



AL-A'RAF

Jurnal Pemikiran Islam dan Filsafat

<https://ejournal.uinsaid.ac.id/index.php/al-araf>

ISSN: 1693-9867 (p); 2527-5119 (e)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v19i2.6488>



ISLAM, (UN)CIVIL SOCIETY AND CHALLENGES FOR DEMOCRATISATION IN INDONESIA

Syaifudin Zuhri

Universitas Islam Negeri Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah, Tulungagung

Abstrak

Kata Kunci:

Un-civil society,
Jihad,
Demokrasi,
Politik Islamist

Artikel ini berusaha untuk menganalisis secara kritis mengenai konsep masyarakat sipil (civil society) dalam perspektif politik Islamist di Indonesia. Se jauh mana konsep masyarakat sipil mampu menjelaskan lahirnya ketentraman publik menjadi isu penting yang hendak dijawab. Fokus utama artikel ini adalah mengulas gerakan Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI). Salah satu organisasi Islamis yang berdiri tidak lama setelah berakhirnya kekuasaan Orde Baru, tetapi sangat aktif dalam gerakan. MMI mengembangkan pemikiran politik yang menentang demokrasi dan ketentraman publik. MMI menjadi representasi organisasi "un-civil society" karena mengadvokasi wacana dan interpretasi Islam yang tidak mendukung lahirnya prinsip civilitas. Hal ini terlihat dari pandangan MMI terhadap demokrasi dan doktrin jihad. Atas dasar itulah, artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa kategorisasi masyarakat sipil di Indonesia harus pula memasukkan kategori masyarakat tidak sipil (un-civil society) meskipun orientasi mereka berbeda. Jika masyarakat sipil memperjuangkan demokrasi, maka masyarakat tidak sipil ini menjadi ancaman bagi demokrasi dan ketentraman publik.

Received:
18 August 2022

Revised:
31 October 2022

Accepted:
06 November 2022

Published Online:
30 December 2022

Corresponding author:

e-mail: syaifudinzuhri@yahoo.com

© 2022 UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta

Abstract**Keywords:**

Un-civil
society, Jihad,
Democracy,
Islamist
Politics

This article tries to critically examine the idea of civil society in light of Indonesia's Islamist politics. This raises the question of how far the idea of a civil society in a democratic country leads to public civility. This is an important question that must be addressed. The Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) is the main focus of this article. MMI, one of the most active Islamist organizations founded after the fall of the authoritarian regime of the New Order, develops political frameworks that endanger democracy and public civility. MMI became an organization that advocates for uncivil discourses of Islamic interpretation, thus representing Indonesia's (un)civil society. It is most visible in the organization's views on democracy and its interpretation of the "jihad" doctrine. As a result, the article concludes that the classification of Indonesian civil society should include both civil and (un)civil society. In addition to civil society, Indonesia should include uncivil society, even if their orientation is different. An un-civil society threatens democracy and public civility while civil society is fighting for it.

Introduction

To speak of democracy, one should begin with the interaction between state and society. The core assumption is that when the state is strong and civil society is weak, democracy will not prevail and *vice versa*. Therefore, democratisation is understood as a process of strengthening civil society.¹ It is in the 1980s, civil society has gained worldwide prominence as a political force in the context of fundamental geopolitical and economic changes and in the wake of numerous transitions to democracy all over the world. Political leaders and scholars' credit civil society with having played a crucial role in the making of transition to democratic politics, in liberating citizens from the oppressive state and to confer full economic and political freedom to citizens.²

The growing political prominence of civil society however has

¹ Arief Budiman, *State and Civil Society in Indonesia*, ed. Arief Budiman, 2nd ed. (Australia: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies Monash University, 1992), 3.

