

ISLAMIC PARTIES AND THE POLITICS OF CONSTITUTIONALISM IN INDONESIA

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“If someone is able to separate sugar from its sweetness, he will be able to separate Islam from politics”. K.H. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah (in Adam Schwarz, A Nation in Waiting, 1999, p.162).

“This is all politics. There is nothing different about PKS. Christian parties, secular parties, other Islamic parties all compromise to be successful in politics. We (PKS) don’t forget that we are Islamic, we don’t forget our origins. But we also accept that if we want to be able to make Indonesia a better place, we need to be able work with other. In Islam, cooperation and compromise can be good things”, Anies Matta-Secretary-General of PKS, (in Greg Fealy et al “Indonesia: Pietism and Compromising for Power”, 2008, p. 49).

ABSTRACT

This article examines the relationship between religion and the state in Indonesia by exploring how Islam used by political parties to shape the politics. It has been argued that Islam politics is a complementary in both nationhood and statehood in Indonesia. From the early days of the new-born nation-state, Muslims in Indonesia had played significant role in shaping the nation; nonetheless, they have never dominated the political power. Fragmentation among Muslims themselves and internal political parties is among the reason why religious (Islamic) parties failed tend to be reluctant in bringing religious identity to the state arena. Political subordination-inclusion-ignorance-confrontation is the circular game that features Islam politics in Indonesia. The debatable issue on shari'a law, which is frequently used by Islamic parties, always becomes the core problem of the relation between Islam and the state. The idea of implementing shari'a law, particularly through constitutional change in the 2009 election is mainly supported by very view parties in the parliament. It is pretty much similar with the 2004 election. However, the non-formal parties, groups outside parliaments, such as Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) and Islamic groups still struggle to included state's power to ensure the shari'a law. Importantly, since the implementation of decentralization, the debate of shari'a law also shifted from national to local issue. Of more than four hundred districts/municipalities and 33 provinces, only very view of

critical to analyze. Thus, understanding both perspectives, Islamism and Islamic revivalism, is useful in studying Islam Indonesia.

In the next session I will discuss the role of political parties, particularly Islamic parties, in shaping Indonesian politics. In this regard, I apply the term ‘politicizing religion’ or ‘religion politicization’ to refer to the use of religion for political purposes. In this regard, the so-called “political Islam” is attributable on how religion politicized. A prominent young Indonesia scholar defines political Islam as any “efforts that promote Muslim aspirations and carry an Islamic agenda into laws and government policy through electoral process and representative (legislative) institution”.⁵⁶³ As in case of Indonesia, some religious parties have very often used religious attributes; such as, text, organization, to achieve their own longer term agenda or for short term purpose, e.g. to gain vote in election. The question is how religious parties use religion matters in the politics? And a conclusion should be drawn in the end of this paper.

II. ISLAM IN INDONESIA

a) Brief History

How Islam spread and who brought the religion in the archipelago is critical questions. Importantly, how the religion becomes majority in a nation which initially founded aggregated of different widespread kingdoms in just less than a century.⁵⁶⁴ To answer these questions scholars have different historical point. A Dutch scholar, Snouck Hurgronje, claimed that Islam brought by middlemen in trade between the Middle east and Nusantara⁵⁶⁵ and the Malay world. While doing business they also propagated Islam into communities who had different beliefs such Hinduism, Buddhism, and indigenous belief. These middlemen followed by Arabs titled of *Syarif* or *Sayyid*⁵⁶⁶, to complete the spreading of Islam either as “priests”, “priest-princes” or Sultans⁵⁶⁷. They were believed mostly the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. However, Asyumardi Azra mentions that in Indonesian historians believed the origin of religion began to widespread directly from Arabia in the first century A.H./seventh century C.E. This

⁵⁶³ A. Baswedan, 'Political Islam in Indonesia: Present and Future Trajectory', *Asian Survey*, vol. 44, issue 5, 2004, p. 670.

