyah (est. 1912) and Nahdlatul Ulama (est.1926) in this period maintained a more or less continuous presence in party politics. The creation of Masyumi in November 1945 provided political Islam with a permanent institutional base within the parliamentary system. Although Masyumi has failed to maintain its function as confederation of Indonesian Muslim communities, four major parties based on Islam presented in the first national elections, which took place in 1955. Two of those parties – Masyumi and Partai NU – secured 42 percent of the seats in the new Constituent Assembly. The Islamist parties also championed political agenda built around the ideas that Indonesia should adopt an Islamic constitution, and should implement Islamic law for Muslims (Munhanif 2012). Such political aspirations highlighted the different ideological stances regarding the form of Indonesian statehood; a difference that ultimately escalated into open conflict between Islamists and the secular-nationalists (PNI) and the communists (PKI).

During the New Order, all ideological politics that existed after independence experienced transformation as a result of attempts by Suharto's government to expand influence through cooptation, accommodation as well as repression (Uhlin 1997).² Yet, the development of Islamist politics in Indonesia cannot be explained simply in terms of the state-Islamist tensions since it is the internal dynamic of Muslim organizations and the consequence of its ideological changes that have determined the nature of the ensuing politics.

In the early 1970s, when the New Order consolidated its power, the rise of Islamic reform movement and new types of Muslim leadership has advanced the programmatic goal of an “Islamic state”. These leaders advocated distinctive strategies and programs that set broad parameters for Muslim politics in relation to the state (Effendy 1995, 20–28). This transformation was achieved after almost 30 years of Islamists having distinct political parties and socio-religious organizations. Alliances between the state elites and Muslim activists and intellectuals led to the New Order to appropriate the religious agenda of Islamism within the institutional construct of the state. This unfolded simultaneously with political accommodation of Muslims into bureaucracy, parliament, and into high-rank positions of public office, which facilitated the greater inclusion of the Muslim into the sphere of the state.

It is within such political changes that, although many political parties were formed and adopted Islam in their ideology in the 1999 democratic election, legacy of convergence between Islam and the state under the New Order remained important in shaping the behaviour of Islamist politics. Few, small and insignificant organizations tended to reject democracy, but in general two major currents of Muslim political development unfolded. Firstly, some Muslim parties perceive that the conflict between Islamic and ‘secular-national state’ has been resolved. These parties are inclined to work within the democratic system, be more moderate and have entirely abandoned their program for Islamic state. Secondly, those are who hold that the reinstatement of the Islamic constitution “Jakarta Charter” and the application of Islamic *shari’a* is part of their organization’s platform.³ Yet, legacies of religious reforms and political accommodation during the New Order have brought this group of Islamists to gain popular support moving forward to work in democracy.

It is clear that almost three decades after Indonesia’s Reformasi in 1998, Islamic parties maintained their strong commitment to democracy. Although their electoral gains instable in the subsequent elections, major Islamic parties played a role in building democratic institutions in Indonesia. Total percentage of vote from these parties is decreasing gradually in every election except PKS (Justice and Welfare Party—Partai Keadilan Sejahtera) and PKB (National Awakening Party—Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa). PKB took considerable number of votes among the Islamic parties in the subsequent elections, however, the support for

the party decreased dramatically in the last election. Since the 2004, four nationalist parties, Partai Golkar (Party of Functionalist Groups), Partai Demokrat (PD–Democratic Party), and Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDI-P– Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle), Partai Gerindra (Greater Indonesia Movement Party—Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya) dominate the democratic politics.

Whereas Islamic parties together collected around 24% of votes in the last two elections, 4% higher than the winning PDI-P, election results show that despite high percentage of Muslim population, Indonesian citizens concern more about economic agenda of political parties rather than religious values and identity. Nationalist parties generally focus on economic agenda; try to develop programs against unemployment, provision of education, welfare policy, and infrastructure development. Additionally, despite considerable number of Islamic parties, secular politics is highly supported by citizens since Indonesia is also diverse in terms of religious and ethnic affiliation. Christian citizens matter in the elections; they are strongly supporting secular parties. Social diversity of country also canalizes voters to the large, catch-all parties. Whereas Islamic parties generally favour promotion of Islam in daily life, in some important degree aspired the application of Islamic law.

Islamic parties do not represent the interests of all Indonesian Muslims (Haris 2004, 61–76). Democratization encompassed the establishment of a multiparty system, the lifting of restrictions on the freedom of press, and an enormous decentralization process that has allowed Islamists to spread their ideas legally through extensive communication networks (Heiduk, 2012: 34). However, despite the role of Islamic groups during the struggle for democratization, these parties are weak in promoting development agenda for the cross-cutting interest in multicultural society. They also failed to use historically successful background of Islamic movements in the elections. Leaders of Islamic parties adopted a general misunderstanding; majority of people are Muslims and they try to solve the problems from Islamic perspective, as if the main problem of Indonesia is the establishment of Islamic rules in daily life. They ignored the actual concern of politics, economic and social problems. Even when they focus on economic issues, they consider policies by referring from the Quran. Such a usage of Islamic rhetoric during the election campaigns has limited the parties to broaden their electoral gains.

Party	1999 (%)	Party	2004 (%)	Party	2009 (%)	Party	2014 (%)	Party	2019 (%)
PDI-P	33.74	Golkar	21.58	PD	20.85	PDIP	18,95	PDIP	19,33
Golkar	22.44	PDI-P	18.53	Golkar	14.45	Golkar	14,75	Gerindra	12,57
PKB	12.61	PKB	10.57	PDI-P	14.03	Gerindra	11,81	Golkar	12,31
PPP	10.71	PPP	8.15	PKS	7.88	PD	10,19	PKB	9,69
PAN	7.12	PD	7.45	PAN	6.01	PKB	9,04	NasDem	9,05
PBB	1.94	PKS	7.34	PPP	5.32	PAN	7,59	PKS	8,21
PK /PKS	1.36	PAN	6.44	PKB	4.94	PKS	6,79	PD	7,77
Gerindra	-	Gerindra	-	Gerindra	3,77	NasDem	6,72	PAN	6,84

Table 1. Percentage of Vote Acquisition in the Indonesian General Election.

It can be said that chance of aggregation among the Islamic parties decrease as leaders of these parties are self-interested and voters generally support leaders as if they are supporting religious leaders. This is partly because religious organizations support different Islamic parties and potential political power is dispersed among these parties. The fragmentation of Islamic authority in civil society, education networks, low party cohesion and various institutional reforms have all prevent efforts of programmatic party politics in democratizing Indonesia (Buehler 2009). As a result, the parties failed to achieve internal power concentration and they generally keep the distance with others, decreases the chance to build around the common platforms of political Islam (Munhanif 2012). Because of the divisions in the Indonesian Islam, diversity of political preferences is also reflected in electoral choices. Their diversity is reflected in their lack of a consensus on the view that the state should be Islamic (Lee 2004, 100). They already compete within a very limited area but they take different positions on the issue of sharia law.⁴ To some degree Islamic parties have unclear position regarding the implementation of Islamic law since they are supported by ulama that are sometime against democratic values.⁵

As this article is concerned with historical trajectory of Muslim democracy, we delineate the sequence of changes in state-Islamist relation in the early the New Order. This period—albeit very short—was crucial, since it set into motion the new dynamic of religious politics that facilitated the rise of Muslim democracy. The New Order's policies to integrate Islamic religious interest into the state's institutions have secured the right of the ulama to operate politically in a limited

sphere. More importantly, the rise of liberal-minded Muslim activists in social organizations aspiring new ideas of politics about Indonesian state since the 1970s, has helped gradual decline of the mobilization of Islamic state. This development became irreversible sequence for the emergence of Muslim democratic struggle when the New Order regime began to collapse later in 1998.

