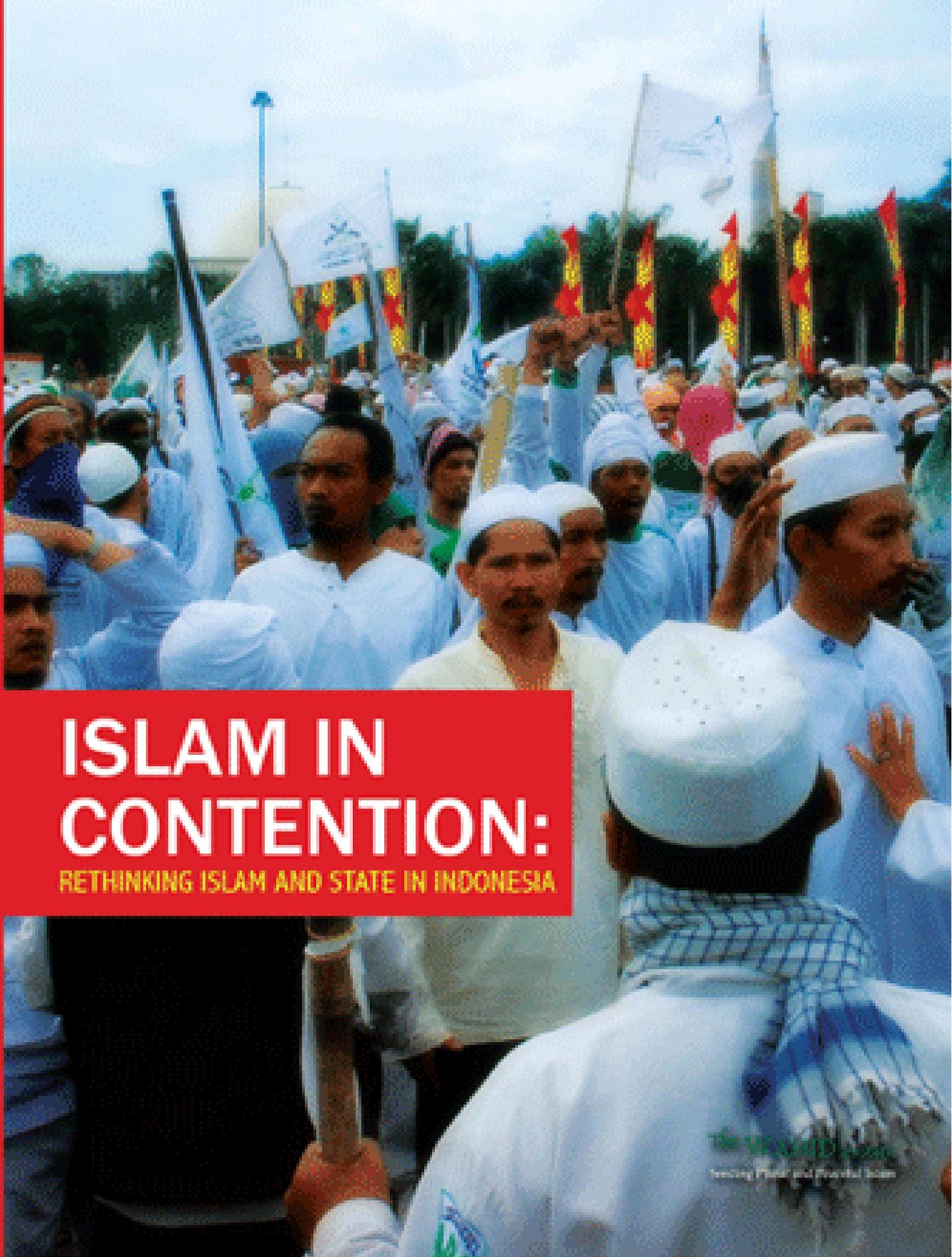


Ota Atsushi, Okamoto Masaaki, and Ahmad Suaedy (eds.)



# ISLAM IN CONTENTION:

RETHINKING ISLAM AND STATE IN INDONESIA

Ota Atsushi,  
Okamoto Masaaki,  
and Ahmad Suaedy (eds.)

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## INTRODUCTION



**Ota Atsushi, Okamoto Masaaki, and Ahmad Suaedy**

IN APRIL 2009, a book titled *An Illusion of Islamic State: Expansion of Transnational Islamic Movement in Indonesia* (*Ilusi Negara Islam: Ekspansi Gerakan Islam Transnasional di Indonesia*) was launched in Indonesia [Wahid 2009]. The book triggered considerable polemic on the current Islamic thoughts and movements in Indonesia, which had the effect of polarizing these realities into two schools. One is that of moderate Islamic groups, which hold the diversity of local society and culture in Indonesia in high regard and, therefore, adheres to the state ideology of Pancasila. The two largest Islamic social organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah belong to this school. The other is that of transnational radical Islamic groups and their spearheads in Indonesia, whose ultimate aim, according to the book, is to establish an Islamic state. Toward this end, the school asserts its understanding of Islam as the only legitimate and justifiable position. The Defenders' Front of Islam (Front Pembela Islam, FPI), the Liberation Party of Indonesia (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, HTI), and the Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS) are categorized in this school, some groups in which do not hesitate to use violence against those opposed to them.

Written and published by moderate Islamic groups, the book intended to alert Indonesians to the rapid expansion and infiltration of transnational radical Islam in Indonesia. In this light it lumped FPI, HTI, and PKS in one school. The intriguing aspect here is the fact that the book became a source of severe controversy among In-

Indonesian Muslim intellectuals. While this may show that Indonesia today enjoys freedom of expression and thought under a democratic regime, it also proves that democratic Indonesia is still a long way from finding an appropriate, suitable, and consensual relationship among Islam, society, and the state.

In fact, Indonesia today is desperately seeking such an appropriate three-cornered relationship. However, this search is by no means new; it has actually been a kind of recurrent phenomenon since the coming of Islam to present-day Indonesia. After the birth of the Republic of Indonesia in the mid-1940s, for example, some leading lights of the Islamic movement such as Mohammad Natsir propagated the adoption of “Jakarta Charter,” which contained the sentence **“with the obligation to live according to Islamic law for Muslims.”** Some of these figures insisted on the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia in the era of parliamentary democracy in the 1950s. The Islamic movement declined, however, at the height of the authoritarian Suharto regime in the mid-1960s. The polemics related to the interrelationship among Islam, society, and the state also disappeared from the public discourse.

After thirty-two years of political oppression, Indonesian democratization since 1998 has reawakened the struggle to find an ideal interrelationship among Islam, society, and the state. The book *An Illusion of Islamic State* and the polemic that attended it were just one of the many examples of the struggle related to the social and political positioning of Islam. The demand of FPI and KISDI (Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas dengan Dunia Islam or Indonesian Committee for the Solidarity of the Islamic World) to revive Jakarta Charter, the violence against Ahmadiyah, a minority group in Islam, and the debate over the antipornography law are other examples.

Significantly, the “revitalized” polemic and tensions are taking place in a totally different social and political landscape from that obtaining in the mid-1940s and 1950s. That is why the motives, strategies, and methods of Islamic groups are different from those in the past—and therefore they are not at all atavistic. At least three prominent characteristics of current Indonesian Islam clearly differ from those of the previous period. The first is the deepening

social Islamization, the second is the weakening Islamic parties, and the third is the intensifying social conflict surrounding Islam. These three characteristics deserve closer examination.