⁵⁶⁴ It has been noted that under-25 generation had made up more than two hundred population strikingly in part of the great deal of Islamization of Indonesia, R. Wright, "Islam's New Face Visible in a Changing Indonesia", Online *Los Angeles Times*, Wednesday, December 27, 2000.

⁵⁶⁵ Nusantara literally means archipelago, a name used by the Western colonial such as Portuguese, Dutch, and British to refer to archipelagos along Sumatra, Java, Bali, Sulawesi, and Moluccas.

⁵⁶⁶ Syarif and Sayyid still used by Arabs descendants in some parts of Indonesia, e.g. in Ampel in East Java and in Mandar in the western Sulawesi Peninsula.

⁵⁶⁷ Sultan also exists in Jogjakarta, Central Java, Pekanbaru Sumatra, Ternate in Moluccas and Pasir in Kalimantan. These mainly occur in former Islamic kingdoms, where local people keep their cultural but not in political term.

In the next expansion, Islam became a new belief in the Nusantara. Benedict Anderson noted that the religion widespread through trading not conquest. Rather than revolutionary, it was assimilative penetration. Anderson illustrates the dissemination:

It could be true to accept Anderson's theory to attribute the penetration in the early days especially in Javanese kingdoms such as Mataram and Kediri. Yet, the other penetration, in fact, was through war and conquest. Once Islam had been 'officially' embraced by local kings, the local kingdoms sometimes justified Islam to conquer their neighboring 'states' such as desperate story of local wars in the eastern region of Indonesia. For example, the well-noted history of Sultan Hasanuddin in Gowa, propagated Islam through war in its neighbors by attacking Bone, Butan, and until the Moluccas archipelagoes.⁵⁷⁰ However, this focus of this paper does not focus on the history of penetration of Islam Indonesia.

Along the historical journey as nation-state of Indonesia, Islam also grew remarkably. In the Dutch and Japanese colonialism, Muslims and their leaders had taken leading role in struggling for independence. Many well-known heroes were *ulama* (Muslim scholars) who not only thought and led communities in spiritual or religious matters, but also became troop leaders against colonialism. Religious organizations such as Muhammadiyah (founded 1912), Persis (1920), and Nahdlatul Ulama (1926) were the main pockets for fighters against the Dutch and Japanese occupation. In short, Muslims and Islamic organizations both have a prominent role in founding Indonesia. With the emergence of Muhammadiyah, Persis and NU, the interpretation of Islam also differed in the so-called “modernist” and “traditionalist” mainstream groups.

According to Burhanuddin, for modernist groups, such as Muhammadiyah and Persis, to comprehend and implement Islam, they follow the *salaf* method which is to prioritize on the Islamic texts (Koran and Hadits). Thoughts of Ibnu Taimiyah used to

⁵⁶⁹ B. Anderson, *Language of Power, Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1990, p. 68.

⁵⁷⁰ For further notes on the war penetration, see for example, Barbara Andaya, *The Heritage of Aru Palakka: A History of South Sulawesi in the Seventeenth Century*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1981.

intend to be literalists in its theological and ritual aspects used. Another important characteristic of this groups tend to be puritan in religious model and rejects cultural factors in religious practices. Literalistic and rationalistic are typical of Muhammadiyah and Persis. As for traditionalist group mainly referred to NU, firmly maintained traditions established by the ulemas in the early period of Islam. The tradition is intended to bridge to understand the Islamic texts. Thus, the distinction of modernist and traditionalist groups lay in not only their views of religion, but also orientation on culture.⁵⁷¹

