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## AN ALTERNATIVE PATH TO PROSPERITY: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ON ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN REFORMATION ERA

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### ABSTRACT

This study is mainly based on concerns on the division in Islamic studies, especially the progress of Islamic thought in one side and the process of political democracy on the other side. In addition, there are limited sources which discuss the roles and contributions of Islam. Statesmanship by far is narrowly discussed in formulating typologies and dominantly conducted from cultural and security approaches. These approaches create ambiguous indicator on Islamic thoughts, and they lead to creating terminologies, like, moderate Islam or radical Islam. Studies conducted under these approaches tend to reduce and simplify thoughts' complexity and dynamics in Islam. In order to understand the dynamics of Islamic thoughts and statesmanship in post-New Order era, an analysis needs to be administered in nationwide and worldwide contexts according to problem complexities. This study tries to explain the logical processes on Islamic thoughts among FPI, MMI, and HTI in responding political and process of democracy in Reformation era. Furthermore, the study aims to explain the underlying reasons among FPI, MMI, and HTI in offering Islamic thoughts which mainly rely on formal-legal sharia. Framework used in this study aims to integrate internal-cultural-theological and political viewpoints to socio-historical perspective with economic-politics analysis. In this sense, state fully realizes that its citizens deserve their roles and rights in contemporary way. Idea on implementing Islamic state is a discursive strategy, response, and resistance movement to state's authoritarian system and manipulative conducts in politics, social, and economic. The results indicate that FPI, MMI, and HTI find it essential that state and day-to-day life are in Islamic teachings' corridor. Furthermore, the thought is one of the few options available in preparing for a prospective change. In the context of changing relation between citizens and state in post New Order era, responses appeared along the process become parts of Indonesian Muslims' dynamics and principles in realizing their rights, in the midst of democracy waves.

**Keywords:** *citizen, democracy, Islamic state, prosperity*

### Introduction

After the fall of the New Order in 1998, the development of Islamic thoughts in Indonesia has found their new medium. Massive liberation has created almost no boundary for Indonesian citizens to express their thoughts, including Islam (Suwarsono Muhammad 2019). In this context, new movements raised and offered state and Islamic thoughts which went to different directions to the mainstream ones, for instance, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. Some of the new movements are Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI/Indonesian Mujahedeen Council), Front Pembela Islam (FPI/Islamic Defenders Front Militia), and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI/Indonesian Party of Liberation).

New state and Islamic discourses offered by the aforementioned organizations mark Muslims' responsiveness to the available public spaces and their sensitivity to political dynamics in the country. Furthermore, changing relation between state and its citizens are in their radars. Nevertheless, studies

on political changes, especially on the changing relation between state and its citizens in democracy viewpoint, tend to ignore the involvement of Islamic communities. Additionally, the communities are accustomed to respond changes in political situations, both in concept and action. More importantly, responses made of deep and comprehensive concepts based on Islamic teachings will create a strong and significant structure in the political dynamic itself.

This study is mainly based on concerns on the division in Islamic studies, especially the progress of Islamic thought in one side and the process of political democracy on the other side. Experts in Islamic studies estimate that Islamic communities are isolated in the country's political dynamics. At the same time, experts in politics and public administration place Muslims in Indonesia as distinctively attributed citizens who are not wholly inspired by Islam in responding dynamics and democracy process in Indonesia.

Close connection between thoughts and current political dynamics is hard to explain because of Islamic teachings' nature that is multi-interpretation. To close the gap, this study assumes that Islamic formula on statehood reasoning can also be varied; nevertheless, there are mainstream thoughts that lead to change (Watt 1998). In addition, it is strengthened by Muslims' position as a major component of citizens in Indonesia. Muslims need conscience on their political roles and positions that mainly construct Islamic thoughts they adopted (Jurdi 2008).

One of the aspects in political change in post-New Order era is a shifting pattern in the relation between citizens and the state. The New Order pattern is marked with state dominance which suppresses people power (Nashir 1999). The pattern achieved by ideological reproduction generated by the country's elites, in term of argument on religious thoughts (Wahid 2009). In the post-New Order era, people get stronger position than the state (Manan 2005). In responding to changes in relationship pattern between these two entities, there comes another argument in the level of thoughts. However, diversity in thoughts, seen among Islamic communities, gives no significant contribution. A claim that the process of democracy in Indonesia chiefly supported by Islamic thoughts by far is hard to prove.