### ISLAMIZATION IN SOCIETY

AS ALMOST all scholars on Indonesian Islam would agree that Islamization has deepened in Indonesian society since late 1970s and that it has accelerated since late 1990s. For example, the large bookstores such as Gramedia and Gunung Agung carry a large section of the books on Islam, and old and young alike have been browsing these books. The journals and magazines on Islam have become quite common and popular after the democratization. The anti-Zionism and anti-US magazine *Sabili* was the best-selling journal following democratization, while an Islamic magazine, *Hidayah*, which is full of stories on the tragedy of sinful Muslims, has also become a top-seller. Islamic *manga* are now becoming an important genre of the *manga*. Islamic pop by Opick and other Islamic singers have also gained currency. Pop music groups such as Ungu and Gigi have begun to sing Islam-nuanced songs.

The female headscarf, the *jilbab*, has become normal wear. Among the Javanese in Yogyakarta, the Islamic wedding is gaining more favor than its old traditional Javanese counterpart. Even the Pemuda Pancasila (Pancasila Youth), comprising co-opted thugs (*preman*), which had underpinned the New Order, has been increasingly Islamized at least in appearance. For example, the chief of its national headquarters and the provincial branch head of East Java province have been portraying themselves as “pious” Muslim in the organization’s brochures and pamphlets. The deepening social Islamization might be well evident in the fact that Muhammadiyah, which used to be a progressive group and a major importer of Islamic reformist movement, now belongs to the same “moderate” group with NU in the prevailing “radical-moderate” dichotomy, as demonstrated in *An Illusion of Islamic State*.

The diversity of preaching (*dakwah* or *da'wah*) media most certainly contributes to social Islamization. These days it is quite easy to have an access to Islamic media not only in the cities but also in

rural communities. Everyone can watch Zainuddin MZ, “a Preacher for a Million *Umma*” on television where there is a variety of and can listen to various types of preachers and teachings. A mentally unstable urban middle-class woman can go on telephone counseling with an Islamic preacher. Or a middle-class student facing an identity crisis in the big city can join some sort of Tarbiyah movement or other types of Islamic teaching groups. During Ramadhan, private TV stations broadcast a flood of Islamic soap operas and music programs. Islamic pop music and comics also have their share of the entertainment sector. One could subscribe to Islamic teachings via SMS. Cyberspace is filled with various types of Islamic interpretations through websites and SNS. Today something Islamic is attractive, cool, and marketable especially for the emergent urban middle class. Islam is being commercialized.

However, Islam is not just a simple good or service but a religion that has the potential to influence human behavior and thinking in a deeper sense. As such, adopting pious Islamic looks, attitudes, and behaviors is a manifestation of deeply rooted social Islamization.

Thus while it has become increasingly natural for Indonesian Muslims to project Islamic piety, it does not necessarily mean that they fully subscribe to the Islamization of judicial administration. According to a survey by the Indonesian Survey Institute on “The trend of support toward the Islamic values vs toward the secular values and the Influence of Political Islam,” a mere 22 percent of the respondents object to a female president and only 25 percent support the jilbab police. Some 61 percent object to the Islamic sentence of chopping off hands. On the other hand, 40 percent of the respondents support the religious police and 39 percent support the government prohibition on bank interest rates [Lembaga Survei Indonesia, October 2007]. These results show that the Indonesian society only selectively supports Islamic judicial administration.

#### WEAKENING AND MODERATING ISLAMIC PARTIES

INTERESTINGLY, social Islamization does not lead to the rise of Islamic parties. Let’s look at the changing voting trends among

Islamic parties. Islamic parties include every party with Islam as the party principle and every party with Islamic social organizations as their supporting bases. The Islamic parties gained around 38 percent of the votes in the elections of 1999 and 2004, respectively, but they reduced their votes to around 29 percent in the 2009 election. The support base has apparently been on the wane, considering the fact that Islamic parties such as Masyumi party and NU party obtained around 45 percent of the votes in 1955. One of the reasons is that Islam has become less appealing as political slogan to the voters. Parties merely selling “Islam” cannot attract voters in an increasingly Islamized society. The historical legacy of the anticommunist Suharto regime lives in post-Suharto Indonesia where leftist parties enjoy little political appeal and support. This political landscape is quite different from that of 1950s when the Communist and Socialist parties wielded strong influence. Accordingly, voters with a strong anticommunist orientation today have no reason to support Islamic parties. Even the so-called secular parties such as Golkar party and PDIP (Partai Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan or the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle) are actually not anti-Islam, and the pious Muslim voters no longer feel uneasy voting for them.

Golkar had been “greening” since the late Suharto period by recruiting the prospective members of Islamic Students’ Association (Himpunan Mahasiswa Indonesia, HMI), an independent Islamic organization. HMI leaders were well trained on how to make impressive speeches and organize seminars and workshops, and how to negotiate with politicians including senior Golkar members. In that sense, Golkar had good reasons to recruit them. Democratization has not stopped this “greening” process within Golkar either. Some of the *kyai* (*kiai*) that willingly or grudgingly supported the Golkar in the New Order continued to support the Golkar party in the era of democracy. Thus the Golkar party cannot simply be called a secular party.

PDIP has often been considered more secular than Golkar and these days the party is desperate to dilute its *abangan*-ness. When Megawati, a daughter of charismatic first president of Indonesia, Sukarno, ran for the presidency from the party in 2004, she wore

a headscarf in an effort to appear like a pious Muslim and fend off criticism over a female presidential candidate. In 2007, PDIP established an Islam section called “the House of Muslim” (Baitul Muslimin) to accommodate less secular Muslim voters. On the political surface at least, the “secular” parties are becoming more and more Islamized, blurring the distinction between secular and Islam parties.

Islamic parties have been changing, too. In the first general election of 1999 after the fall of Suharto, both the PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa or National Awakening Party), with NU as its base, and PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional or National Mandate Party), with Muhammadiyah as its base, decided not to adopt Islam as their parties’ principle. Instead they chose Pancasila partly because they highly valued the religious diversity of Indonesia and partly because they aimed to gain wider support by differentiating themselves from Islamist parties such as PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan or United Development Party), Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB, the Crescent Star Party), and Partai Keadilan (PK, the Justice Party). This strategy didn’t go well, however, and PKB and PAN weakened considerably in the elections of 1999, 2004, and 2009. They failed to widen their support base beyond their original social organizations, and even those belonging to these two organizations split their votes to splinter parties such as PPNUI (Partai Persatuan Nahdlatul Ummah Indonesia or Nahdlatul Ummah Unity Party of Indonesia) and National Sunny Party (Partai Matahari Bangsa).

The only party that could increase its political influence was PK or, later, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). This party created a new strategy by appealing to clean politics based on Islamic ethics and the eradication of corruption. PKS’s national and local politicians returned the budget allocated to the national and local governments when the allocation was just for their own benefit, such as the travel fee and the special bonus for the Breaking of the Ramadhan Fast (*Idul Fitri*). And whenever and wherever an earthquake struck, they were the first to visit the disaster sites and organized relief activities with the banner of the party. The strategy worked, and the voting percentage jumped from 1.7 percent to 7.3 percent. The party became the largest party in the capital of Jakarta and wielded

significant influence in urban areas in 2004. Finally, PKS became one of the ruling coalition parties in the Yudhoyono administration.

PKS was and is an Islamist party with Islam as its principle, but it succeeded in gaining greater political power by not emphasizing its Islamist ideology during the election campaign. The party played down its original standpoints on the introduction of Islamic law and the establishment of an Islamic state with a view to gain voter support and swiftly and pragmatically became moderate. The 2009 election accelerated this moderate trend. The party set the goal of being one of the three largest parties by raising the voting percentage to 20 percent. Support from the urban areas was not enough and rural support was imperative to achieve the target.

Thus PKS launched a series of provocative election ads. One applauded Suharto as among the seven national heroes and teachers—an assertion based on research conducted by PKS showing that Suharto was still popular among the rural voters. Another ad featured a young woman with no *jilbab* soliciting support for the party. This reckless aggrandizement strategy failed, however, and the party just obtained 7.9 percent of the total votes in the 2009 election, or a mere increase of 0.5 percent from the 2004 election results. The party fell between two stools. On the one hand, the Islamist voters were disappointed with the party's pragmatism. On the other hand, the floating voters did not switch their votes to PKS but to the Democrat Party (Partai Demokrat, PD) led by Yudhoyono. It was symbolic that the PD, replacing PKS, became the largest party in Jakarta.