There were several elements underlying the contrasting political behavior of NU and Masyumi. First, both parties tended to see themselves as direct competitors for Muslim constituency and both vied for control of the Department of Religious Affairs with its lucrative patronage opportunities and capacity to influence grassroots Islamic activities. Finally, NU tended to adopt a more pragmatic and accommodatory approach to politics than did Masyumi. NU used politics as a means of securing or protecting its sectional interests, particularly insofar as access to government patronage and the religious bureaucracy were concerned. In pursuing these interests, flexibility, moderation and a capacity for compromise became defining feature of NU's behavior. The Masyumi, by contrast, emphasized resoluteness and consistency in their approach to politics. They were reluctant to compromise on core matters of policy and frequently quoted passages from the Qur'an and hadith enjoining steadfastness and commitment to what is deemed right. In practical politics, these differences inclined NU and Masyumi towards alliances with non-Islamic parties rather than each other. NU was drawn to the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI), with its populist, Java-centric orientation; Masyumi found co-operation with the technocratic Socialist Party (PSI) and outer island-based Christian parties more congenial. Only on overtly Islamic issues such as the Jakarta Charter did NU and Masyumi co-operate closely.⁵⁷²

When Indonesia became a new nation-state, Islam remained as the main belief. It is not clear how Islam suddenly became the majority of religion in a period less than one century. However, the way of Indonesia Muslim interpret and understand the religion has been different. The difference is based the cultural background which is so diverse in Indonesia. In the so-called *aliran* (literally means ‘stream’), the American anthropologist, Clifford Geertz classified pluralism within Islam itself into *santri*, *abangan*, and *abangan*. Geertz defines aliran as “comprehensive patterns of social integration”.⁵⁷³ Doogue and Kirkwood explains this category⁵⁷⁴:

⁵⁷¹ Burhanuddin, 'Mainstream Islam in Indonesia' in R. Sukma and C. Joewono (eds.) *Islamic Thought and Movements in Contemporary Indonesia*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 2007, p. 29-31.

⁵⁷² Fealy, *Limits*, p. 158-9.

⁵⁷³ Geertz, 'The Javanese Village', in G. W. Skinner (ed.) *Local, Ethnic, and National Loyalties in Village Indonesia*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1957, p. 57.

- Arguably, this category might be less relevant in socio-cultural today's Indonesian Muslims, yet; we look at the pattern of political preference of Muslims in the last two elections, 2004 and 2009, the Geertz's category can be traced. It is particularly in within Islamic parties. Even, it is argued that despite the two current elections (2004 and 2009) show the win of nationalist-secular parties is tangible; traditional Muslim voters remain choose the parties based on this category, e. g. the votes for PPP, PKB and PAN are mainly from *santri* Muslim. I will discuss this in the next part of this paper.

It is important to note that Islam in Indonesia typically pluralistic. Plural Islam here means the interpretation of Islam has diverse for many Muslims; i.e., there has been no single concept of how the religion deals with the nation-state for example. The vast majority are *Sunni* and *Shafii*'I school of thought. Mainstream of those Sunni-based thought are belonging to Nahdathul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. Also there is a very view of; yet, marginal of *Shii*. Not less important is the fact that the existence of indigenous beliefs who incorporate animism and Islam or other major recognized religions e.g. Hinduism and Buddhism. Those indigenous groups, who were sometimes ignored and enforced to any 'alien' religions during the Soeharto regime, now claim their rights to exist before the state.

The debate of the position of religion, Islam precisely, in the state has been major subject in the history of Indonesia's politics and constitution. It is mainly the

⁵⁷⁴ Doogue and Kirkwood, *Tomorrow's Islam: Uniting Age-Old Beliefs and a Modern World*, ABC Books, Sydney, 2005, p. 274.

question on whether the shari'a law is recognized in the constitution.⁵⁷⁵ It is particularly surrounded on the so-called Jakarta Charter (*Piagam Jakarta*), an agreement on 22 June 1945 among the founding father such as Soekarno, Muhammad Hatta, AA Maramis, Abikusno Tjoksojoso, Abdulkahar Muzakkir, Agus Salim, Ahmad Soebardjo, Wahid Hasyim, and Muhammad Yamin. The charter then became the 1945 Constitution had been approved. Yet, the un-ending bitter debate until nowadays is the seven-word clause "... dengan kewajiban menjalankan syariat Islam bagi pemeluk-pemeluknya" [... with the obligation for adherents of Islam to practice Islamic law].⁵⁷⁶