State Consolidation and Muslim Responses

Scholars and policy makers are alike to perceive the New Order military regime led by Suharto as decisive moment in Indonesian state consolidation. Emerging from Sukarno's Guided Democracy, the New Order owed its political origins to Islamist groups. A great hope, therefore, was placed on Muslim leaders in the early years of the New Order, that they would play the role as a ruling partner with the government.⁶ It soon became clear that not only did Suharto have no intention to share power with Islamist groups, but the New Order spread the specter of the Islamist threat by labeling Islamist groups as the "extreme-right" to complement the regime's number one enemy, "extreme left" PKI (Effendy, 1995:98; Samson, 1969).

It is within this interaction between the consolidation of the new regime and Islamists' consistent struggle for an Islamic state that a new type of Muslim leadership emerged. They sought to fundamentally redefine political Islam in its relation with the state. In the later period, facilitated by the changing alignment between state elites and this new leadership, Suharto's government translated "... this new interpretation [of Islamic state] formulated by this young generation of Muslim intellectuals" (Effendy 1995, 301) by adopting accommodative policies toward Islam. These policies were carried out in the form of elite incorporation, cooptation, and political accommodation. In what follows is a map of the varieties of Islamist responses to the state consolidation under the New Order.

Islamists' responses to the state consolidation under the New Order can be mapped out into three distinct groups: politicians of Masyumi and NU, young Muslim activists, and young intellectuals associated with Muslim student organizations. Politicians were the first who were eager to revive their parties as vehicles for participation in the new regime. The NU moved easily to organize as a party entity. Yet, for modernist Muslims, the path was not as easy as they expected. In late

1966, less than a year after Natsir and other Masyumi leaders were released from prison by Suharto, former Masyumi politicians set up a committee with the principal task to “prepare any possibility for the rehabilitation of Masyumi Party” (Hassan 1980, 79).⁷ It soon became clear, that the New Order strongly rejected the idea. Two reasons underlined the New Order’s decision: Masyumi was once a powerful party who up until the 1960 had a popular grassroot following. Such strength potentially could pose a challenge to the power of the new regime (Effendy 1995, 192–95; Samson 1968). Second, army leaders objected to Masyumi’s ideological goals for its efforts in the creation of an Islamic state, especially in constitutional struggles for reinstatement of the Jakarta Charter. However, was the fact that some in the military leadership remained resentful of the Masyumi leaders in their involvement in PRRI (Samson 1968, 1005).

By 1968, however, Suharto and young Muslim activists settled on the need to establish a political party for modernist Muslims with two conditions: dropping the name of Masyumi and the restriction of former leaders of Masyumi from party leadership (Hassan 1980, 174–75; Samson 1971, 161–62). The former Masyumi leadership rejected this offer, yet a new party to represent the modernist Muslim was finally formed in late 1968 with no political attachment to the Old Guard of Masyumi: Partai Muslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Party, Parmusi). Rising to leadership positions in Parmusi were young and educated Muslim activists from Muhammadiyah and Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (Muslim Student Association, HMI).⁸ These young Muslim politicians dominated the party directives and, under compulsion from the New Order, were forced to ‘*deconfessionalize*’ Islamist parties (Nieuwenhuijze 1958, 180–243).⁹ This was a process that illustrates a shift among Islamist politicians from their “formal, strictly dogmatic orientations in the struggle for [the] Islamic state” to the acceptance of a common platform in national politics (Effendy 1995, 27).

A second response was from the Masyumi Vanguard. Being excluded from the Parmusi leadership, the Old-Guards of Masyumi were left with no option but to pursue their struggle for political power outside the party system. They then convened a new organization focusing on *da’wa*, social services, and adopting the relatively inoffensive strategy of principled non-cooperation towards the state. Although employing

a cultural version of Islam, the former Masyumi leaders seemed to be merely suspending, rather than relinquishing, their long terms goal of an Islamic state. In 1967, they established the Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation (Dewan Da'wah Islam Indonesia, DDII) (Husin 1998, 70). DDII soon became the corner stone for political activism for the “Masyumi vanguards”. As declared by its founders, DDII, especially after the failure of the Masyumi rehabilitation, will serve as an institution for “preserving the spirit of Masyumi in [a] non-political party organization” (Husin 1998, 79).

The creation of DDII then constituted a shift of attention for the former Masyumi leaders from “politicized Islam” to “social and *da'wa* activities” (van Bruinessen 1996). It also indicated quite strongly that the pre-1965 coup Muslim politicians began to retreat from formal, parliamentary politics and devoted their engagement to the social and religious sphere. Muhammad Natsir, the most charismatic leader in Masyumi, suggested in the DDII’s declaration that Indonesian Muslims should begin turning more attention to dakwah (*da'wa*) than politics in the traditional sense.¹⁰ Central to DDII’s goal was to “Islamize society from the ground up through *da'wa* activities” (Collin, 2003:114).

Third was the ideological response expressed in 1970 by younger Muslim activists and intellectuals projected as “the revitalization of Islamic faith” (Madjid, 1970:3) and called a Renewal movement (*Gerakan pembaruan*). Determined to offer an alternative strategy for Muslim engagement with broader national goals, the Renewal movement served as the decisive break from the long history of conflicts between Islam and the secular constitution of statehood. These young activists called for “the *secularization* of [the] Islamic party” (Madjid 1970, 8) and as a result, the dismantling of the Islamic state option.

At a general level, the need for Islamic renewal was greatly informed by the immediate events of the uneasy relations between political Islam and the new regime after the 1965 coup. Most notably were the heated debates between Islam and “modernization” and the dedicated efforts of Masyumi politicians for the struggle for Islamic state. Such events had a transformative effect on young Muslim activists in the late 1960s. Being part of a generation known as “Generation 66,”¹¹ and having played a significant role in bringing Sukarno’s regime to an end, many of the younger Muslim generation shared political aspirations of the New Order elements (army, technocrats, secular-leaning intellectuals)

in order to realize in their lifetime politically stable and a modernized Indonesia (Effendy 1995, 151; Hassan 1980, 88).

Muslim activists had expected to benefit from their implicit alliance with the New Order. Yet, they found that Muslims—being included with banned Masyumi and labeled as the “extreme right”—were drawn into a morass of political conflict that was deflecting the Islamic message from promoting its cultural, ethical, and broader political goals. Utomo Danandjaja, a leader of the Islamic Student Union (PII) who later became a leading proponent of the Renewal movement, stated in 1970, “And we [the young generation] are fed up with wrestling endlessly with problems that are never solved. We want something new, something fresh, and a short-cut way to break the vicious circle which has no beginning and no end” (Hassan 1980, 90). Seeking to resolve this, these emerging intellectuals and politicians began to redefine new interests as alternatives for Muslim politics. In the ensuing decades, they showed that conflict between Islam and the state that was filled with hostility in post-revolutionary politics could be pushed into new directions.