Muslims need to make sure that the current state's life operates under their religious corridors. In this case, it emphasizes that the study comes from a belief that there is an overlapping—if it is not yet a synergy—in Islamic thoughts as a way to implement religious teachings with statehood reasoning from citizens' viewpoint. Muslims run two functions, as members of particular religious group and as citizens. These functions enable Indonesia to build political system which fulfills good governance principles and supports its Muslim citizens.

The aforementioned condition is principally simple; however, it causes substantial implication, as the condition plays an important role in solution making in the structure and future life of Indonesian statesmanship, more particularly, in citizen-state entity relation. In this case, there are limited studies on Islam's roles and contributions to the state, either written by Indonesian political researchers or Islamic studies researchers. Moreover, studies on Islam and statesmanship by far mainly expose on characterizing Islam itself. Therefore, the characterizing leads to exoticism, thought's characterization, and ways to respond dynamics in the society through thinking capacity channeling.

This study tries to explain the logical processes on Islamic thoughts among FPI, MMI, and HTI in responding political and process of democracy in Reformation era. In addition, the study aims to explain the underlying reasons among FPI, MMI, and HTI in offering Islamic thoughts which mainly rely on formal-legal sharia.

### **Severe Problems on Islamic Politics in Indonesia**

Studies on Islamic thoughts in Indonesia, both religious and political-governmental studies, during the Old Order, New Order, and Reformation Era have produced various inquiries. Most of these studies lead to typology, for instance, a study by Mark Woodward about Islam's prospect in responding the process of democracy. Woodward, an expert on Indonesian history, puts Islamic thoughts in Indonesia into five groups; Traditional, Modern, Islamist, Natives and Neo-Modernist (Woodward 2009). Peter

G. Riddel divides Indonesian Islam after the fall of New Order regime into four typologies; modernist, traditionalist, neo-modernist, and Islamist (Riddel 2002). Riddel mostly agrees to Woodward's model, except on native Islam. William E. Shepard mentions that a fundamental problem on typology studies lies on its classification, since it tends to understand phenomena related to religion, economic, and politics. The typologies will turn complicated even though studies using these approaches are inevitable (Shepard 1987).

Various typologies resulted from the studies create some serious problems. One of them is overlapping results in mapping the typologies themselves. Additionally, there will be limitations in describing Islamic thought dynamics in religious realms and in responding to state dynamics. Studies on Islamic thought which are solely based on aforementioned typologies will be difficult to uphold Islamic thought dynamics related to democratization process between people and state after the fall of New Order regime.

In general, the studies dominantly apply cultural and security approaches. The first approach emphasizes on internal tradition of Indonesian Islam. In its process and application, this approach points out on individual interpretation or analysis from Islamic community organization to Islam and its influence on political conducts. In addition, the approach is dominantly used to learn about Indonesian Islam (Hadiz 2016). On the other hand, the second approach used by researchers who have limited knowledge on Islamic teachings (John Obert Voll 1982). Further impact on understanding Islamic thought dynamics using both approaches is developing ambiguous indicator on the thought itself. Hence, it leads to terminologies, like, moderate Islam or radical Islam (Hadiz 2016), etc.

The approaches also create problem's simplification and reduction, as well as a complex Islamic thought dynamic (Bayah 2007). Therefore, in understanding Islamic thought dynamics after the fall of New Order regime, Islamic and geopolitical thoughts of FPI, MMI, and HTI need to be examined in a context of problem's complexity, in local, national, and global scopes.

In order to establish a study on Islamic thought dynamics in the context of post-New Order democracy, the study aims at considering internal-cultural-theological and political perspectives. It also considers applying socio-historical and economic-politics analysis (Hadiz 2016). Therefore, this study needs to refer to both micro context (complexity on problems occurred in social and internal surroundings) faced by these organizations and macro context (i.e. globalization or global economic liberalization). These contexts have proven that interpretation on Islam provides validity upon collective actions done by the organizations. In this sense, Islamic teachings act as framing sources in maintaining the situations, especially in altering the relation between citizens and state.

### **Citizens Vs. State**

The basic framework of thinking on the relation between citizens and state in this study is situating the citizens with their full rights, different from *wong cilik* (grassroots) or *kawula* (followers). In this sense, state fully realizes that citizens deserve their roles and rights in contemporary way. Citizens' position affects the pattern of relation between them and the state (Kuntowijoyo 2008). This type of relation is widely promoted in post- New Order era.

There are several requirements to achieve an ideal relation between citizens and state. First and foremost, state's willingness represented by politicians and government in putting citizens as the subjects of their policies. Secondly, dedicating service provided by the state and its rulers fully to citizens (Mul Khan 2009). Finally, citizens are free from any form of state and its rulers' intervention. Ideally, citizens are the subjects of their state; thus, state's elites should serve them (Nor et al. 2009). In this sense, when the state has run its obligation to serve citizens, it will create an equitable and affluent country.