Interpretation and definitely implication of the charter was vague, according to Greg Fealy. For minimalist group, the obligation to follow shari'a law set individual Muslims, not the state. The maximalists insist that to ensure adherents of Islam commitment to the shari'a was the state's function and the constitutional basis for broad legislation would be provided through the charter. Fealy, further, notes that even if most Muslim leaders advocate the inclusion of the clause within the constitution perceived by nationalist and non-Muslims as an effort to create Indonesia an Islamic state, it would not have had this effect. Even, the charter was intended "as an adjunct to Pancasila, not replacement"; the proposal for Islam to be the official state religion never been proposed.⁵⁷⁷

In Indonesia, the term “shari’a” is commonly understood differently into two meanings. An-Naim illustrates⁵⁷⁸:

- Shari'a with a capital "S" is used to refer to the totality of God's detailed guidance for humanity. This vision of Shari'a is believed to be eternal and universal, but it is to be derived from the totality of God's signs (*ayat*), which are conveyed in the material world, as well as in the Qur'an.
- Shari'a with a small "s", which is *fiqh*, is the product of the human law-law making process, or *ijtihad* (juridical reasoning by Islamic scholars according to the traditional methodology of Islamic jurisprudence. However, strongly believed to be valid and binding, the product of this process is always merely speculative conjecture and necessarily temporary and transient. Although *fiqh* purports to regulate human behavior, there is always flexibility and freedom for each human being to choose among a range of options without fear of committing an offense or sin that warrants punishment.

⁵⁷⁵ Baswedan, 'Political Islam in Indonesia, Present and Future Trajectory', *Asian Survey*, vol. 44, no. 5, 2004, p. 669.

⁵⁷⁶ For details of the constitution see Lili Romli, *Islam Yes, Partai Islam Yes*, Pustaka Pelajar, Yogyakarta, 2006, p. 265-6.

⁵⁷⁷ Fealy, *Limits of Indonesian Political Islam*, p. 155.

⁵⁷⁸ An-Naim, p.245.

a) After Independence until the End of the New Order Period

Acknowledged by the Soekarno regime as the mainstream of Muslim's socio-political representation, NU and Muhammadiyah became stronger. However, as Fealy argues that lack of solidarity and conflict between these organizations became a main element in the political dynamic from the late 1950s, when Soekarno and the army were approaching Indonesia towards the authoritarian Guided Democracy. Masyumi was firmly opposed to toppling down of parliamentary democracy, arguing that it was not only violate of the community's democratic rights but also contrary to the Islamic principle that supported consultation (*musyawarah*) and deliberation (*mufakat*) between the government and people. By contrast, NU halfheartedly agreed to Guided Democracy, fearing that its own interest as well as those of the broader Muslim community would be endangered if it rejected to involve. It is believed that the agreement and involvement of NU was important to the approach of Soekarno's Guided Democracy. In the further step, Soekarno exposed his new regime as mixing the diversity of Indonesian politics. Then, president Soekarno mad up the acronym *Nasakom* (i.e. *Nasinalis-Agama-Komunis* or Nationalist-Religion-Communist) to portray the supposed combination of these different elements.⁵⁸¹ Perhaps, it is the first idea to unite between communism and religion in the world; as Soekarno did.

It is not surprising, as a result of Masyumi disagreement, the Soekarno regime banned Masyumi in 1960. In 1962 senior Masyumi leaders were arrested and under arrested until 1967. The parliament restricted by reducing Islamic parties into just 25 percent, down 45 percent in the 1955 democratically elected parliament. The regime also decreased NU's involvement over the direction of government. In this case, Fealy suggests that marginalization Islam politics was the consequence of the lack solidarity of Islamic groups in the Soekarno regime.⁵⁸²