Ideas and the Origins of Muslim Democrats

It is important to provide a description of certain features of the new generation of Islamist leadership that began to form in the early 1960s. Members of this generation were not so much different from their elders in terms of social-religious background, which belonged to *santri* communities, but quite distinct in their socialization. While the Old-NU-Masyumi Guards passed through the stressful and torturous period of political changes, ranging from colonial repression, nationalist awakenings, Japanese occupation, to independence Revolution, this emerging leadership faced simmering ideological debates in which the conflicts of political Islam against communist and secular-nationalist escalated. Central to this socialization, therefore, was the historic failure of the Islamist parties with rebellions and hostilities between Islam and other partisan groups especially the PKI, with the cumulative effects felt in the late 1960s.

Locked in this historical legacy, members of this generation sought to find a solution for the reconciliation between Islam and the state. Discussions and debates over the position of Islam in the New Order mounted between 1966 and 1968 (Hassan 1980). This event became

a precursor for ideas on Islam and politics and crystallized with young Muslim activists declaring the Renewal movement in 1970. The ideas they envisioned and the strategy they pursued have set into motion a profound change for Islamist politics.

Because the Renewal ideas served the interest of the state, the New Order government quietly adopted the ideas in its strategy dealing with religious politics by “promoting individual religious piety, suppressing its political expression” (Liddle 1996; Wertheim 1972). In this sense, the role of the state was crucial in bringing about Islamist transformation. Yet, changes in Islamism do not necessarily parallel state repression, although it often does. For example, the creation of Parmusi at the expense of the exclusion of Masyumi leaders occurred despite the regime’s intervention. However, alternative ideas of an “Islamic state” advocated by the Renewal generation remained an “endogenous” aspiration of Indonesian Muslim politics.

The failure of the Islamic state, the totalistic-religious nature of its ideology as well as the dissolution of Masyumi produced multiple legacies for Muslim activists in the early 1970s. As the New Order regime increasingly consolidated, the ideology of an Islamic state remained confined among Muslim elites who began to define their political interests in their negotiations with the new regime. Central to this contest was an episode of battle for the reinstatement of the Jakarta Charter in the Constitution. In the MPR session of 1968, while Suharto’s New Order advocated the view that Pancasila constituted an “national consensus that reflected [the] intrinsic personality of the Indonesian society” (Samson 1968, 44), Islamist elite both former Masyumi and NU called for reviving the Jakarta Charter which, once again, failed.

Shaped by this development, a number of young Muslim activists in student organizations declared their rejection of an Islamic state. The leading figure of this movement was Nurcholish Madjid (1940-2005), the former leader of the Masyumi-affiliated student organization HMI (Ali and Effendi 1986; Hassan 1980).¹² However, because Nurcholish represented a generation, the movement constituted a circle of Muslim intellectuals and leaders that began to form in the mid 1960s. In Yogyakarta, for instance, important individuals associated with the Renewal movement at the time were Djohan Effendi, Syu’bah Asa, Farid Wajdi, and the late Ahmad Wahib. Others in Jakarta include

Utomo Dananjaya, Usep Fathuddin, Eki Syahrudin. Several numbers of emerging intellectuals who shared Nurcholish's ideas became the backbone of the movement, such as Aswab Mahasin, Dawam Rahadjo, and Adi Sasono. Following his return from studies in al Azhar, Cairo, Abdurrahman Wahid who later in the middle 1980s took the NU leadership, quickly aligned himself with the movement (Barton and Feally 1996, 12). Partly as a consequence, since the early 1980s many of the youth associated with NU and HMI, and a significant number of ulama organizations, shared religious outlook strongly influenced by the Renewal movement (Effendy 1995, 266–80).

The movement found its first expression in a speech delivered by Nurcholish in Jakarta on January 2, 1970.¹³ Important to Nurcholish's speech was his declaration of "Islam Yes, Islamic Party No" (Hassan 1980, 188). Anchoring his ideas in many sources of Islamic classics, Nurcholish's ideas comprised a number of diverse themes of political and religious thinking¹⁴ (Barton 1995; Kull 2005). Here we focus only on his ideas related to religion and politics.

The most crucial point Nurcholish raised is his deliberate attempt to create an inspiring alternative to the totalistic religious nature advanced by Islamist political ideologues. These ideologues had justified the idea of an Islamic state by arguing that the doctrine of the transcendent unity of God (*tauhid*) demanded total political, social, and ideological unity. Natsir, for instance, leader of Masyumi in the 1950s, put it, because Islam provides the totality of the political system there can be "no difference between worldly and other-worldly," there can be no "contradictions." *Tauhid*, Natsir insisted, demands "a society... free from... exploitation, feudalism and rejection of differentiation among class, race, secular ideologies ... and so forth" (Natsir 1993, 116).

Concerned with the fact that this intolerant vision would downgrade Islam from its spiritual message, Nurcholish tried to discredit it by standing the concept of *tauhid* (and secularism) on its head. *Tauhid*, he asserted, was not about politics, nor at the least about political parties (Madjid 1970; 1972). On the contrary, Nurcholish argued, because "absolute transcendence pertains solely to God," it should "give rise to an attitude of 'de-sacralization' towards that which is other than God, namely the world, its problems and values... To *sacralize* anything other than God is, in reality, *shirk* [polytheism]" (Madjid 1970, 18). Invoking a central tenet of Islamic mysticism, he argued that "because God is the

Ultimate Absolute ... beyond the ken of human comprehension”, it was a human violation to assume that man could transform God’s mysteries into worldly ideology.

The solution was, thus, to embrace a form of ‘secularization’ that would strengthen Islamic spirituality by “temporalizing ... values which are ... worldly and ... freeing the *umma* (Muslim community) from the tendency to spiritualize them” (Madjid 1970, 13). The term ‘secularization’ he used would provoke public debate in the Muslim community. Therefore, from the beginning Nurcholish tried to clarify what he meant by secularization:

“Secularization does not mean the application of secularism, because ‘secularism’ is the name for an ideology, a new closed worldview which functions very much like a new religion...by ‘secularization’ one does not mean the application of secularism and the transformation of Muslims into secularists. What is intended is the ‘temporalizing’ of values which are in fact worldly, and the freeing of the *umma* from the tendency to spiritualize them.”¹⁵

To Nurcholish and his contemporaries, one of the most problematic “worldly values and affairs” that has been elevated into spiritual or sacred categories was “Islamic political parties”. For this reason, Nurcholish argued that, “Islamic party institutions need to be de-sacralized” (Effendy 1995, 154).

In the post-revolution Indonesia, the high watershed of mobilization through Islamist parties gave way to Muslims suffering “stagnation in religious thinking” and thereby believing that “Islamic political parties represent divine injunction” (Madjid, 1970:4). Nurcholish contended that “to perceive Islamic parties or an Islamic state as sacred was equivalent to making them beyond worldly objects” (Effendy 1995, 161–62). Part of the reason why Muslims failed to recognize such a distinction, Nurcholish asserted, is because the “solidarity-making nature of the political party” (Hassan 1980, 103). Using religion to justify a certain political grouping of Islam against others “... has fostered the tendency of Muslims’ inability to differentiate values which are transcendental from those which are secular and temporal” (Effendy 1995, 163).