In a nutshell, the secular parties Golkar and PDIP have been undergoing a “greening” process to reach out to the pious voters while the Islamic parties have been diluting their greenness. Both groups are anyhow aspiring to the centrist axis. The PD typifies this trend. According to its official website, PD is both a nationalist and religious party. Its election ads had depicted it as a centrist party. This centrist policy by a non-Islamic party succeeded quite well, and the party became the largest party with around 21 percent of the votes. The party's presidential candidate, Yudhoyono, is knowledgeable about Islam and has faced little criticism from the Islamist

groups. The secular camp regards him as a moderate Muslim and doesn't believe that Yudhoyono, who has had a long military career, would support the introduction of Islamic laws and the establishment of an Islamic state.

Even though the Islamic parties are weakening, Indonesian politics itself is on the centrist path with some emphasis on Islamic elements, and the current Yudhoyono government has co-opted the major Islamic and Islamist parties in the coalition. In that sense, social Islamization is not inconsistent with the weakening of Islamic parties. Social Islamization itself has weakened of Islamic parties.

#### THE DEEPENING SOCIAL CONFLICT ON ISLAM

THE WEAKENING of Islamic parties doesn't mean that a relative peace is now being forged among various Islamic social groups, however. A conflict might become a physical one when the issues are related to the freedom of religion and belief and the freedom of speech and expression such as the (Islamic) moral appropriateness of costumes and clothes that a female artist, singer, or dancer wears in public, or that of the contents of a TV program or film. These cases are very visible, which is why everyone can easily have his/her own moral judgment. And with the start of democracy, it has been quite easy for every such opinion to be aired in public through various media. So, a small controversy related to morality among the intellectuals and professionals can potentially have a snowball effect involving various social groups in the controversy, which sometimes ends in physical conflict—as did the anti-pornography law and the ban on *Ahmadiyah*, as cited in the book. Indonesia is still socially volatile. The political “peace” attained with the birth of the coalition government led by Yudhoyono does not mean that Indonesian democracy has been consolidated in a substantial sense of the word.

Recognizing these sociopolitical situations in Indonesia, this particular book draws attention to the following points. Part I deals with a theoretical discussion on the role of Islam and the state to achieve social justice. It opens with a correspondence between a religious leader and a social scientist. Masdar F Mas'udi, director of the NU headquarters, discusses that the state in Islamic teachings is en-

tirely a social and humanitarian institution, which is responsible for guaranteeing justice. Islam, according to Masdar, must inspire the state toward this end. Sociologist H. H. Michael Hsiao points out the affinity between Islamic values in the Qur'an and the contemporary intellectual discourse on the advocacy of human rights. He argues that the ideal state in Islam approaches the modern welfare state.

Part II discusses the three hot issues in contemporary Indonesian Islam. Abubakar Eby Hara discusses the debate over the implementation of *perda syari'ah* (Islamic bylaws) at several local provinces. He points out that in the course of the debate, both the supporters and opponents have come to refer to Pancasila as the main platform on which to establish their argument. Pancasila today seems to be gaining new life as a basis for agreement among groups of different opinions, although we should not forget that Pancasila is a very open-ended concept that allows multiple interpretations. Marzuki Wahid discusses the formation and aftermath of the Counter Legal Draft to Islamic Law Compilation (CLD-KHI) compiled in 2004, intended to counter the legal reference currently used by judges of the Religious Court. The CLD-KHI itself shortly provoked nationwide repercussions. Marzuki's analysis shows how Indonesian Muslims are split over sensitive legal issues such as polygamy and contract marriage. Abdul Rozaki discusses the debate over the law to regulate pornography. Rozaki argues that the issue, which should have been discussed in terms of public morals and the protection of women and children, became political capital for several political leaders to collect Muslim votes. Ahmad Suaedy discusses collective violence against religious minorities, both within and outside Islam. Examining recent cases, he analyzes a pattern in the process leading to violent action. He warns that the weak attitude of religious and state authorities such as MUI (the Indonesian Council of Ulama), the Department of Religious Affairs, and the Yudhoyono government gives room for radical circles to resort to violence. These discussions show greater complexity beyond the aforementioned radical-moderate dichotomy. Debates surrounding the antipornography law, for example, covered a wide range of issues such as the protection of social—and not necessarily religious—moralities, and con-

cern about the increasing role of the state in intervening in private affairs. These complexities reveal the wide social effects of Islam-related legal and political issues.

Part III pays due attention to the strategies of three political institutions to seek mass support. The analysis is directed to the two contrasting (radical and moderate) Islamic camps, HTI and the PKS, and the centrist Yudhoyono government. Fahlesa Munabari examines the history, structure, and support-seeking strategies of HTI, which has recently received increasing attention because of its growing public support and its striking appeal to reestablish the caliphate. Munabari deciphers HTI's seemingly confusing remarks and activities, such as its self-proclaimed pacifism and its apparent openness to participate in elections in spite of its rejection of parliamentary democracy. Okamoto Masaaki examines the "realistic" strategy of the PKS to expand its support base. Tracing the shifts in the election strategies not only in the central readership but also in the local PKS in Banten and other regions, Okamoto asserts that the PKS is transforming to a "normal" party with less Islamic nuances. Sasaki Takuo discusses the Islam-related policies of the Yudhoyono government against the background of moderate Islam, the dominant current of Indonesian Islam. Sasaki explains that Yudhoyono's politics have been consistently pragmatic. Even the widely criticized government decree against Ahmadiyah was, according to Sasaki, based on pragmatic thought. Munabari and Okamoto point out that HTI and the PKS, respectively, have made every effort to obtain mass support, while the Yudhoyono government, according to Sasaki, seems to embody the hopes of the majority moderate Islam most effectively.

Part IV focuses on some important aspects of the process of social Islamization. Two of the groups strongly susceptible to the Islamization in Indonesia are women and the Chinese. Kobayashi Yasuko discusses the ulama's shifting perspectives on women's social status, on the basis of the examination of the NU's legal forum's discussion, *Bahsul Masa'il* (discussions of issues), from 1926 to 2004. Although ulama's decisions seem increasingly progressive and respectful of women during the period in discussion, Kobayashi points out persistent conservative ideas in their deci-

sions and their avoidance of particular problems such as polygamy. Syuan-yuan Chiou examines how the “Chinese theory” — the idea that Chinese Muslims facilitated early Islamization in Java — has been addressed, repressed, and revived, from the New Order period to the Reformation era. Refuting the reliability of the “Chinese theory” as a historical theory, Chiou focuses on the factors that formed the theory, that is, liberal Indonesian scholars’ multiculturalism, Chinese-Indonesian’s ethnic empowerment, and the rise of China. The recent reemergence of the “Chinese theory” seems to be a struggle for the minority Chinese to obtain a respected position in the national history of Indonesia.

Another important aspect of social Islamization is the localization of Islam. Healing remains an integral part of most religions, notably Islam. Tsung-Te Tsai discusses the medical theory and practice of “Islamic” healing in Java. Obviously the theories and practices Tsai explains comprise a mixture of Islamic principles with Javanese and Hindu elements. Considering that many ordinary Indonesian Muslims still frequently practice this type of traditional healing, it remains an important aspect of Islamic practice in Indonesia.