In 1966 the New Order emerged. Led by general Soeharto, the regime isolated and in-house detained Soekarno. The Soeharto regime, according to Fealy, placed Islam as a political force into suspicious and distrusted Muslims leaders. Despite it allowed the founding of new Islamic party, Parmusi (the Indonesian Muslim Party) in 1967, nevertheless; it did not permit to rehabilitate Masyumi. Similar with Soekarno regime, the New Order and particularly Soeharto himself believed that Islam political parties were potential power challengers that could undermine the secular based state. Accordingly, by domesticating Islamic parties, Muslims elites and proponents of shari'a law not only failed to make Islamic state, but also they were marginalized and perceived as "minorities" or "outsiders" in the state. They were frequently an object of distrusting and suspecting of anti Pancasila. Again, as it has been suggested that in the early the

⁵⁸¹ Fealy, *Limits*, p. 159.

⁵⁸² Fealy, *Limits*, p. 160.

	Religious Jurisprudence			enthusiastically because it was believed giving support for Muslim interest
4.	SDSB (gambling)	1990s	Muslim	Government accept Muslims objection and the gambling was banned
5	YABMP (Muslim-Pancasila Foundation)	1980s & 1990s	State/president	Muslims responded positively to gain fund-support to build mosques around Indonesia
6.	Joint-Degree between Ministry of Home Affairs & Religious Ministry	1990s	State	Muslims accepted the initiative of government to arrange the religious charity (<i>zakat</i>)
7.	Musmalat Bank	1990s	State	Muslims positively the establishing of the so-called Bank Shari'a Muamalat
8	Muslim Scholars Association (ICMI)	1990s	Muslim, then state took the initiative	State supported and Muslims broadly advocated
9	Istiqlal Festival	1990	Muslim (particularly ICMI	State supported even sponsored.

Source: Lili Romli, Islam Yes, Partai Islam Yes, 2006, p. 89-91, adapted Abdul Azis Thaba, Islam dan Negara dalam Politik Orde Baru [Islam and the state in the Politics of the New Order], 1996, p. 313-315.

Additionally, Effendy classified the New Order regime's accommodation into four kinds: (1) structural; mainly on education, (2) legislative; the National Education Law, religious court, and the compilation of Islamic jurisprudence, reversal of policy on *jilbab*, religious alms, annulment of lottery, (3) infrastructural; Muslim Pancasila Foundation, "religious project" in Five-Year Development Plan, (4) cultural; adoption of Islamic (Arabic?) idiom into Bahasa Indonesia.⁵⁸⁵ Additionally, in the early years of

⁵⁸⁵ Effendy, *Islam and the State*, p.151-171.

From socio-political perspective, as Romli has suggested that the founding of the Indonesian Muslim Scholars Association (ICMI) was phenomenal accommodation of Soeharto regime. Led by Prof Habibie, hundreds of Muslim prominent leaders from diverse background were collected to support the New Order interests. Habibie's unique origin was important because he was not from prominent Islamic movements but a technocrat and bureaucratic base.⁵⁸⁷ He himself sometimes called "super minister" due a number of essential ministries and departments that he headed; then replaced President Soeharto. The pro-cont of the ICMI founding featured Muslims position, particularly Islamic organization, in the 1990s of New Order.⁵⁸⁸ In short, the so-called "Pancasila Democracy", the Soeharto regime effectively isolated political Islam.

There have been significant changes in Indonesian politics after the post-Soeharto regime in 1998. It included the emergence of a many Islamic parties. During 1998 and 1999, the political parties were mushrooming, including Islamic parties. In this era, as reported that there were about 184 political parties, but 148 proposed to establish and yet only 141 among them were approved. And there were only 48 parties joined the general elections.⁵⁸⁹ And 21 out of 42 parties were categorized as Islamic; typically clearly use Islam as their ideological foundation.⁵⁹⁰ Woodward classifies the parties into four main groups⁵⁹¹:

- Clearly secular parties resisted Arab-like variant of Islam and a more noticeable role of Islam in politics. It appealed to Hindus, Christians and other. Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDIP) and the Golkar Party were the categories in this group.
- Islamic parties led by famous Muslim leaders that focus their segments on Muslim community. PKB and PAN could be classified in this group.