From his rejection of Islamic parties, Nurcholish derived his sharp critique of the idea of the Islamic state. A more clear idea to demonstrate the fallacy of the Islamic state was elaborated later after his return from finishing his graduate studies at the University of Chicago

in 1984. Nurcholish's understanding of the Islamic state was shaped by his reading about the nature of how such an "ideology for an Islamic state was conceived" (Madjid 1993, 253). The idea of Islamic state promoted by Muslim thinkers in the Muslim world in the late colonial period is "a form of apology" (Madjid 1994, 255). This attitude emerges from two different directions: the defense against "Western-modern ideologies such as democracy, socialism or communism" and "legalism that derive from the understanding of Islam as a structured system based on collection of laws" (Madjid 1994, 252).

Central to the process of the ideological appropriation of Islam as a system of governance is the role played by Western-educated Muslims. This segment of Muslim society that grew up in modern-colonial institutions saw Islam as "equal or superior to modern ideologies with regard to socio-political issues" (Barton 1997, 115). They argue that Islam is different from Buddhism, Hinduism, or Christianity because "Islam is *al-Din*" (Madjid 1994, 225), so it has governing authority over politics, economics and the cultural sphere. Consequently, Muslim leaders believed that "Islam as *al-din* symbolizes a comprehensive religious system and world view" (Madjid 1994, 226). It is for this historical reason that, in response to his critique over the Renewal movement in 1972, Nurcholish maintained that "what we believe was an Islamic state actually [such a state] never existed; ... the idea that Islam has a complete conception of governance was merely a historical accident" (Hassan 1980, 107; Madjid 2004).¹⁶

By the early 1980s, members of the Renewal generation began to spread and established leading organizations for social and educational transformation (Effendy 1995, 211). Many of them organized social and education programs for rural development coordinated with international NGOs and government projects. These programs were mostly attached to the *pesantren* communities (Effendy 1995). Some politicians from this Renewal generation joined the government's party, Golkar (Hassan 1980; Porter 2002).

However, two mechanisms facilitated the migration of the Renewal ideas into the broader scheme of social and political development. First is the emergence of an "agency of persuasion" (Mallarangeng 2000, 181) which translated those ideas into programs for social transformation in Islamist organizations. Since being elected in the mid 1980s as NU's chairman, Abdurrahman Wahid began to institutionalize this ideological

shift of Islamism in NU-*pesantren* communities. Abdurrahman convinced his traditional followers to endorse two decisions: 1) NU would stop all participation in the state-controlled party system in order to focus its energies on promoting social and cultural reform on a grassroots level; and 2) NU would abandon its agenda in the pursuit of an Islamic state and would accept Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution as the final bases for state authority. Second, alternative views offered by the Renewal movement on the Pancasila state served the interests of both the New Order and Indonesian Muslims. Beginning in the 1970s, the regime quietly embraced the elements of the 'secularization thesis' for the gradual accommodation of religious interests through its main entrusted institution: the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The institutional accommodation has been facilitated by its two modern-oriented Ministers, Mukti Ali (1971-1977) and Munawir Syadzali (1982-1993).

Institutional Changes in Suharto's Politics

Beginning in the late 1980s, Suharto's government undertook accommodation of Muslim's religious as well as political interests. Gradual step toward capturing Muslim interests was in fact adopted as early as the mid 1970s. This includes the infamous establishment of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI in 1975 and other institutions that were visibly designed to appropriate the role of ulama and to strengthen their authorities in the institutional design of the state.¹⁷ But the most important—albeit problematic—of the New Order's pro-Muslim policies was the creation of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia, ICMI) in late 1990. This was a nation-wide organization formed as part of Suharto's efforts to assume control over the Muslim middle class. A closer look at the timing of the foundation of ICMI allows one to argue that such incorporation was made possible by a temporal congruence between the increasingly established Pancasila as the common platform for Islamist organizations and the high level of consolidation of state building. It seemed that the massive expansion of Muslim middle class in bureaucracy, civil society organizations and business sectors, left Suharto with no choice for his state-building strategy but to include them in his regime structure (Anwar 1995; Hefner 1993).

The establishment of MUI was as outcome of a tug of war between Muslim leaders and the Suharto government. At least since 1970,

Suharto approached Muslim leaders expressing his initiative to form a single, centralized office for the ulama (Mudzhar 1993). This idea was not new.¹⁸ Yet, the relationship between the New Order and Muslim groups, especially after the painful emasculation of Parmusi, made the latter consistently reject any proposal for the creation of an ulama organization. However, Muslim protests against the legal unification of the marriage bill in 1973 provided a lesson for the New Order. A more serious engagement to incorporate religious interests of Islamist politics in the institutional design of the state was crucial. In May 1975, the Minister of Home Affairs, Amir Mahmud, convened the provincial governors to set up councils of ulama in nearly all of Indonesia's twenty six provinces (Ichwan 2005). These regional councils of ulama, along with leaders of independent organizations including Muhammadiyah, NU, and Persis were then brought in as members of the national MUI (Ichwan 2005, 4). Following a National Conference of Indonesian Ulama in July 1975, MUI was finally established.

The New Order's initial plan in the creation of MUI was to mobilize the ulama to participate in political development (Effendy 1995). Since its inception, MUI was designed to lend legitimacy to government policy initiatives and directives, as an observer noted, "... that the ulama can explain the New Order's policies in a religious idiom acceptable to, and understood by, the wider Muslim *ummah*" (van Bruinessen 1996, 15). In effect, it was meant to deflect potential objections by Muslim groups who might choose to oppose government policy. MUI therefore remained under considerable pressure to justify government policy and fulfill the requirement to set up a *fatwa* commission (Ichwan 2005; Porter 2002, 79).¹⁹

Secondly, the development of state-Islam relations in the New Order shifted dramatically beginning in the late 1980s. With the gradual move toward institutional accommodation, the increasingly established norm of the 'Pancasila state' embraced by Muslim organizations, and the expansion of Muslim middle class, Suharto's New Order completed his politics of accommodation by building a new social coalition with Muslim groups who had previously been marginalized. This coalition was created by a new co-opted nation-wide organization known as the Association of All-Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), in December 1990 (Hefner, 1994; Mujani, 1995). Under the leadership of Suharto's protégé and trusted loyalist, the long-serving Minister of

Research and Technology, B.J. Habibie, ICMI became a new instrument for the New Order to recruit the elite into the bureaucracy, various ministerial posts, and the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR). This was previously undertaken by Golkar and other "... limited circles of military and civilian ruling groups in Suharto's corporate networks" (Porter 2002, 167).²⁰

The initiators of the ICMI were neither Muslim intellectuals nor Habibie, but a number of Muslim students who planned to organize a national seminar on the role of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals in political development (Husaini, 1995; Ali-Fauzi, 1994).²¹ As soon as the organization was officially formed, the response from the Muslim elites to the ICMI was overwhelmingly enthusiastic. The ICMI began as a loose federation of Muslims representing a wide spectrum of moderate, reform-minded, conservative, and 'radical' Islamist organizations. Yet, elements from modernist Muslims including Muhammadiyah, HMI, DDII, some ex-Masyumis, and politicians of PPP, became dominant. For the Muslim middle class in the 1990s, as Liddle (1996, 18) points out, it looked as though the government, after two decades of keeping Islamist activists and politicians from the corridors of the New Order's power, was finally willing to admit them.