Part V deals with the long history of Islam at the local level, focusing on the Banten region since sixteenth century. Under the ongoing decentralization process, which puts a premium on the search for local identity, and under an academic trend that is increasingly critical of the “national history approach,” an examination of the historical path dependence of Islamization in different localities will be an important issue in the foreseeable future. Ota Atsushi discusses the Islamization of Banten from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. He argues that the conventional wisdom that Banten had embraced orthodox Islam since the early kingdom period is a myth. Ota points out that political leaders have long attempted to reconcile “orthodox” Islam and local pre-Islamic elements, based on contemporary Javanese and Dutch sources. Abdul Hamid examines the shifting political role of kyai in Banten from the New Order period to the present. Tracing kyai involvement in local politics, Hamid shows that the influence of kyai steadily deteriorated during the period in discussion.

It is widely acknowledged that Indonesia has become one of

the most successful democratic countries in Southeast Asia and in the Islamic world. This book aims to reveal the dynamism and diversity of the current thoughts and movements surrounding Indonesian Islam, as well as the hopes and challenges Indonesian democracy faces on the road to consolidation.

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# THE KIAI IN BANTEN: SHIFTING ROLES IN CHANGING TIMES

**Abdul Hamid**

## INTRODUCTION

Muslims in Banten are considered to be stricter in their religious adherence than anywhere else in Java. Martin Van Bruinessen describes colonial-era Muslims in Banten:

The populations of Banten were more faithful than other Javanese in the observance of such religious obligations as the fast during Ramadhan and the payment of *Zakat*. Moreover, unlike elsewhere the payment of *zakat* in Banten served to strengthen independent *ulama* – the Kiai or guru – as against the official religious functionaries who usually administered (and enforced) *zakat* [Van Bruinessen 1995: 165].

Understandably, the *kiai* (*kyai*, Islamic expert) has been very important in Banten. During the colonial period they led several large-scale uprisings. Apparently *kiai* still seem to have strong presence in present-day Banten. For example, they continue to run 1682 *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) in Banten [Department of Religious Affairs 2008].

This does not imply, however, that the role of *kiai* has never changed in the Banten society since the colonial period. On the con-

trary, kiai seem to have lost the role of cultural broker during the New Order era, and they have become less than political brokers in the Reformation era. This chapter discusses the shifting role of kiai in local politics in Banten during the New Order era and thereafter. Focusing on kiai's relationship with the government, parties, and individual politicians, I argue how the larger changes have affected the role of kiai in the society.

When it comes to the political role of kiai in Java, there are at least three significant opinions from observers. First, Clifford Geertz concluded that kiai have a role as cultural brokers. He discusses that kiai play broker for Muslims to give them an understanding of what is going on at the national level [Geertz in Turmudi 2003: 1]. Second, Hiroko Horikoshi, based on her research in Garut, West Java, argues that kiai not only had a role as brokers, but also as creative instigators of social change. Kiai did not only protect society from the negative impacts of social change, but were also pioneers of positive social change. They did not only filter information and pass it on to society, but also offered an agenda for change that they felt was appropriate to for the communities [Hudaeri 2007: 10]. Third, Kuntowijoyo [2001] emphasizes the role of present-day kiai as political brokers in the Reformation period, based on his study of the role of kiai engaged in politics by turning their religious authority and their followers into political capital.

This study emphasizes that the role of kiai has shifted considerably in the course of time. I will discuss that kiai in Banten changed from cultural brokers and instigators of social change in the colonial period to political brokers in the Suharto era, and further to "*janur kuning*" (decoration in ceremonies) in the Reformasi era.

## KIAI IN JAVA

The term "kiai" in Javanese has three different meanings: a title of respect for objects considered holy, a title of respect for the elderly in general, and a title the community gives to experts in Islam who own or lead a pesantren and teach the classical Islamic texts to students.

In this study, kiai refers to the third meaning. In Java, kiai represent the cultural, social, political, and economic elite. They are religious teachers/preachers, and own significantly large amounts of land. They are considered, and consider themselves, to hold prominent positions both at the local and national levels. They are effective decision makers in the social life of Javanese [Dhofier 1982: 55-56]. Kiai usually manage a *pesantren*, an educational institute in which students, called *santri*, receive Islamic knowledge from one kiai, who specializes in the area he teaches [Turmudi 2003: 28]. Kiai need not be bothered with farm work because their followers and the community who work their land are highly devoted to serving their every need. Although they are not formally government officials, their social status tends to be culturally higher [Horikoshi 1987: 193]. The role of kiai in village communities in Java is not limited to religious issues [Kuntowidjojo 1991: 53]. Many everyday problems concerning domestic affairs, marriage, economic affairs, and even medication are referred to kiai. The Muslim community always attempts to adjust its perspective on life and its behavior with that of its kiai.

In Banten, kiai can be differentiated into *kiai kitab* and *kiai hikmah*, in accordance with their specialization. Kiai kitab refers to those who teach interpretation of the *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts), such as the Qur'an, Hadith, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), and *usul fiqh* (study of fiqh). The kiai hikmah refers to those who teach and practice more spiritual things through their wisdom and magic. They teach particular passages of the Qur'an and the chanting of the confession of faith, and pray for practical necessities such as medication [Hudaeri 2007: 83]. The strong connection to spiritual power is an important characteristic of kiai in Banten, especially of kiai hikmah.

Kiai's spiritual power is related to magic, which is a source of power of *jawara* – another cultural elite in Banten. Tihami [1992: 200] notes that jawara are individuals who gain magical power such as invulnerability from kiai. Jawara are often said to be the servants of kiai. Jawara are influential figures in society because of their skill in the martial art of *pencak silat*, in addition to their supernatural powers.

## KIAI LEADERSHIP IN BANTEN: FROM THE COLONIAL ERA TO SUKARNO PERIOD

The leadership of kiai in colonial Banten is evidenced by the large role played in the two failed anti-Dutch uprisings. In 1888, several influential kiai, who held anti-Western sentiments through their study in Mecca, led a large-scale revolt. These kiai prepared and organized the revolt through their networks with their disciples [Kartodirdjo 1966]. Kiai also played an important role in the communist uprising in Banten in 1926. Dissatisfied with the moderate policy and the purification efforts of Islam of the leaders of Sarekat Islam, the largest Islamic organization at that time, a part of kiai chose to cooperate with PKI (the Indonesian Communist Party) in order to fight against the Dutch, the common enemy [Williams 1990].

The political power of kiai reached its peak during the revolution. When Japanese surrender left a power vacuum, Banten community figures, including representatives of the youth, jawara, and women, elected Kiai Haji (KH) Tubagus Achmad Chatib to run the civil government as Resident of Banten at the end of August 1945 [Suharto 2001]. In several places, society spontaneously replaced government officials particularly with kiai. Dewan Rakyat (the People's Council) led by Ce Mamat, the Serang branch head of the Indonesian National Committee (KNI), temporarily took over the government from Achmad Chatib through their uprising. Eventually, however, the Tentara Keamanan Rakyat (TKR, the People's Security Army) led by Kiai Sjam'un defeated Ce Mamat and his followers. Through this series of events, almost all formal positions in the government, military, police, and the legal apparatus were occupied by kiai, from the level of province down to the district. Kiai Achmad Chatib formed the Majelis Ulama (Council of Ulama), consisting of forty influential kiai, as an advisory institute [Michrob and Chudari 1993].

Problems arose when a radio station disclosed a plan for Banten to secede from the Republic of Indonesia under Resident KH Achmad Chatib, who would be the Sultan. The central government intervened and began to restrict the power of the Resident of Banten and kiai. After December 1946, the central government

appointed government delegates as vice governor of West Java, stationed in Serang; and vice resident of Banten [Williams 1990: 306-307]. Likewise the central government gradually replaced kiai in official positions with professional officials. Finally, KH Achmad Chatib was posted to the government of West Java province (Bandung), of which the Banten area was a part at that time, in December 1949, after the TKR defeat of KNI. At this moment the role of kiai in the formal government structure ended.

From this time on until the mid 1960s kiai no longer constituted a distinct dominant group in the local politics of Banten. They were fragmented in many political parties, although they still maintained certain power, holding several positions in the central and local parliaments.