⁵⁹¹ Woodward, 'Indonesia's Religious Political Parties: Democratic Consolidation and Security in Post-New Order Indonesia', *Asian Survey*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2008, p. 48-9.

- Islamic parties that support a significant position within politics and focus on family law, Bank shari'a and advocated anti-pornographic and "porno action" law. PKS, PBB, and PPP represented this category.
- A small number of Christian parties.

Woodward also remarks that in 1999 election the secular parties, PDI-P and the Golkar, gained 66.16 in aggregate votes. And the ‘grey’ parties such as PKB and PAN also came into top ten major parties.⁵⁹² It is noteworthy the major political parties were reliant heavily on their ‘charismatic’ or symbolic leaders⁵⁹³. For example, Megawati’s PDI-P, Abdurrahman Wahid’s PKB, and Amien Rais’ PAN.

Although religious parties are not dominated by Islam, and there are Catholic and Protestant parties as well, the establishment of Islamic parties has opened up a public concern. Motives and motivation of the emergence of so many Islamic parties had been questioned by many intellectuals and political analysts. Political inference and the repercussions for future of Indonesia politics also concerned. Importantly, the concern of minority groups, like Catholic and Protestants, who were supported by secular groups believed that the rise of so many Islamic parties led to anxiety and worried that such religion-based parties might increase “political sectarianism”. For minority groups, the rise of Islamic parties could eventually lead to national disintegration.⁵⁹⁴ Concern of the minority groups is not new. Azra states, “It is not secret that for many years Christians have believed that Muslims generally still support the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia”⁵⁹⁵. The increase suspicious of non-Muslim groups is logical because many political parties replaced their ideological foundation from Pancasila to Islam.

However, as many Indonesia Muslim figures believe that the emergence of Islamic parties after the fall of Soeharto regime was simply euphoria of *era reformasi*, which is generally understood by the Muslim elites to mean political freedom and democracy. That was not surprising because among the Muslim political leaders, who were suppressed and marginalized in the New Order regime. Yet, it was commonly believed counterproductive for the unity and welfare of Indonesian Muslim society.⁵⁹⁶ In fact, the rise of so many Islamic parties exacerbated the fragmentation of Muslim politics. Again Anderson's thesis on the failure of political Islam in during *reformasi* era proved to be true. It should be kept in mind; however, that they played critical role in

⁵⁹² Woodward, *Indonesia's Religious Political Parties*, p. 49.

⁵⁹³ For the discussion of 'charismatic leader' in Indonesian politics, see B. Anderson, *Language and Power, Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1990.

⁵⁹⁴ Azra, *Indonesia, Islam, and Democracy: Dynamics in a Global Context*, Solstice and International Centre for Islam and Pluralism, Jakarta, 2006, p. 6.

⁵⁹⁵ Azra, *Indonesia*, p. 28.

⁵⁹⁶ Azra, Indonesia, p. 29

Commenting the failure of Islamic parties in the 1999 election, Effendy stresses two aspects should be taken into account. First, the view of that religious bound will automatically be followed by political endorsement was repeatedly has not occurred. In fact, Islamic parties had no enough acknowledgement of socio-cultural and demographic background of Indonesian voters that always change. Religious issues could not totally be raised to shape political preference, even if the *aliran* politics still influenced. Second, the image of Islamic parties, frequently equated with Islamic state or the issue of the incorporation of the shari'a law into the state constitution, was critical factor as well.⁵⁹⁸ These factors, I believe, attributable to the unpopularity of Islamic parties in the 2004 and 2009 general elections.