The important implication of the state-Islamist alignment through ICMI was a profound change of the conduct of politics among Islamist political elites. At the most general level, the struggle for the "Jakarta Charter" was dropped. Although ICMI members can be regarded as representing a variety of Islamist camps, the majority of them shared at least one common goal - they perceived ICMI as having provided them with a useful vehicle for gaining access to them in power. This shared agenda enabled Muslim leaders, in theory at least, to pursue their own agenda and exert influence upon state agencies, officials, and policy-making (Liddle 1996). Most of them were prepared publicly to support Suharto and to operate within the Pancasila framework in return for Suharto's protection. They argued that under Suharto's and Habibie's protection, ICMI would enjoy the necessary conditions to establish itself as part of the New Order's institutional structure.

Such a commitment to the 'Pancasila state' was also reflected by those Islamist leaders who opposed the Suharto-ICMI alignment. In the 1990, it was Abdurrahman Wahid also known Gus Dur that expressed its strong criticism against ICMI. Gus Dur's opposition was

not only framed within Suharto's cooptation toward Islam, but also his concern that such incorporation has sectarian implication as "... a step backwards toward political segmentation based on agenda for further Islamization of the state" (Porter 2002, 110). To Gus Dur, by bringing ICMI into the regime politics "Suharto provides a political channel for intolerant, and ultimately anti-Pancasila, Islamic political views" (Ramage 1995, 162). Along with other figures of non-Muslim and nationalist-secular activists, Gus Dur's opposition to the state-ICMI alliance has placed him as a Muslim leader whose commitment to Pancasila state remains undiminished (Hefner 2000, 142). In response to the formation of ICMI, in March 1991 Gus Dur convened around 50 secular-nationalist and non-Muslim intellectuals, politicians, journalists, NGO activists, and social workers to set up an informal organization called Democracy Forum (Forum Democracy). This forum symbolically played a decisive role of opposition against state-ICMI alliance.

Democratization and Dismantling of Islamic State

As Indonesia adopted a democratic system, Islamic symbols and ideology were once again revived and became instrumental for political mobilization. Many political parties and social organizations were formed and adopted Islam as their ideology. However, in spite of the resurrection of the Islamic state alternative, legacies of conciliation between Islam and the state during the New Order period remained important in shaping the behaviour of Islamist politics.

To map out patterns of Islamist mobilization in this period, we suggest that there are two major currents of Islamist development. The first are Islamist organizations who tend to perceive that the conflict between Islamic and the 'secular state' has been resolved. These movements are inclined to work within the democratic system, be more moderate and have entirely abandoned their program for the Islamic state. I label this type of organization as 'secularized Islamism'. The second are those who hold that the reinstatement of the Jakarta Charter and the application of Islamic *shari'a* is part of their organization's platform. These organizations adopted a relatively radical and, to some extent, militant outlook toward pursuing their goals. Some envisioned the re-establishment of the "caliphate system". In general, however, the legacies of conflict, co-optation, repression, and accommodation

during the last decades of Suharto's New Order were detrimental to these types of Islamism.

Soon after assuming the presidency, the Habibie government lifted many of the legal restrictions for political participation and established new laws to regulate the conduct of political parties and democratic elections. On June 1, 1998, Habibie delivered a long presidential address in which he promised to hold fair, honest and democratic elections in 1999. This change helped to activate Indonesian political groups to become political parties in preparation for the elections.

In early 1999, a total of 141 parties were officially registered, but only 48 eventually took part in the June 1999 elections (Suryadinata, 1999; Salim, 1999). Around a dozen of these emerging parties identified themselves as Islamic. Among these they adopted either Islam as their ideological bases or sought to draw their support base from the Muslim masses and organizations (Tan 2006, 92).²² After almost three decades of this democratic transition, only five major Islamist parties survived and continue as electoral representatives for Muslim political interests. All of the Islamist parties combined performed poorly and were eclipsed by secular-nationalist parties in the subsequent elections in 1999 and 2004 and significantly dropped in 2019.²³ Despite such poor results, it is still important to provide a map of Islamist characteristics in order to delineate our proposition about the ultimate outcome of Islamist mobilization in the post-stabilization period of state building.

At a general level, pattern of Islamist party formation was structured around the existing networks of established Muslim organizations, especially NU and Muhammadiyah. The parties were built up during the New Order period such as DDII or they relied on grass-roots activists developed earlier on the university campuses. Two Islamist parties that fit into the first category, that is, 'secularized Islamist parties', are the Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB, National Awakening Party) and the Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN, National Mandate Party). The PKB was founded in July 1998 and was strongly identified as an Islamic party because of its infrastructural connection with NU leadership.²⁴ Since its creation, Abdurrahman Wahid and other party founders made serious efforts to make the PKB as "a party that is non-sectarian and open to membership and leadership by non-Islamic elements" (Salim 1999, 16). For this particular reason, the PKB decidedly embraced Pancasila as its ideological basis, not Islam. In a few areas in eastern Indonesia,

the PKB has Christian leadership. Wahid was a strong symbol in the party, until his death in January 2010, and helped the PKB to appear as one of the few Islamist parties that was able to build alliance across ideological differences, especially with nationalists.

PAN was also an Islamic party whose commitment to Pancasila remained in spite of the New Order's collapse. PAN was founded in August 1998 by cross-ideological activists opposing the Suharto regime, but with a leading important figure with Islamist credentials, Amin Rais. Rais was chairman of Muhammadiyah 1995-1998 which was known for its the vanguard protest during the 1998 *Reformasi* movement that led to the fall of Suharto's New Order. The involvement of liberal-leaning activists who founded the party led to the PAN initially espousing a pluralistic ideology. However, Amin's strong presence in this party has brought the consequence that for Indonesian voters PAN was associated as the political arm of the modernist Muhammadiyah. After the 1999 elections, along with Amin's gradual return to his core constituency, PAN was perceived as a party representing modernist-urban Muslim constituents. In the 1999 presidential race in the Consultative Assembly, under Amin's leadership, PAN and PKB succeeded to construct a coalition with other parties assisting Abdurrahman Wahid's bid to become the President of Indonesia by defeating Habibie (Golkar) and Megawati Sukarno Putri (PDI-P).²⁵ However, the two parties never obtained electoral success. The PKB won only 13% of the vote in 1999 and 11% in 2004. Similarly, PAN gained 7% of the vote in 1999 and 6% in 2004 (Ulfen 2007).

PKB's and PAN's commitment to the Pancasila state of Indonesia was clearly evidenced by their position during the debate on the Jakarta Charter in the 1999 MPR session and the constitution amendment debate in 2002 (Ulfen 2007). In contrast to other Islamist parties such as PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan), PBB (Partai Bulan Bintang) and PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera), PKB and PAN aligned themselves with secular nationalist parties (Golkar, PDIP, and PD) who opposed reinstatement of the Jakarta Charter in the constitution. The Islamic state-oriented PKS, a new party that we shall examine shortly, took a unique position. It was willing to forego the Jakarta Charter, but proposed to change the Jakarta Charter with what they called the "Madina Charter", a concept taken from a model of governance established by Muhammad in Medina in which Jewish, Christian, and

other religions were treated equally. The PKS' proposal also said that the state would impose an obligation on all religious groups, not only Muslims, to practice their own religious obligations. Yet, to most non-Islamist, this is *shari'a* by another name.