² Muthiah Alagappa, *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia: Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space*, ed. Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), ix.

stimulated a great deal of thoughts about the concept in the scholarly works. Some used civil society as a lens to explain democratic political changes, especially in developing countries, and others asserted civil society as a clearer understanding of the interface between the government and society.³ In addition, as its revival is concomitant with the expansion of liberalism and democratisation, civil society has a broad continuum of definitions by which group and activism can be classified. For western liberal thinker, civil society is a necessary condition by which liberal democracy and economic liberalisation is enabled to flourish,⁴ and a realisation of ultimate form of western society,⁵ whereas, for “post-modern utopianism” scholar, civil society is an alternative of defective of individual interest within democracy or as the mid-way between socialism and democracy.⁶

Initially, the idea of civil society refers to a sphere of action and interest between the level of household and the institution of the state; as a counterbalance the state’s monopoly and coercion.⁷ Civil society is also defined as political and about empowerment of the citizen in relation to state and market. In politics, civil society guarantees democracy, justice

³ Muthiah Alagappa, *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia: Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space*, ix.

⁴ S. Kaviraj and S. Khilnani, *Civil Society: Histories and Possibilities*, ed. S. Kaviraj and S. Khilnani (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), <https://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/samples/cam031/00065176.pdf>, 269.; Peter North, “Constructing Civil Society? Green Money in Transition Hungary,” *Review of International Political Economy* 13, no. 1 (April 10, 2006): 28–52, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25124060>.

⁵ C.M. Elliot, “Civil Society and Democracy: A Comparative Review Essay,” in *Civil Society and Democracy: A Reader*, ed. C.M. Elliot (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 21.

⁶ S. Kaviraj and S. Khilnani, *Civil Society: Histories and Possibilities*, ed. S. Kaviraj and S. Khilnani, 16.; Bob Sugeng Hadiwinata, “From ‘Heroes’ to ‘Troublemakers’? Civil Society and Democratization in Indonesia,” in *Democratization in Post-Subarto Indonesia*, ed. Marco Bunte and Andreas Ufen (Oxon: Roudletge, 2009), 278.

⁷ Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).; Kenneth Baynes, “Review of Civil Society and Political Theory,” ed. Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Political Theory* 21, no. 3 (April 10, 2023): 544–547, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/191805>.; John A. Hall, *Powers and Liberties: The Causes and Consequences of the Rise of the West* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986).; Adam B. Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (New York: Free Press, 1995), <https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691010816/the-idea-of-civil-society>.

and tolerance if and when it serves to strengthen two social arrangements; extra-governmental associations that act as counterweight to the state's monopoly of power and a social pluralism that helps to legitimate the idea that people have rights to their own ideas and actions.⁸ Likewise, it bridges between the top and bottom interest, between the government and the opposition which allows state and society coexist without falling into the extremes of authoritarianism rule or popular revolt.⁹ In economics, civil society mobilises private action for the common welfare, through voluntary associations. These associations are autonomous which means that they have their own resources –preferably deriving from their own membership- and that they can only satisfactorily operate in a political climate that respects the freedoms of association and expression.¹⁰

However, civil society is a normative concept and derives from the Western political concept. Scholars are invited to [re]consider the idea in different political circumstances. Muthiah Alagappa criticises a common believe among western scholars that civil society is alien to Asian situations. In Asia, civil society organisations not only exist, but also have experienced dramatic growth since 1980s and development of civil society has been fuelled by multiple factors; anti-colonial mobilisation, weakness of states, resistance to repressive rule etc.¹¹ Given the fact western genesis, Muslim scholars are varied responding to the idea of civil society. While on the edge-right side are those who claimed that it is secular, anti-religious and aiming at westernising Muslim societies, contrary, on the edge-left side are those who argued that it is a global ideal, irrespective of its western

⁸Robert W. Hefner, "Islamisation and Democratisation in Indonesia," in *Islam in an Era of Nation-States*, ed. Robert W. Hefner and Patricia Horvatic (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 112.; Supriyanto Abdi, "Muslim Politics and Democracy in Indonesia," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* 7, no. 1 SE-Articles (August 31, 2007): 77–93, <https://journal.uii.ac.id/Millah/article/view/4278>.

⁹ Hasan Hanafi, "Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society: A Reflective Islamic Approach," in *Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society*, ed. Simone Chambers and Will Kymlicka (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 173.

¹⁰ Nies Mulder, *Southeast Asian Images* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2003), 218-219.