It is important to note that the discourse of Islamic state or shari'a law re-emerged after the fall of Soeharto regime. Yet, it was not rose by political parties but Islamic organizations during this period. As Azra has state that in the 2004 election, Islam and Islamic issues "did not become the central and big issues"; rather, most Indonesians "were concerned mostly with issues they face in the real life" such as economic downturn, widespread corruption, law enforcement, and other social ills like drugs and poverty.⁵⁹⁹

However, by and large, Indonesian Muslims' commitment to democracy is competent. As shown in general elections over the last decade. In 1999 and 2004

⁶⁰⁰ An-Naim, p. 231. See also the report of the Jakarta Post, Tuesday, 18 September 2007, available at: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/print/152411> [consulted, 8 June 2011].

general elections, voter participation was high: 91 percent and 84 percent respectively, and 77 percent for 2004 presidential election. Broad support of Muslim communities for democracy is consistently strong. In 2008, 82 percent of Muslim preferred democracy as the best political system for Indonesia, according to a poll.⁶⁰¹ This shows that Indonesian's recent political development through democracy has been consolidated.

Furthermore, during this period, a number of significant developments of democratic process are significant. Abdulkaki confirms that constitutional amendments, for example, that guarantee of freedom of expression and association and media as well, are good efforts. Also significantly, the elimination of the possible re-emergence of a new presidential dictatorship has taken place. And political parties are no longer urged to adopt Pancasila as the sole foundation by removing the ideological uniformity on the political party's base.⁶⁰²

The idea of implementing shari'a law, particularly through constitutional change in the 2009 election is mainly supported by very few parties in the parliament. It is pretty much similar with the 2004 election. However, the non-formal parties, groups outside parliaments, such as Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) and Islamic groups still struggle to include state's power to ensure the shari'a law. Equally essential, thanks to the implementation of decentralization, the debate of shari'a law also shifted from national to local issue. From more than four hundred districts/municipalities and 32 provinces, only very few of them have passed any shari'a-based local regulations.⁶⁰³ As Ramage has stated, it was not Islamic parties, but by secular ones, dominating the passing of local shari'a regulations. The "shari'a-nization" movement in a small number of districts believed undermining Indonesia's pluralism and diversity.⁶⁰⁴ Another example of shari'a-based issue is the anti-pornography bill that seems less vocal now in the implementation.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰¹ Fealy, 'Indonesia: Pietism and Compromising for Power' in A. Bubalo *et al* (eds.) *Zealous Democrat*, Lowy Institute, 2008, p. 55-6.

⁶⁰² Abdulbaki, "Democratic in Indonesia: from Transition to Consolidation', *Asian Journal of Political Sciences*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2008, p. 156-8.

⁶⁰³ It is arguably debatable that whether the local regulations were genuinely shari'a or not because as far as I concern the claim for shari'a regulations, such as the obligation to have the Koran acquisition was not purely shari'a law. Furthermore, the only one province, i.e. Aceh has officially claims as specific region to implement the shari'a; yet, a number of Acehese colleagues are convinced that what the Acehese government claims about shari'a was totally different with the reality. In fact, there is not distinctive difference between Aceh province and the rest of 32 provinces of Indonesia. The Jakarta Post released that 250 shari'a by law have been passed in South Sulawesi, West Java, Banten, West Sumatra, West Kalimantan and Aceh, The Jakarta Post, Tuesday, 18 September 2007, available at: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/print/152411> [consulted, 8 June 2011].

⁶⁰⁴ Ramage, *Indonesia Democracy First*, 2007, p. 147-8.

⁶⁰⁵ Further discussion, see P. Allen, 'Challenging Diversity?: Indonesia's Anti-Pornography Bill', *Asian Studies Review*, vol. 31, 2007, pp. 101-115.