The explanation has indicated how citizens-state's relation should be equally solid. A reliable state will be able to manage its functions, such as, providing security, maintaining economic stability, creating social order, and preserving territorial integration. Powerful citizens mean having the capacity to

conduct control upon their state's condition, especially when it starts to be tyrannical or abuses its power. Thus, citizens-state relation will create balanced and accommodating power (Manan 2005).

### **Methodology**

The study aimed at tracing Islamic thoughts in a process of democracy as an impact of shiFPing in the concept of state in Reformation era. The thoughts under study belonged to social-religious organization, namely FPI (Rizieq 2011), MMI (Jurdi 2008), and HTI (Nashir 1999). These organizations represented similar organizations established in the end of New Order regime. In addition, FPI, MMI, and HTI had dedicated followers and particular perspectives on Islam and statesmanship; therefore, these characteristics distinguished them from other Islam-based organizations, for instance, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. Additionally, the three organizations clearly offered Islamic state system and formalized sharia as the solutions to state and political problems in Indonesia. Sources, Characteristics, and Approaches

The study used primary and secondary sources. Primary sources covered important decisions made by FPI, MMI, and HTI (Rizieq 2011) related to Islam and citizens-state relation in Indonesia since 1998. Secondary sources used were experts' studies on Islam-based organizations in Indonesia and their thoughts on the shifting position of Indonesian citizens, especially in Reformation era. The study worked under descriptive-interpretive and verificative frameworks (Sumardi 1982) which not only described the responses of FPI, MMI, and HTI to the process of democracy and citizens reposition in Indonesia, but also conducted interpretations to the available data. Then, it was followed up with critical analysis. The study also worked under socio-historical approach namely challenge and response (Toynbee 1955).

### **Analysis Model**

The study adopted discourse analysis (Hasan 2012) to explore the response to Islamic thoughts produced by FPI, MMI, and HTI. It put the response as a result of interaction between long-term dynamics in Islamic politics, like state's authoritarianism, and current politics, social, and economic systems (Hasan 2008). Therefore, ideas to formally revitalize khilafah, dawlah Islamiyah, Islamic state, or sharia implementation were parts of the discourse strategies in an imbalanced and manipulative power relation between citizens and state. Besides, the ideas became alternative discourses in embracing a prospective change (Hasan 2012). Hence, responses to Islamic thoughts that FPI, MMI, and HTI proposed could be seen as an effort and conscience to achieve better and more respected life, in terms of process of democracy. These responses were also parts of dynamics among Muslims in Indonesia during a shifting period. They started to know their rights as citizens by the time democracy found its ground in the country (Nor et al. 2012).

The study started with formulating the research problems and followed by data collection, data display, data condensation, and conclusion's drawing/verifying. Figure 1 illustrates the steps made in conducting the research (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana 2014).

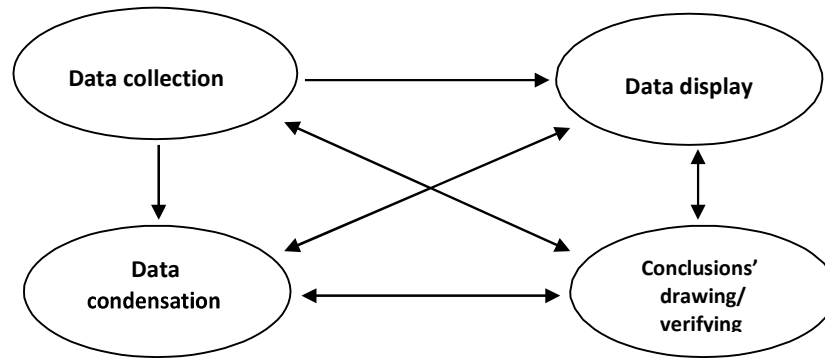


Figure 1. Research Steps

## Results and Discussion

The perspectives of FPI, MMI, and HTI on repositioning the pattern of citizens-state entity after the fall of New Order regime are mainly based on khilafah system, Islamic state, and formal sharia implementation. Based on global Muslim's dynamics—including Indonesia—FPI, MMI, and HTI conclude that adopting Islamic state concept and formalizing sharia laws are the best solutions to resolve various grassroots' problems (Yusanto 2009). These are the key words of fundamental paradigm among FPI, MMI, and HTI followers.