#### CORPORATIZATION OF KIAI AND THE GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THE NEW ORDER: THE CASE OF THE SERANG DISTRICT

Aware of the power of kiai as leaders in Banten, the New Order regime beginning in 1967 attempted to approach them. I focus on such government attempts in the Serang District, the center of the political activities in Banten since the colonial era.

The provincial government in Bandung led by Gov. Solichin G. P. and the military apparatus conceived an idea to co-opt kiai into supporting Golkar at the end of the 1960s. Solichin discussed this idea with military leaders and senior government officers, and A T Witono, the Siliwangi regional military commander, enthusiastically welcomed it. Eventually these two officials met with KH Mahmud, a highly respected kiai in the Banten community, in order to gain his agreement to persuade kiai to support Golkar. Lt. Gen. Surono, defense commander for Division II (Java-Madura), also visited Banten in order to talk with KH Mahmud and other Banten kiai. These initial meetings, however, failed to produce results.

It was President Suharto who brought a breakthrough in the situation. He summoned KH Mahmud and other kiai in a meeting in Batukuwung near Anyer. At the end of the meeting, these kiai declared that they would become Golkar supporters. On 3 May 1970,

the ulama's organization Satkar Ulama (Ulama Working Squad) was founded in Banten, with KH Mahmud as general chairman [Artati 1988: 45]. Satkar Ulama then became a member of *Hasta Karya*, a wing of Golkar.<sup>1</sup> This direct involvement of Suharto was the beginning of government attempts to "tame" the kiai of Banten.

In the lead-up to the 1971 general elections, kiai in Satkar Ulama did not only run campaigns in their pesantren, but also appealed in their sermons that Muslims in Banten should elect Golkar. As a result, Golkar won the largest percentage of votes at 49.83 percent, defeating rivals such as PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia, Indonesian National Party), Parmusi (Partai Muslimin Indonesia, Indonesia Muslim Party, formerly Masyumi), and PSII (Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia, Indonesian Islamic Union Party) in Serang. The government well understood that embracing the kiai would ensure the government to entrench its power in the Banten society more easily.

Following the formation of Satkar Ulama, the government successfully "tamed" jawara in 1971. The newly founded Satkar Jawara (Jawara Working Squad), which later changed its name to Persatuan Pendekar Pesilatan Seni Budaya Banten Indonesia (Indonesian Union of Bantenese Men of Martial Arts, Art and Culture, PPPSBBBI) in 1973, became a pillar of the New Order in Banten.

Although the Suharto government fiercely suppressed Islamic political parties,<sup>2</sup> leaders of the United Development Party (PPP) took a strategy to evoke religious sentiment among Muslims in preparation for the 1977 elections. In an increasing number of sermons and Friday gatherings, PPP kiai stressed their party's Islamness. They

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<sup>1</sup> *Hasta Karya* consists of two kinds of organizations. First were those that helped found Golkar, such as Kesatuan Organisasi Serba Guna Gotong Royong (Kosgoro), Musyawarah Kekeluargaan Gotong Royong (MKGR), and Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Swadiri Indonesia (Soksi). Second were those formed by Golkar, namely Angkatan Muda Pembaharuan Indonesia (AMPI), Satkar Ulama, Al-Hidayah, Wanita Karya, and Majelis Dakwah Islamiyah (MDI).

<sup>2</sup> In 1973, the government merged all Islamic parties including NU, Parmusi, PSII, and Perti into PPP, and all nationalist and Christian parties such as PNI, Parkindo (Partai Kristen Indonesia, Indonesian Christian Party), Partai Katolik (Catholic Party), IPKI (Ikatan Pendukung Kemerdekaan Indonesia, League of Upholders of Indonesian Independence), Murba Party. In 1975, the Suharto government further banned political parties (read PPP and PDI) from having branches at the village level.

employed the Ka'bah as the party's symbol. As a result, in the 1977 elections in Serang, PPP won with a total of 54.97 percent. Golkar secured the second-largest percentage, 42.52 percent, while PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, Indonesian Democratic Party) came in last with a meager 2.52 percent (see Table 1). Golkar's reaction was quick and ruthless. They took a large number of PPP supporters (including kiai) to the regional military command for interrogation or imprisonment [Artati 1988: 47].

Evaluating this election result, the head of Golkar in Serang, Suwandi, concluded that Golkar failed because it did not have strong-enough roots in the Islamic community in Banten. Golkar decided to take a strategy to recruit kiai into its ranks and to form an Islamic wing within Golkar. The party established a policy to ensure that at least 30 percent of members of the advisory council at the district level be kiai. At the district and village levels, local kiai and *ustadz* (pesantren teachers) were appointed managers in the local organizations of Golkar.

Golkar also found that kiai would be effective "vote getters." *Vote getters* was Golkar's term for community leaders who ran as Golkar's top legislative candidates but were prepared to step down when Golkar nominated people under its influence as its legislative members after the elections. As a result of this and similar maneuvers, which were first implemented in Serang and later attempted in other areas, especially in Banten,<sup>3</sup> Golkar defeated PPP in the 1982 elections with 48.57 percent of the vote, compared with PPP's 47.98 percent, and PDI's 3.45 percent (see Table 1).

Yet such a narrow victory did not satisfy Golkar. Aware of the importance of Muslim support for their victory, Golkar further accelerated the strategy to accommodate Islamic figures and kiai. It recruited them into Satkar Ulama in a large scale after its first National Deliberative Council in 1985. The local government also gave Golkar kiai candidates any support necessary to win the elections. In the 1987 polls Golkar chose only Muslims, including those

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Aman Sukarso, former regional secretary of Serang District, 6 August 2008. He took part intensively in many Golkar meetings to win the 1978 general elections. When he was a subdistrict chief (*Camat*), he also involved in the establishing of Satkar Ulama because he had close relations with many kiai.

from the military, for Serang legislative candidates from Golkar [Artati 1988: 52].

The party also attempted to place Islamic-school related influential figures under its influence. For example, it strongly intervened in the internal conflict in Al Khaeriyah, an influential pesantren in Serang.<sup>4</sup> After the death of its founder KH Sjam'un, KH Sadeli Hasan and KH Rahmatullah Syam'un fiercely competed for the successor's position. When the younger brother of KH Rahmatullah Syam'un, Fathullah Syam'un, tried to disassociate himself from the conflict, Golkar seized the opportunity. Party members approached Fathullah Syam'un, and appointed him the Golkar leader in Serang. Fathullah Syam'un ran in the 1987 elections, and after he won, he was nominated chairman of the Serang legislative assembly from 1987-1992, supported by the district head of Serang and the regional military command. In addition, Golkar also exerted influence on Al Khaeriyah and other Islamic schools, through the Golkar member KH Wahab Affif.<sup>5</sup> He was also an Al Khaeriyah member and the Dean of State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Sunan Gunung Djati in Serang (now IAIN Maulana Hasanuddin Serang). He used his position to mobilize other IAIN lecturers to attend Golkar campaigns. Students protested through a series of demonstrations, accusing Wahab Affif of acting unjustly and of not being loyal to the PPP [Iman in Tihami 2006: 25, 158].

On the other hand, PPP was declining on its own account. Beginning in 1978 PPP was internally divided into Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muslimin Indonesia (MI) sections. The conflict reached a

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<sup>4</sup> Al Khaeriyah or Pondok Pesantren Citangkil was established on 5 May 1925 by Kiai Sjam'un, grandson of Kiai Wasid, a leader of the 1888 revolt. Sjam'un studied under Kiai Sa'I in pesantren Delingseng Serang, and Kiai Jasim in pesantren Kamasan Cinangka. Then he continued his study in Mecca for five years, and finally graduated from Al Azhar University in 1915. Sjam'un was well known as military commander of Banten in the 1945 freedom revolt, and he became the head of Serang District.