<i>Party</i>	<i>2004 (percent)</i>	<i>2009 (percent)</i>	<i>Ideology/Base</i>
Democrat	7.45%	20.36%	Secular-nationalist
PDIP	18.53	14.32	Secular-nationalist
Golkar	21.58%	14.24	Secular-nationalist
PKS	7.34%	8.46%	Islam
PAN	6.44%	6.36%	Islam & nationalist
PPP	8.15%	5.46%	Islam
PKB	8.15%	5.12%	Islam & nationalist
Gerindra	n. a.	4.47%	Secular-nationalist
Hanura	n. a.	3. 52%	Secular-nationalist
PBB	2.62%	1.98%	Islam

The result of the 2009 election raises the anxiety about the emergence of Islamic parties particularly *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* (the Prosperous Justice Party-PKS). Approaching the Egyptian Islamist Muslim Brotherhood method, this party has been believed as re-emerging of Islamist in Indonesia. Yet, although it slightly increases, it is surprising many ones when the party ‘only’ achieved more than 8 percent because

⁶⁰⁷ Interview The Jakarta Post with Taufik Abdullah, online The Jakarta Post, Tuesday, 18 September 2007, available at: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/print/152411> [consulted, 8 June 2011].

before the election held the PKS's leaders and members strongly believed on their calculation that they would gain 20 percent in this vote.⁶⁰⁸

Again, in aggregate, the Islamic parties will not dominate Indonesia's politics. There are three underlying "classical" factors, according Effendy, why they do not gain significant votes in the 2009 election: first, "the inability of Islamic parties to translate ideological identity into concrete programs". It is because voters believed that Islam has not proved itself as a major in politics. Second, the internal conflict and disunity within Islamic parties is also critical reason they fail. Finally, philosophical shifting "from being ideologically driven in the 1940s and 1950s, to pragmatist now" influence the failure of Islamic parties.⁶⁰⁹

Finally, any attempt to support the consolidating democracy in Indonesia is crucial. Skeptical, even pessimistic, view that Islam is not compatible with democracy should be answered by solving problems that could undermine the democratic values. Indonesia's challenges of democracy, as Azra has suggested, associated with four factors. First, prerequisites of democracy, such as education and economic development, are less developed. Patrimonialism and corruption still rampantly undermine the nation-state development. Second, some Indonesia Muslims tend to believe the nostalgia to unite and merger religion and politics; by translating into formalization of Islam in politics. Third, lack of democratic culture among political elites and Muslim communities also remains problem. Lastly, the role of civil society organizations is fragile too. To support democratic consolidation, the pivotal position of Islamic civil society groups has to be advocated.⁶¹⁰

CONCLUDING REMARK

The central argument underlying this paper has been: first, political Islam, particularly Islamic (Islamist?) parties, play significant role in the state of Indonesia. Second, the role of Islamic parties has never been dominating the national politics. The failure of political Islam since independence is attributable with two main factors: internal conflict among themselves and the state pressure. As Abootalebi and Abdalbaki have suggested that “the relationship between Islam and the state or the role of Islam in political life ranges from subordination of the state to Islam... to political accommodation... to political inclusion of Islam... to toleration... to ignoring Islam...

⁶⁰⁸ Online Channel News Asia, “Indonesian voters lose faith in Islamic Parties”, available at: http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_asiapacific/view/420229/1/.html [consulted, 6 April, 2011].

⁶⁰⁹ Effendy, "Islamic Parties have long been at an Impasse", on line the Jakarta Post, Friday, 17 April 2009, available at: <http://www.thejakrtapost.com/print/207338> [consulted, 1 May 2011].

⁶¹⁰ Azra, *Indonesia, Islam, and Democracy*, 2006, p. 24-25.

The debatable issue on shari'a law, which is frequently used by Islamic parties, always becomes the core problem of the relation between Islam and the state. As it has been suggested that Islam and Muslims played pivotal role in shaping Indonesian politics; yet, bitterly enough to say that the involvement of Islam with Indonesia's politics remains complementary factor. Internal conflict and disunity among Islamic parties and the state policy, such as marginalization and distrust, are attributable to losing of the parties. It apparently seems that using Islam in the political world by elites repeatedly fail to dominate the power. In the final remark, I believe that Indonesians themselves tend to prefer national (secular) cohesion by choosing nationalist parties rather than bringing Islam into pragmatic politics.

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