Therefore, state's position and roles are essential and will determine the success in implementing sharia. State has the ultimate power and right to implement law. Moreover, in the perspective of these organizations, a state is established to support sharia implementation. It illustrates that the organizations fully support structural sharia enforcements by the state. Therefore, efforts made by Muslims to implement sharia in their country is essential (Nor et al. 2009).

Thus, the perspectives on Islamic state and sharia enforcement underline the assumption on the changes in relation pattern between citizens and their state. As a result, FPI, MMI, and HTI strongly decline any system which has no Islamic values in it. They consider sharia enforcement as an absolute decision, in order to let Indonesian Muslims out of Western influences.

In a global level, the discourse appears to respond failures made by ruling elites in many Islamic countries to provide security, justice, equal economic-political access, and prosperity to their citizens. In fact, the elites were corrupt, deceitful, and nepotists (Warf 2019) who worsened their citizens' lives. Additionally, the elites also unethically tried to prolong their power, for instance, by claiming citizen's belongings (Giustozzi 2020).

As mentioned earlier, failure in understanding historical and political background among movements made by Islam-based organizations like FPI, MMI, and HTI has led to simplification in prior studies discussing this issue. The studies misleadingly interpret and analyze the meaning behind discourses of khilafah Islamiyah, dawlah Islamiyah, Islamic state, and formal sharia implementation. For these organizations, ideological- theological dimension deserves more attention, so that the discourses produced cannot be interpreted solely from historical perspective. Some experts claim that the discourses are mainly perceived as dreams of a utopic and ahistorical figure who has desired to live in the past. Other experts also claim that FPI, MMI, and HTI in Indonesia try to reverse the clock and fight for totalitarian-based theocracy system from a remnant of patrimonial regime which has lost its power once modernization and globalization start to give new hopes to a more egalitarian and participating political system, namely democracy (Nor et al 2020).

The discourses of khilafah Islamiyah, dawlah Islamiyah, Islamic state, and formal sharia implementation that FPI, MMI, and HTI offered can be seen as responses to the dynamics of social changes, especially to deal with modernization and globalization. In addition, the responses can also be interpreted as resistance movements to the corrupted regime. The organizations see God's absence in a secular state has proven that, both in Indonesia and in other Islamic countries, the ruling elites have failed in maintaining the relation between citizens and state. Therefore, citizens have no power to criticize their ruling elites (Hasan 2012). Hence, FPI, MMI, and HTI see Islamic state and formal sharia implementation as feasible alternatives to deal with secular or democratic system

In the system of khilafah Islamiyah, dawlah Islamiyah, Islamic state, and sharia enforcement with theocratic approach, God is being a part in maintaining political system. The premise is mainly sourced from absolute power that God has. Therefore, citizens should be obedient to the system. It triggers an idea in which Muslims should not bow to majority's choice and their belief on democracy is a digression.

FPI, MMI, and HTI consider a state which adopts democratic principles is in contradiction to Islamic ideologies. In addition, they believe that democracy is equal to secularism and made it easily manipulated by ruling elites who want to preserve their supremacy. These organizations offer an alternative system that sacred and transcendental. These two characteristics, according to FPI, MMI, and HTI, will eliminate any chance of elites manipulating power for their own gains. Besides, the organizations' viewpoint on theocratic state creates potentially authoritarian leaders who suppressed others in the name of God or religion (Nor et al. 2012).

Related to their understandings on democracy, these organizations have wrongly perceived the philosophy of democracy itself. Democracy is potentially used to control or to minimize power abuse done by the ruling elites. It rejects tyrant majority even though the system adopts crowdsource mechanism. In addition, democracy pay respects to minor's rights. For the most part, democracy runs liability and openness, as well as people's participation without any discrimination, especially in decision making (Nor et al. 2012).

Citizens-state relation in a country which adopts khilafah Islamiyah, Islamic state, and sharia enforcement determines that citizens can criticize their leader; however, they cannot impeach him. The leader steps down from his position when he apostates from Islam, gets mentally ill, or keeps hostage by a tougher enemy with little or no chance of release (Amin 2012). When one of the three reasons violated by a state leader, citizens have the right to ignore his/her orders. The impeachment process of the leader should be handled by mazalim judge, not based on the citizens' will. Nevertheless, it raises a dilemma. Mazalim judge is the one who is capable of conducting impeachment to a caliphate; ironically, he is sworn by the caliphate himself. This reasoning has no end and it will always return to the caliphate. Therefore, it indicates another model of obscuring an autocratic system.

Issues that FPI, MMI, and HTI try to revitalize khilafah Islamiyah, dawlah Islamiyah, Islamic state, and sharia enforcement can be seen as discursive strategies to respond power relation, especially on imbalanced and manipulative relation between citizens and state. Additionally, these strategies reflect frustrations that the citizens experience, mostly among youth who has no certainty in facing their future.