PPP, PBB and PKS constituted Islamist parties that were formed in the post-New Order and represent our second category. These parties are inclined to perceive that the struggle for Islamic state continues and share an ideological outlook but differ in terms of their respective infrastructural support. PPP was the 1973 forced amalgam Islamist party that accepted Pancasila as its ideology in 1987. After democratization, PPP sought to refashion itself to appear as the Islamic party best able to represent the interests of all Muslims (Suryadinata 2002, 58). It sought to shed its image as the institutionalized Islamic party of the Suharto regime and, therefore, revived Islam as its ideology and re-adopted the Ka'ba as party symbol. Of all the parties whose platform for an Islamic state remained, PPP has the most diffuse support across Muslim groups, with strongholds in the outer islands and among rural and elderly voters (Suryadinata, Evi Nurvidya Arifin, and Aris Ananta 2003, 12). PBB, by contrast, sought to position itself as the successor to Masyumi and court its community through DDII networks (Salim 1999). Founded in July 1998, PBB denied that it sought to turn Indonesia into a formal Islamic state but supported the implementation of regulations to reflect Islamic values, which included bringing the Jakarta Charter back in the constitution (Suryadinata 2002, 45).

From our discussion on the objectives of the post-New Order's Islamist parties, PPP, PBB and PKS advocated a firm stance on Islamic issues with a tendency to support a conservative Islamization of the country. Yet, parties who still pushed for the reinstatement of the Jakarta Charter and the application of *shari'a* represented a very small minority in the Parliament. The combined electoral gains of PPP, PBB and PKS in 1999 and 2004, for example, accounted for only 12% (71 seats of 670 seats) and 8.2% respectively. This lack of electoral strength indicated that the Islamic state alternative had clearly diminished with the political process of democratic consolidation. In 1955, the parties who supported the Jakarta Charter—Masyumi and NU—obtained 40% of the parliament seats, while in 1999 they declined to just 12%. In the 2004 General Elections, PPP and PBB, the two parties left to support the Jakarta Charter, received only 10.8% of the vote.

It must be noted, however, the debate and discussion on the return to an Islamic state also took place outside the Parliament. During the constitutional reform period from 1999 to 2002, several Islamist groups organized in civil society mobilized thousands of supporters outside the Parliament building in support of the reinstatement of the Jakarta Charter. Different from their 'brothers' who organized political parties, these organizations adopted a radical outlook. Some of them even aspired to the creation of the "Caliphate system" and employed *jihadist* political programs (Jamhari and Jahroni, 2004).

Prominent among these organizations are the Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defender Front, FPI), Lasykar Jihad (Jihadist Squad), Majelis Mujahidin (Holy Knight Council), Hizbut Tahrir (Party of Freedom, HT), Forum Komunikasi Ahlu Sunah wal Jama'ah (FKAJ), and a jihadist group suspected to have organizational links with al-Qaida Jama'at Islamiya (JI). Hasan (2004) and Mujani (2003) noted that the mobilization capacity of these new radical Islamists, while perhaps still falling far short compared to their peak in Masyumi period in the 1950's, continued to grow and produced one of the most formidable forces in contemporary Indonesian Islam. One may pose a question: Where do these radicals come from?

To answer this, one must take in account the long-term implications of the New Order's religious-political policies as well as the rise of Islamic-based aspirations that developed shortly before the fall of Suharto. It is apparent that the two-pronged strategy in transforming political Islam, the promotion of personal piety and the suppression of its political expression, generated unintended consequences. This policy helped political Islam to become more integrated with the political system, but also facilitated the expansion of religious groups. The increased prominence of DDII and the rise of ICMI in the 1990s enabled these groups to appeal and attract members, especially students from university campuses (Mujani 2005; van Bruinessen 2006).

In the 1980s, Indonesia witnessed a broad-based religious activism centered on university campuses. Organizations or small groups for religious studies appeared and *da'wa* activism developed from one university campus to another. Two factors were crucial in shaping this development. First was the severe restriction of student political activity through the New Order's Campus Normalization Act (Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus, NKK). The act was passed by the office of the

Department of Education following massive student demonstrations in 1978 to protest the re-election of Suharto for a third term. Traditionally, political activities among Indonesian students were common and revolved around the student centre. With the government regulation of student activities, centers for the student activism were subverted into ceremonial and entertaining activities. Many Muslim students in this period began to funnel their activism through campus mosques (Krance, 2001). The second factor was the Iranian Revolution of 1979. This event led Muslim students to turn to the *da'wa* movement organized around the themes of building dedicated activists with a strong religious identity. By maintaining a decidedly Islamic tone, the *da'wa* organizations hoped to appeal to all segments of the Indonesian society to act as their mouthpiece against what they perceived as un-Islamic conduct.

Muslim students studying in the Middle East, particularly al-Azhar (Egypt), Madina University and Umm al-Qura of Mecca (Arab Saudi), began returning home by the late 1980s. Through DDII's initiatives, they provided new leadership to the campus *da'wa* movement. This new ulama served as spiritual guides and produced Indonesian translations of works by leaders of the international Islamist organizations including the Muslim Brotherhood and other thinkers.²⁶ As the *da'wa* groups grew stronger, in the early 1990s, they began formally to organize their activities in the University Institute for Islamic Propagation (Lembaga Dakwah Kampus, LDK). This organization expanded and started to enter student politics. Precisely similar to the JI-Brotherhood in Egypt, they used their institutional base to win control of university student senates (Badan Eksekutif Mahasiswa or BEM). In less than a decade, almost all the student governments at major universities were controlled by the Islamist activists.²⁷

Among the earliest appearance of *da'wa* activists as a real political force was in their public campaign against what they saw as secular or un-Islamic policies of the New Order government in the 1990s. Partly triggered by the pro-Islamic turn of Suharto's politics, *da'wa* students launched demonstrations protesting policies regarded as un-Islamic. The first and foremost was a campaign against a state-sponsored gambling and lottery on the grounds that "Islam forbids gambling". In late 1993, supported by MUI and other Muslim organizations, the government passed legislation to ban any form of gambling and lottery. In 1994,

the *da'wa* student organizations succeeded in seeing the government lift legal restrictions Muslim women dress, such as the Islamic head-covering (*jilbab*) in public schools, universities and other public offices (Effendy 1995, 339–41).

However, the Indonesian economic crisis in mid 1997 leading to the emergence of nation-wide student demonstrations against Suharto marked a decisive point for LDK organizations. Such events served as a political instrument for these formerly quietist Muslim activists to become a new Islamist political force. In March 1998, the LDK organizations formed a distinguished student-action organization during the *Reformasi* era called Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia (the United Muslim Student Action, KAMMI). This important phase of organization building brought *da'wa* groups together in a nation-wide Islamist student movement distinguished from the established Muslim student organizations affiliated with HMI, Muhammadiyah or the NU.