<sup>5</sup> Wahab Affif, son-in-law of KH Sadeli Hasan, was an eminent figure of Golkar in Banten. He joined Golkar as a member of Dewan Pimpinan Daerah (Provincial Board) of Golkar in West Java Province. Back to Serang in 1980, he became a member of the Advisory Council of Golkar in Serang District. Later he also became one of the members of Dewan Pimpinan Pusat (National Board) of Satkar Ulama Golkar.

climax with NU's exit from PPP and from the formal political arena in 1984 through its declaration to return to the 1926 *Khittab* (basic guidelines) that stipulated NU as an independent organization [Syamsuddin 2001: 52]. These events weakened PPP, not only in the central government but also at the local level in Serang.

The death blow for PPP was the loss of its Islamic identity. Law No 3/1985 on political parties and Golkar and Law No 8/1985 on social organizations required that Pancasila become the sole ideology of all organizations. All political parties were requested to use for their symbol one of the motifs from the Pancasila and Garuda shield. As a result, in the 1987 elections PPP was banned from using the Ka'bah, a symbol familiar to all Muslims, and instead it had to use a star. This meant that PPP lost its identity as an Islamic party. In practice, PPP campaigners found it difficult to distinguish themselves from Golkar or PDI. Many kiai turned into Golkar supporters.

As a result of these government manuevrings and other problems,<sup>6</sup> in the 1987 elections PPP only obtained 29.19 percent of the vote in Serang, while Golkar dominated with 60.35 percent. From this point onward Golkar dominated politics in Banten.

**Table 1.** Comparison of percentage of votes won in the 1977, 1982, and 1988 elections in Serang

Political Party	1977	1982	1987
PPP	54.97	47.98	29.19
Golkar	42.52	48.57	60.35
PDI	2.52	3.45	10.45

This is how kiai in Banten were accommodated in Golkar, and in return, they and their pesantren obtained political security and economic advantage. Most important, Golkar's economic support ensured the longevity and development of their pesantren. Kiai

<sup>6</sup> The military's increasingly brutal attitude instilled fear among Muslim activists. At the national level for instance, the Tanjung Priok incident saw hundreds of Islamic activists killed by the military on 12 September 1984. As a result, PPP's campaigning was not as incessant as in previous elections.

Mahmudi admitted that material/financial support from Golkar in the New Order era were much better than those from any other political parties including the PPP and Islamic parties in the Reformasi era. Mahmudi has served as a subdistrict coordinator of the winning Golkar team in Banten for about ten years.<sup>7</sup>

### THE FATE OF STUBBORN KIAI

On the other hand, the New Order regime and the military pressured kiai who were considered less than supportive of Golkar. Many of these kiai eventually avoided the political realm and focused on their teaching. Some also chose to flee in the way the Prophet did from Mecca to Medina. For instance, Kiai Damanhuri from Cihideung, Pandeglang, went to Mecca.

Kiai Damanhuri's brother-in-law, Kiai Dimiyati, one of the most prominent kiai in Banten, suffered persecution by the New Order regime. As he was highly respected, santri and community figures used the title *Abuya* (Senior Kiai) for him. Abuya Dimiyati's pesantren in Cidahu, Pandeglang, was home to santri from all over Banten, Jakarta, Bogor, and Sumatra. As he was considered as the most senior of kiai, he also gave weekly lessons to kiai from pesantren all over Banten. He is also the leader of the Syadziliyyah *tarekat* (Sufi order) in Indonesia, and he is widely believed to have wisdom and invulnerability [Hudaeri 2007: 71]. In the lead-up to the 1977 elections Abuya Dimiyati became known as antigovernment and anti-Golkar. On 11 March 1977, prior to a Friday sermon, he said that the community should not be scared or intimidated by the interests of one contestant in the elections, no matter what threats were made. Refusing the slogan "Golkar is the Government," he retorted, "The government is the Republic of Indonesia and not Golkar" [Dimiyati 2008: 192-198].

The situation became heated when police arrested Abuya Dimiyati three days later. This nearly brought the entire city of Pandeglang to the brink of anarchy. Santri and jawara agreed to break him out of prison. However, anarchy was averted when Abuya

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Kiai Mahmudi, 22 August 2008.

Dimiyati sent a message via a prison warden to the jawara leaders who wished to free him from jail: "I am all right in prison; don't do anything." Abuya was sentenced to six months in jail.

Mythical and mystical incidents surrounded this issue. It is said that Abuya Dimiyati, although in jail, was at the same time often seen at the Cidahu pesantren. Many also saw him at his house, the Pandeglang market, or praying at Mesjid Agung Pandeglang. In addition, the law enforcement officers involved in Abuya Dimiyati's arrest reportedly had bad experiences. The judge who sentenced him fell mute, and a police officer who arrested him went insane.

Not only individual kiai, but also Islamic organizations with many kiai as members such as Mathla'ul Anwar (MA),<sup>8</sup> were repressed. Under the leadership of Nafsirin Hadi, MA had formed a rather close relationship with the Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia (DI/TII, House of Islam/Indonesian Islamic Army) movement. In addition, MA also articulated its disagreement with the application of Pancasila as the sole basis for organizations. This led to a very tense relationship with the government.

Nafsirin Hadi became the head of MA during the twelfth Congress in Jakarta in 1975, replacing KH M Muslim who had died in 1974. During the ten years of Nafsirin Hadi's leadership, MA fell into confusion. First, the dispute between Nafsirin Hadi and the general secretary, Irsjad Djuwaeli, eventually ended in the firing Irsjad Djuwaeli from his position (Djuwaeli 1997: 30). Bad relations with the government led to the cancellation of the MA congress planned in Lampung, because of the failure to obtain permission from the Lampung provincial government. This led to internal fragmentation in the MA leadership, and gave a golden opportunity for the government to intervene. In the 1985 MA congress in Menes, the progovernment group succeeded not only in removing Nafsirin Hadi from his position in the MA headquarters but also in expel-

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<sup>8</sup> Mathla'ul Anwar was established in 1916 in Menes, Banten, by several local kiai namely KH. TB. Muhammad Soleh, Kiai Entol Muhammad Yasin, and Kiai Mas Abdurrahman. Kiai Entol Muhammad Yassin was the first leader. Since its birth, Mathla'ul Anwar focused on Islamic (*dakwah*) and *madrasah* (Islamic school) education system. In 1936, more than forty madrasah were affiliated with Mathla'ul Anwar.

ling him from the organization, with the full support of Lt. Gen. Alamsyah Ratuperwiranegara.<sup>9</sup> The progovernment Kiai Burhani took over the director, and Irsjad Djuwaeli became the secretary general of MA [Rosidin 2007].

This incident opened a backdoor for the government and Golkar to penetrate MA. It accepted Pancasila as its ideological basis [Djuwaeli 1997: 31], and in addition, MA adopted several principles implemented in Golkar, such as the establishment of a strong advisory board, led by a government personnel, in this case retired Lt. Gen. Alamsyah Ratuperwiranegara.

In the 1991 MA congress, opened by Vice President Soedharmono, Irsjad Djuwaeli was elected the director of MA headquarters. Under his leadership MA declared its support for Golkar. In 1992 Irsjad Djuwaeli became a member of parliament from Golkar. Irsjad Djuwaeli believed that the decision to support Golkar would have a significant impact on the organization's development both at the local and central levels. By its 14th Congress in Jakarta in 1991, MA had branches in seventeen provinces [Djuwaeli 1997: 31]. Within the corporatized system of Golkar, MA achieved extraordinary expansion throughout Indonesia.