With problems in communication among citizens, state, and troubling elites in various countries, including Indonesia, issues on khilafah Islamiyah, dawlah Islamiyah, Islamic state, and sharia enforcement turn out to be one of the few options available in preparing for a better condition. Thus, it shows that responses to Islamic thoughts offered by FPI,

MMI, and HTI in repositioning citizens-state indicate initiative and conscience in creating a better and more respectable life condition. The responses also become parts of Indonesian Muslims' dynamics and principles in realizing their rights, in the midst of democracy waves, locally and globally (Kenney 2018).

The aforementioned explanation also illustrates that the Islamic thoughts proposed by FPI, MMI, and HTI come from Islamic teachings which are holistic and comprehensive; besides, the teachings can lead to continuous and multiple interpretations which adapt to changing circumstances, including changing governance and state.

Based on the analysis on Islamic thoughts that FPI, MMI, and HTI proposed on democracy process in contemporary Indonesia, the strong current that the organizations brought aims at building a commendable Indonesia with formal Islamic state concept. In the long run, the concept will create a prosperous, respected, and civilized state. Therefore, the changing relation between citizens and state according to FPI, MMI, and HTI is closely related to several factors, as described in Figure 2 (Hasan 2010).

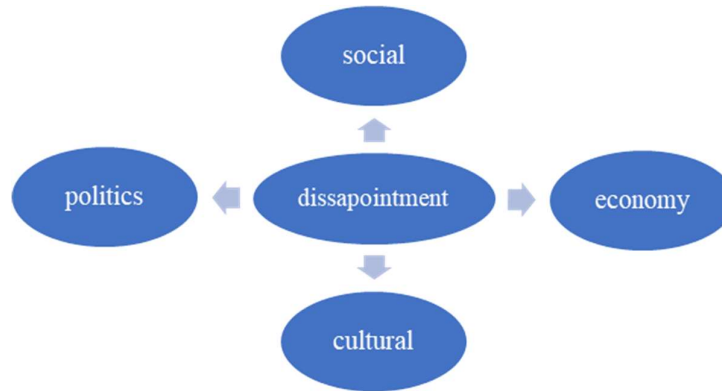


Figure 2. Several factors influenced the changing relation citizens and state

As a critical note, thoughts on Islamic state and formal sharia implementation proposed by FPI, MMI, and HTI illustrate failure in understanding the philosophy of democracy, comprehending the nation state system, and lacking in strategies. In addition, these organizations tend to neglect the required formula in social transformation theory. The organizations, similar to other Islamic movements, only revolve around discussions in theological-normative level, not on strategic-methodological design which covers formulating social theory and designing agendas on changing the citizens-state relation (Kuntowijoyo 2008). The thoughts are dominated by Islamic perspective which tends to react directly and instantly in changing the relation, as described in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Pattern of action among FPI, MMI, and HTI

This pattern, strengthened with Muslim community’s movements which translate text to action instantly and tend to ignore their surroundings, ends up in a failure. In facing complexity of contemporary state or political dynamics, Islamic teachings should be comprehended in three levels, as distinctive, shared, and regulative-normative values (M. Abdullah, 2017).

Thus, lesson learnt from the failure made by FPI, MMI, HTI, and other similar movements, the time has come for Muslims leaders to work on ideas and to propose changes in terms of statesmanship based

on prophetic-transformative social sciences, philosophical or ethical formulations, and well prepared goals, accomplishment strategies, and actions (Kuntowijoyo 2008).

## Conclusion

For FPI, MMI, and HTI, it is essential that state and day-to-day life are in Islamic teachings' corridor. The idea is basically a fusion of Islamic thought which implements theological dogma and statehood reasoning from citizen's viewpoint. Indonesian Muslims run two functions, as members of particular religious group and as citizens. Then, with their functions, Indonesia Muslims have the prospects in building a political system with global standard and gaining supports from its fellow Muslim citizens.

Next, thought on revitalizing khilafah Islamiyah, dawlah Islamiyah, Islamic state, and sharia enforcement becomes a part of discourse strategies in power relation, especially in an imbalanced and manipulative citizens-state relation. Furthermore, the thought is one of the few options available in preparing for a prospective change. Hence, responses on the thought proposed by FPI, MMI, and HTI in repositioning citizens-state relation indicate initiative and conscience in creating a better and more respectable life condition. The responses also become parts of Indonesian Muslims' dynamics and principles in realizing their rights, in the midst of democracy waves.

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