The idea for forming a political party was initiated by KAMMI leaders shortly after the resignation of Suharto in mid 1998. During the rush to form political parties, in July 1998, 52 *da'wa* leaders initiated Partai Keadilan (Justice Party, PK). The initiative began in a huge demonstration in Al-Azhar Mosque in Jakarta calling for ending violence after the resignation of Suharto. There emerges serious question whether the KAMMI activists continue to struggle for political changes in wider scope of political institutions including the parliament or return to student *da'wa* activism while joint the already declared political parties associated with Islamist aspiration, especially PBB or PAN. KAMMI activists, Almuzammil Yusuf and Mahfudz Siddik, then organized a poll of over 8,000 students and alumni of the LDK/KAMMI network. With support from 70 percent of KAMMI members nationally, they proceeded to invite a range of Muslim intellectuals and public figures to discuss the establishment of a political party. In July 1998, the decision to form Partai Keadilan (PK) was announced by 52 *da'wa* leaders marking the PK and, then, in 2004 PKS to represent interests of the new generation of Islamist activists after the question of Islamism and Pancasila was resolved.

This declaration marked a formal split between the LDK-Tarbiyah movement with its older generation of leadership in DDII (Masyumi) who had established PBB. One of the most important characteristics

of the PK was that it was comprised of young members and was led by young leaders (between 30 and 40 years old) who have a high level of education (Damanik 2002, 231). PK was also distinguished from other emerging Islamist parties that participated in the first democratic elections in June 1999 in that it was not associated with any established Islamist leadership that developed either during the Indonesian revolution, Guided Democracy or Suharto's New Order.

The establishment of PK in 1998 was a major turning point in the development of the Tarbiyah organizations, but also created divisions among them. While some activists joined KAMMI in forming the new party, others took a more radical position, rejecting democracy as un-Islamic and interpreting *jihad* as requiring Muslims to struggle for the implementation of *Shari'a*. Hizbut Tahrir and other leadership emerged as the radical alternative and appeared public after the fall of Suharto. This organization competed with KAMMI to recruit followers on university campuses.

In the 1999 elections, using the slogan "Islam is Solution", the PK came away with disappointing results. It only collected 1.7% of the total vote. This means that the PK failed to pass the minimum electoral threshold of a 2% share of the vote. In April 2002, two years before the 2004 elections, the PK leadership then founded a new party named Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS). Learning from the failure in the 1999 elections, PKS revised its platform away from "purely religious appeals" and moved forward to adopt a more general platform painting an image of itself as a party that fights against corruption. The program bore fruit in the 2004 election. The electoral results in this particular election demonstrated the Indonesian public supported the PKS when it won 7.3% of vote; with 45 seats placing the PKS as the sixth largest party in the parliament.

A close look at the PKS' leadership organizational structure, reflects a religious political party that seeks to combine ulama and political authority. Following Masyumi prior to 1952—and to some extent the Brotherhood—the party executive leadership was guided by the authority of the Religious Council (Dewan Syari'ah). This council was comprised of ulama, religious scholars, or selected preachers (Sembiring 2020). The highest authority for decision making was the Deliberation Council consisting of ulama, the executive council, and regional representatives. Executive authority rested with the leaders or activists

who were sometime also trained as religious scholars and who passed through the necessary process of leadership training in the Tarbiyah institutions.

In this sense, central to the mobilization of the PKS was its strong claim to represent an Islamic political force “concerned with a moral reform” (Nurwahid 2020). Since its inception in 1998, the PKS has positioned itself as the party which consistently campaigned for the urgent need for greater morality. The party reiterates time and again that the present chaos in Indonesia is caused primarily by a lack of morality among the nation’s leaders.

“...During the important stages of *Reformasi* movement, every one talked about political reform, economic reform, societal reform and so forth. We have so many ambitious plans and programs in those talks. But one is missing: why does no one talk about moral reform? So, we tried consistently to bear in mind that, the top priority of party program that the public needs to know is, that we are concerned with the reform of public, especially elite, morality.” (Sembiring 2020).

Conclusion Remarks

The narrative presented the periodic convergence between of the state institutional development and elements of Muslim interests. We presented new agenda and definitions articulated by Muslim activists in the early 1970s that led to changing patterns of state-Islamist relations in the following decades. Proposition underlined in our argument is that legacies of state formation shaped the subsequent patterns of state-society relations and, in turn, reshaped the state’s strategy in transforming its Muslim constituents. The strength of Islamist forces, both in the modernist-Masyumi and the traditionalist-NU has been part of the New Order’s major concern since its early years. The mode of interaction between the New Order and Islam was therefore marked, first, by the state’s constant attempt to control party politics and, second, by the move forward to transform Muslim politics into associational life.

Crucial for the New Order’s religio-political policies was the redefinition of Muslim interests expressed by young Muslim intellectuals and activists in the early 1970s. This ideational response to consolidating state helped to break the traditional conception of an Islamic state that had been the ideological base for Islamist parties.

Such responses paved the way for the rise of a broader goal with a clear solution for the convergence between Islam and the secular authority. In its essence, such responses reflect breaking old forms of political strategy and programs for the “Islamic state”, redefining new ones, and, as a result, changing relations between Muslims and other political groups including the state.

Three of the institutional developments were detrimental to the declining appeal of the Islamic state. The first was the regime’s efforts for de-confessionalization of Islamist parties. The New Order took steps to restructure mass politics, with the prominent target of establishing control over political parties. The regime courted Islamist politicians by enacting legal restrictions and to an important degree a violent repression of the organizational existence of Islam. Since 1973, political Islam, PPP in particular, subjected its membership to ideological reorientation to conform to the state ideology of Pancasila. Successful in party de-confessionalization, the regime enacted further policies to dismantle the potential power of Islamic state ideas by bringing all Muslim civil society organizations into another phase of ideological submission. Finally, the establishment of MUI served as an important development through which aspects of religious interests in an Islamic alternative were secured in the institutional structure of the state.

Endnotes

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1. ‘Political Islam’ or ‘Islamist politics’ are used here interchangeably. It refers to the phenomenon of Islamic movement engaging in politics qua Muslim organizations. It encompasses activities that seek to influence state policies or to influence the balance of power as performed by actors who perceive their actions as outcome of their identity as Muslims.
 2. Despite long history of Islamic movements in Indonesia, the parties’ political engagement was controlled in some periods and there were times they had to merge unlike today’s diversity. Under the New Order political Islam was a particular target of regime repression, with all four Muslims parties forced to merge into an unstable new entity called the United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan—PPP). Yet, the party was manipulated and controlled by the regime. The PPP was the only active political party during the New Order and seemed like a balancer party for Suharto to control Islamists in one party.
 3. These parties adopted a relatively puritan and, to some extent, militant outlook toward pursuing their goals. Some envisioned the re-establishment of the “caliphate system”.
 4. For example, on the one hand the PBB (The Crescent Star Party – Partai Bulan Bintang) idealizes the model of a semi-religious state where ulama has an explicit authority and role in defining Islamic law (Weck, 2011: 98). On the other hand, the PAN (National Mandate Party – Partai Amanat Nasional) supports modern, moderate Islamic politics like the PKS.
 5. In Indonesia there are many groups of Islamists who reject democracy. There are, for example, HTI, Hidayatullah, as well as the Islamic Youth Forum of Surakarta (FPIS) (Weck, 2011: 97). Such kind of extreme groups strongly reject Pancasila and insist on the establishment of sharia law like in Arabic countries.
 6. This hope was understandable given their participation in overthrowing Sukarno and later in crushing the PKI.
 7. This committee was selected from a loose network organization of Masyumi and other modernist Muslim activists formed after the dissolution of the party, called *Badan Koordinasi Amal Muslimin* (Coordinating Body of Muslim Activities). This organization, except NU that remained organize as a party, draws from 16 Islamist organizations united in Masyumi prior to 1952. See Boland (1984, 119).
 8. The creation Parmusi was stressful process for Muslim elite associated with Masyumi. The resistance from former Masyumi leaders such as Natsir, Sukiman and Muhammad Roem was strong enough to oppose the government intervention in the creation of the new party. See Allan Samson (1971).
 9. The term ‘deconfessionalization’ refers to a phenomenon where religious political organization, Islamist parties in this context, reached a certain level of threshold to abandon their religious goals and agree to operate its platform and policies based on a common ground in national politics.