### KIAI AND THE DYNAMICS OF BANTEN POLITICS IN THE REFORMATION ERA

After the collapse of the New Order, Indonesia underwent a period of political liberalization. Political freedom led to a rapid proliferation of political parties like mushrooms after a rain. Kiai ceased to have any obligation to support the government. They were fragmented across a wide range of political parties, while several remained with Golkar, such as Kiai Wahab Afif, Kiai Salman Al Faris and KH Irsjad Djuwaeli. The establishment of PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa or National Awakening Party) by Kiai Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) brought many kiai back to the political world. Several kiai made their debut in the local political stage, such as Kiai Aminuddin

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<sup>9</sup> Lt. Gen. Alamsyah Ratuperwiranegara is a former state secretary, minister of religious affairs (1978-1983), and coordinating minister for people's welfare (1983-1988).

Ibrahim and Kiai Muhtadi Dimiyati in PKB.

Generally speaking, kiai in Banten in the Reformation era played a minor role in politics. They became assistants to non-kiai politicians. In the 2005 elections of the Pandeglang district head, kiai held a prominent position in the campaign team for the incumbent, Dimiyati Natakusumah.<sup>10</sup> The head of MUI Pandeglang, KH Datep, even issued a *fatwa* to elect Dimiyati in the election. It was widely rumored that the heads of all district MUI branches received an amount of money from Dimiyati. The student branch of Nahdlatul Ulama, the Pandeglang branch of LAKPESDAM NU (Lembaga Kajian dan Pengembangan Sumber Manusia Nadhlatul Ulama or Nadhlatul Ulama Institute for Study and Human Resources Development), and the Ansor Youth Movement organized demonstrations demanding that MUI act neutrally and that KH Datep be removed as head of MUI Pandeglang. Eventually, MUI Banten temporarily suspended KH Datep as head of MUI Pandeglang.<sup>11</sup>

However, kiai continued to support Dimiyati. He had a strong influence on kiai partly because he was also head of the PPP provincial branch in Banten. However, the main reason of the kiai's support was the fact that during his term Dimiyati gave a large amount of aid to pesantren and their managers. KH Datep describes the situation:

At that time many government programs to aid *madrasah* (religious school) were not completed. The fear was that if [the District Head and his] officers were replaced, the programs would be forgotten or would have to start from scratch again. We all worked so hard so that at least 75 percent of our religious programs might be realized. At the time there was no infrastructure for religious practices, or financial support for religious teachers, madrasah and so on. Now, one school alone receives contributions and incentives for its staff. Today it amounts to Rp 2.7 million per school, and some even get Rp 3 million [Rahmatullah 2008: 15].

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<sup>10</sup> However, the incumbent was shaken by a scandal involving a high school student, SDK, who claimed that she had had sexual intercourse with the regent in a hotel in Jakarta. *Pikiran Rakyat*, 27 April 2004.

<sup>11</sup> *Suara Karya*, 25 August 2005.

Kiai were also a strong force in the election for the governor of Banten Province in 2006. Four pairs of candidates for the governor and vice governor contested the election, namely Zulkieflimansyah-Marissa Haque, supported by PKS and PSI; Tryana Sjam'un-Benjamin Davnie, supported by PPP and PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional or the National Mandate Party); H Ratu Atut Chosiyah-HM Masduki, supported by Golkar, PDIP (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan or the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle), PBB (Partai Bulan Bintang or Crescent Star Party), PBR (Partai Bintang Reformasi or Reform Star Party), and PDS (Partai Damai Sejahtera or Prosperous Peace Party); and Irsyad Djuwaeli-Mas Ahmad Daniri, supported by PKB and PD (Democrat party or Partai Demokrat). All candidates endeavored to make use of kiai to win the support of the community. Atut Chosiyah, for instance, made Satkar Ulama, currently led by her father Chasan Sochib, an important supporting element of his campaign team. Zulkieflimansyah gained support from the Communication Forum for Kiai and Community Figures (FKKTM) headed by KH Ubung. Tryana Sjam'un received support from several managers of the Banten Communication Forum for Pesantren (Banten FSPP), while Irsjad Djuwaeli relied on support from Mathla'ul Anwar and Kiai Khozinul Asror from NU.

Competition for kiai support was quite fierce. Atut Chosiyah failed to secure unanimous support from kiai because members of the Banten FSPP refused to support Atut, preferring to remain neutral. In fact, however, several senior members of this organization supported Zulkieflimansyah and Tryana Sjam'un. In response Atut's campaign team established the Communication Forum for Salafi Pesantren (FSPPS), and won the elections. In 2007 the new governor removed the budget of Rp 750 million a year for pesantren, the funding that had previously been channeled through FSPP.<sup>12</sup>

Support from kiai became a significant factor for politicians

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Fatah Sulaeman, daily chairman of FSPP Banten Province, 8 August 2008, and Kiai Mahmudi, ex-chairman of FSPP Serang District (now chairman of Majelis Ulama Indonesia), 22 August 2008. La Ode Asrarudin, member of the Banten Regional Assembly of People's Representative (DPRD) from Golkar, also admitted the above. Asrarudin stated that it was a punishment for FSPP, but they had a plan to resume financial support for FSPP. Interview with Asrarudin, 12 June 2009.

to win general and local elections. Politicians used kiai to gain local support, while kiai used political competitions to gain economic benefits. With the demand was met by the supply, politicians and kiai were equally active in approaching one another. La Ode Asrarudin from Golkar suggested that politicians were skilled in calculating exactly which kiai would approach them. Politicians preferred kiai from Majelis Taklim (religious study groups) because they lived within Banten. Kiai of pesantren were not usually targets as many of their santri came from outside Banten.<sup>13</sup>

It is thus evident how kiai in the post-New Order era have ceased to be cultural brokers or instigators of social change, and have become political brokers. This is partly because pesantren and kiai are economically weak. The number of santri studying at pesantren, especially at Salafi pesantren, is decreasing. They cannot compete with modern education, which provides knowledge and skills necessary for modern life. As a result, pesantren have become dependent as educational institutions, both in terms of their curriculum and funding.

Consequently, kiai are becoming more openly pragmatic, especially in political affairs. In the 2004 general elections, Kiai KA, an NU leader in Pandeglang, suggested to a candidate for the Regional Representative Council that he gain approval from 40 prominent kiai in Pandeglang and mobilize their political support symbolized through a mass prayer. The candidate took this suggestion, made necessary preparations, and invited many people. However, before the prayer could start, Kiai KA required that he and the forty kiai be reimbursed for expenses. This confused the candidate, as they had never talked previously of money. However, because they had already sent out invitations and media had publicized the event, he fulfilled Kiai KA's request after some bargaining. The prayer went ahead. Two weeks later, the same candidate was stunned to find that another regional candidate held an even larger mass prayer with the same kiai. He concluded that Kiai KA was no more than an event organizer who carried out mass prayers for money, without really offering political support.<sup>14</sup> Muchtar Mandala, a candidate supported

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with La Ode Asrarudin, 12 June 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Confidential interview with EAH, candidate of the Regional Representative

by PKB, experienced an almost identical incident with the same kiai when he was running for governor of Banten. Kiai KA, a frequent visitor, expressed his support for Muchtar Mandala. However, he was aware that the kiai had also approached Kiai Muhtadi Dimiyati, another PKB member, and another candidate, while still planning to milk Muchtar Mandala of his money. Kiai KA and the other candidate were not aware that Kiai Muhtadi Dimiyati was Muchtar Mandala's main supporter.<sup>15</sup>

Kiai's brokerage was not too different in the 2004 presidential elections. During the briefing by the head of Golkar, Akbar Tanjung, on the National Coalition for Banten Golkar Leaders and Cadres, he gave a speech in Pandeglang on 21 August 2004. Then KH Ujang Rapiudin, a local religious figure, spoke bluntly about money before closing the event with a prayer: "People don't need t-shirts or candidates' photos; what is important is the envelope filled with money."<sup>16</sup>

Local government officials also understand that they should give kiai funding and should pursue good relations with them in order to run their work smoothly. For instance, the director of an institution of the local government of Banten every now and again granted project funding (under Rp 50 million) to a well known kiai without going through open bidding procedures.<sup>17</sup>

Society sees this trend very cynically: "In the past the government approached kiai, but now kiai approach the government" [Turmudi 2003]; "In the past, Banten was a place of a thousand kiai and a million santri, but now, kiai get a million [rupiah from politicians and the government] and santri get a thousand [rupiah from kiai]."