10. Natsir claimed in 1967, that the rejection of the Jakarta Charter in 1959 demonstrated that “more than half of the nation’s almost 90 percent Muslims rejected the obligation of living by the *shari’at*; obviously there is a need for further Islamization” (Hussein, 1997:73).
11. Generation 1966 is well established in Indonesian political lexicon. Its name was taken from cross-class and ideological alliances that took part in bringing Sukarno’s Guided democracy came to end. The name Generation 66 was then attributed to indicate a historical break between the two regimes: Sukarno’s Old Order and Suharto’s New Order.
12. See also Ann Kull (2005). Nurcholish’s renewal ideas were considered by many as a turning point of the transformation of Islamist politics. In the post-1965 coup, the main message of the reform offered a substantial solution for the reconciliation between Islam and the state. Nurcholish’s relationship with political Islam started at very early age when he was a student in the State Institute of Islamic Studies (Institut Agama Islam Negeri, IAIN) Jakarta. It was in these student years that he was elected as the president of HMI in 1966-1969 and 1969-1971.
13. The speech was organized informally as part of a post-*Idul Fitri* (Feast of Breaking the Ramadan) celebration. It was organized jointly by four of the most important Muslim youth and student organizations—HMI, GPI (Muslim Youth Movement), PII and Persami (Association of Indonesian Muslim Graduates). Nurcholish’s paper entitled “The Necessity of Renewing Islamic Thought and the Problem of Integration of the *Ummat*”.
14. Nurcholish’s main message reflected a wide range of intellectual concerns of the fundamental Islamic tenets ranging from God, human beings and the manner of their relationships in the light of new social realities, and these were connected with politics of modernization of Islam.
15. In his paper, Nurcholish acknowledged that the term “secularization” was adopted from American Protestant theologian, Harvey Cox, to underpin the idea of the increasing urbanization and rationalization from which the
16. Nurcholish argued that the conceptualization of Islamic state was a social-political need, in the sense that it was part of resolving problem to oversee the strategy against colonialism. Religion became a form of inspiration and resistance against Western powers and values during anti-colonial movements. Muslim theoreticians did not elaborate the idea of Islamic state until the end of World War I.
17. Before MUI was formed, through the Minister of Religious Affairs, Mukti Ali, the government created Association for Islamic Education Reform (Gabungan Usaha Perbaikan Pendidikan Indonesia, GUPPI), in 1970; Indonesian Dakwah Council (MDI) and the Indonesian Mosque Council (DMI) in 1973. Board of Indonesian Mosques (BKPMI) was also created linked to religious section of Golkar. Later in late 1980s, significant number of social organizations was founded expected generally to be included in subordinate networks of Suharto’s management of Islamist political support. See, Porter (2002).
18. The precursors of MUI dated back to the early decade of Indonesian revolution. In the 1950s, when the Army was seeking to win the hearts of Muslim in West Java in its struggle against DI/TII, the army command organized meetings with local ulama, demanding their political co-operation. In 1958, too, the provincial Ulama Council was established that comprised ulama and military personnel and with mainly security-oriented purpose. In 1962 a similar body was established at the national level as a means to gain Muslim support for Sukarno’s Guided Democracy. The first New Order Ulama Council was formed in Aceh in 1965-66. This was part of the anti-

- communist campaign after the 1965 coup, in which the military commander of Aceh demanded leading ulama to issue a fatwa against the communists.
19. A number of occasions illustrated that MUI's fatwa was produced in order to religiously ascertain as well as justify the government wishes. Yet, many achievements played by MUI can be acknowledged. To name one of them was the MUI-government program in the socialization of the use of IUD in family planning. Many observers noted that without the role played by MUI, it is unlikely that the government could reduce the national birth rate in such a populous country with such a big success in a decade. For extensive review on the role of MUI, see M. B. Hooker (2003).
 20. What puzzles from ICMI is the political context on why this organization emerged in the way it did. The formation of ICMI in 1990 marked an important threshold point in the Islamist development in which there was convergence of interests between the state elite and large segments of Islamist groups, especially the modernist mainstream.
 21. ICMI began with an initiative of number of Muslim students from Brawijaya University who travelled to Jakarta in search of financial aid and speakers for the seminar. These students were advised by two prominent Islamist activists associated with the Renewal movement of the 1970s to meet with Minister BJ Habibie. The purpose is to ask for his support for the possibility to form an organization for Muslim intellectuals and to be led by himself. In the beginning, Habibie was reluctant to accept such a request, but agreed eventually after consulting with Suharto about the plan to establish a nation-wide organization for Indonesian Muslim intellectuals. See Anwar (1995).
 22. It must be noted that the revival of Islamic ideology in political parties in the 1990 elections were facilitated by change in political bill related to the 1985 Bill on Pancasila as the sole foundation for social and political organizations (*azas tunggal*). The lift of this bill was made during the November 10-13 meeting of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR).
 23. In 2004 and 2009 elections, there were dramatic changes in electoral rule. First is related to the fact that the president and the vice president are elected directly; Second, the rule also set to elect representatives for the national level DPR and DPD, the provincial Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (DPRD I) and the district DPRD Daerah II (DPRD II). Observers suggested the year 2004 came to be widely referred to as the "Year of Voting Frequently".
 24. In 1999, there were four other parties affiliated to NU. But the symbol of Abdurrahman Wahid (NU's 1984-1999 chairman) in PKB became sufficient to make this party as 'an official' political organization for NU constituents.
 25. In the 1999 elections, PDI-P had won a plurality of 33.76% in the election, but Megawati, the party leader, failed to reach out to the Muslim parties to build a coalition to ensure her election through MPR. Megawati seemed to take the position that she could rule without support from other parties. Some elements of Poros-Tengah (center Axis) led by Amin Rais argued against Megawati on the grounds that Islam does not allow a woman to be a leader if there are qualified men. Poros Tengah succeeded in electing Abdurrahman Wahid to the presidency. However, in 2000, Wahid was impeached due to corruption scandals that evolved Wahid's role. As the Vice President, Megawati then took office.
 26. Islamic publishing house especially linked to the DDII-Media Dakwah, flooded bookstores with books on Islam. Among the published works were books or booklets by Hassan Al-Banna, Abul A'la Maududi, Sayyid Qutb, and other thinkers associated with the revival of Islam including Ali Syariati, Imam Khomeini.
 27. The current leaders of PKS, in addition to the graduates from the Middle East Universities, came from the LDK activists in this period.

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6. Ms. *Undhang-Undhang Banten*, L.Or.5598, Leiden University.
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السنة الثالثون، العدد ٣، ٢٠٢٣

مجلة إنذونيسية للدراسات الإسلامية



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في إنذونيسيا

عارف سبحان