Kiai themselves have begun to see their role cynically. Aware of their weak position, they even compared themselves to "janur kuning"—mere decoration to signify the greatness of a celebration, but forgotten and thrown away as soon as the event is finished. Kiai

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Council (DPD) from the Banten province in the 2004 election, 1 August 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Muchtar Mandala, 16 June 2009.

<sup>16</sup> *Kompas*, 23 August 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Confidential interview with MTG, head of a provincial department (Kepala Dinas) of the Banten Province, 8 December 2008.

were used to give legitimacy to certain political groups, but forgotten as soon as elections were over.<sup>18</sup>

Does the support from kiai guarantee the support from society? In practice, politicians admit that the support of kiai is not as significant as expected. Zulkieflimansyah held an event where a thousand ulama declared their support for his candidacy in the 2006 elections for Banten governor in Lebak. However, he received an insignificant percentage of the votes in Lebak.<sup>19</sup>

Satkar Ulama and FSPPS offered their support for Atut. However, this was also considered insignificant in comparison with the support from her family and the jawara under her father Chasan Sochib.<sup>20</sup> Kiai who attend events for politicians may believe that their participation does not mean their full support. In fact, it is not rare that kiai confuse their community members by expressing loyalty to more than one candidate in order to receive material support.<sup>21</sup> According to Fitron, support from kiai is more important in building an image of a good Muslim than in receiving real voter support. He assumes that in Banten, close relations with kiai have positive connotations.

Yet not all kiai have entered the political world. Kiai Munfasir in Ciomas is one such kiai in Banten who remain disinterested in politics. He lives an isolated life in his pesantren in Cipulus, Ciomas, Banten. His pesantren is home to only a few santri. Those who wish to study there are not allowed to eat anything from outside the pesantren. They eat rice, fish, and fruit such as bananas and pawpaw grown in the pesantren.

Some kiai have established radical groups, refusing political participation in a democratic manner. Among them is Front Hizbullah (the Hizbullah Front), founded by KH Cecep Bustomi from Pandeglang, with the aim to implement Islamic law (*syari'ah*) and fight against all forms of vice. Front Hizbullah applies a radical method in pursuit of its aims, encouraging its members to destroy or interfere in anything they thought to contain vicious elements,

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<sup>18</sup> Interview with Kiai Mahmudi, 22 August 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Fitron, committee DPW PKS Banten, 16 June 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with La Ode, 12 June 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Fitron, La Ode, and Muchtar Mandala also admitted the above-mentioned.

including some forms of entertainment performed in circumcision and marriage ceremonies. Members actively joined in destructive actions in 1999 and 2000. Their activities, however, weakened after the death of Kiai Cecep Bustomi in gunfire from unknown assailants on 24 July 2000, in the aftermath of the conflict with the army's Special Force (Kopassus).

Another case that kiai were involved in violence was the mass siege of the building of the *Banten Daily* newspaper, led by Kiai Aminuddin, the provincial branch head of PKB. They protested against a photo printed in the newspaper that showed demonstrators carrying a caricature of Abdurrahman Wahid (president at the time).<sup>22</sup> The issue was eventually resolved with the intervention of Hakamuddin Jamal, acting governor of Banten.

These two cases seem, however, rather exceptional. There was barely any violent conflict related to Islam in Banten, in spite of the emerging religious radicalism in post-Suharto Indonesia in general.

### THE STRENGTHENING OF JAWARA

In the Reformation era, especially after Banten become a province in 2000, the real political power seem to have moved from kiai to jawara. The newly emerging political jawara were jawara businessmen who had increased their power under the New Order regime. The government established Satkar Jawara (after the end of 1973, PPPSBBI) in 1971, in Batukuwung, Serang, as an autonomous organization within Golkar to support the potential of jawara in Banten. The government expected jawara to act as informal leaders of the local society. H. Tubagus Chasan Sochib has led the Satkar Jawara since its establishment.

Soon Chasan Sochib became a dominant jawara figure. In the election of the Banten governor in 2001, his daughter, Atut Chosiyah, became vice governor. He then attempted to take control of Satkar Ulama. Although he was not a kiai, Chasan Sochib won the election for the head of the Satkar Ulama in the National Congress in

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<sup>22</sup> The cartoon illustrated a naked baby with Abdurrahman Wahid's head. Nahdlatul Ulama mass considered it harassment, since Wahid was not only a president but also a kiai.

2000, defeating Kiai Salman Al Faris in the second round of votes. Kiai Salman suspected that jawara intervened by casting votes at the Congress. This is an ironic paradox, in light of the fact that, historically, jawara have been students or even servants of kiai.

A similar fate met the Banten branch of Satkar Ulama. Kiai Syahrir Abror, a former security guard at a company in Cilegon, took over the head of the branch from Kiai Subroni Mansyur in 2002. He was not from the pesantren circle, and reportedly he could not write Arabic correctly. However, he played a significant role as political broker, and contributed to the victory of Atut Chosiyah in the 2006 gubernatorial elections. The Banten branch of Satkar Ulama even held collective prayers with thousands of ulama, in order to pray for Atut's victory in the elections.<sup>23</sup>

## CONCLUSION

After reaching a peak as formal leaders in the civil government and military during the revolution era, the role of kiai in the political world has declined on the back of several external and internal factors.

The main external factor was New Order intervention. Under the strong pressure and repression from the regime, kiai were faced with a dilemma of three choices: first, to join the party in power (read: Golkar); second, to oppose the government; and third, to withdraw from the political realm and focus on education. None was really beneficial. Joining Golkar and becoming political brokers for this organization meant they became highly dependent on Golkar, from their pesantren curriculum to funding. This also led to a decline in their charisma. One kiai termed such colleagues as "kiai abandoned by society."<sup>24</sup> It seems that this was the intention of the New Order's corporatist strategy. The New Order regime understood that the power of kiai lay in their charisma, and therefore Golkar "tamed" them in corporatist organizations such as Satkar Ulama, in order to deprive them of that charisma. Opposing the government was clearly not beneficial. As seen in the detention of

<sup>23</sup> *Radar Banten*, 30 September 2006.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with KH Mahmudi, 22 August 2008.

Abuya Dimiyati and PPP kiai, the New Order regime was ruthless on kiai who refused to collaborate with the government.

In the third option, to withdraw from the political realm, kiai had to face the internal factor of the decline of their role. Pesantren education was pressured by modern education, and kiai were increasingly marginalized in the realm of modern knowledge and learning. Decrease in the number of students meant economic difficulty for kiai. They have also failed to regenerate. Since each pesantren is no longer under the influence of one kiai, the selection of a successor of a pesantren has often brought about conflicts.

Under this difficult situation, kiai have increasingly become politically pragmatic. As a result, their role, with which they exert political influence over a community, has changed from that of cultural brokers in the colonial period to that of political brokers in the Suharto era, and finally to that of *janur kuning* in the Reformasi era. Kiai have tried to fulfill their basic needs by “selling” the community they claimed to hold influence over. However, they have held a relatively weak bargaining position to politicians or political parties.

Kiai in Banten have been unable to significantly influence election results. They are only “*janur kuning*,” without charisma, ignored after elections. In the eyes of society, kiai involved in politics are no longer role models to be followed, while in the eyes of politicians, using kiai for support no longer guarantees rewarding results. In the eyes of kiai, receiving material aid in practical politics represents nothing more than an awareness of their role as *janur kuning*. The political role of kiai in present-day Banten is nothing less, and nothing more.

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