¹¹ Alagappa, *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia: Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space*, vii-ix.

origins and accept as a model, a norm of practice and an ideal lifestyle for individuals and societies. Between the two sides are those who take a mid-way of thinking –modernist and reformist-, emphasising the possibility of developing the ingredients of classical Islam to reflect modern social needs through creative interpretation, *'ijtihad*.¹²

Furthermore, scholarly debates on civil society also generated Indonesian Muslim scholars falling into two groups. The first group is scholars who emphasise the universality of both the concept and practice of civil society. This group defines civil society as voluntary groups or organisations of citizens outside the state which act to balance the state power, on the one hand, and individuals, on the other hand.¹³ Civil society, for a foremost civil society scholar of this group, A.S. Hikam, is not necessarily opposing the state, but displaying ‘a high degree of independence versus the state’ while it adheres the laws and values of society and has ‘self-generating’, self-supporting’ and ‘voluntary’ characteristics. Here, civil society is often translated civil society as “*masyarakat sipil*” or “*masyarakat kewargaan*.” Unlike the above-mentioned group, the second group of scholars uses civil society interchangeably with “*masyarakat madani*”, which has an Islamic connotation. *Madani* refers to Medina, the city where the prophet Muhammad the first political entity which recognised religious, social and cultural plurality. Among those scholars is Nurcholis Madjid who defines *masyarakat madani* as institutional resources or organisations whose functions are both to bridge the state power and its citizens and work for building civility (*tamaddun*).¹⁴

¹² Hanafi, “Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society: A Reflective Islamic Approach.”, 171

¹³ Muhammad A.S. Hikam, *Demokrasi Dan Civil Society* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1999), 3.; Ahmad Baso, *Civil Society versus Masyarakat Madani: Arkeologi Pemikiran ‘Civil Society’ Dalam Islam Indonesia* (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 1999).

¹⁴ Nurcholis Madjid, “Menuju Masyarakat Madani,” *Ulumul Qur’an* 2, no. 7 (1996): 51–55.

Civil Society and Religion

In western interpretation, civil society includes formal and informal voluntary organisations and networks, political parties, churches, trade unions and media, but excludes business and government institutions.¹⁵ In more practical way, Schmitter contends that civil society must embody dual autonomy, collective action, non-usurpation and civil or legal nature,¹⁶ while Whitehead's analysis is profoundly contested the idea of religious fundamentalism as one form of civil society as the latter argued 'various form of religious fundamentalism may have to be tolerated in a democracy, but cannot be regarded as part of a modern liberal civil society'.¹⁷ Notably scholars excluded religious organisation from the definition of civil society because they assume civil society is broader than any narrow primordial or religion base, while others include religious organisation as part of civil society or at least 'embryo of civil society' due to providing constituents political means and having voluntary characters.¹⁸ Mahajan, for example, categorised Indian associations and organisations, based on caste, ethnicity and religion, as compromising civil society¹⁹ as with Sullivan' and Norton' categorisations of Muslim civil society organisations in the Middle East.²⁰ Likewise, Nakamura clearly is convinced that civil society not only exists, but also plays important roles

¹⁵ Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, ix.; Martin Shaw, "Civil Society and Global Politics: Beyond a Social Movements Approach," *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 23 (1994): 647–667.

¹⁶ Schmitter Philippe C., "Civil Society East and West," in *Consolidating the Third World Democracies. Themes and Perspectives*, ed. Yun-han Chu and Hung-mao Tien Diamond, Larry, Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press and the National Endowment for Democracy, 1997), 240.

¹⁷ L. Whitehead, "Bowling in the Bronx: The Uncivil Interstices between Civil and Political Society," in *Civil Society and Democratisation*, ed. P. Burnell and P. Calvert (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 35.

¹⁸ A. Culla, *Masyarakat Madani: Pemikiran, Teori Dan Relevansinya Dengan Cita-Cita Reformasi* (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Pustaka, 1999), 147.

¹⁹ G. Mahajan, "Civil Society and Its Avatars," in *Civil Society and Democracy: A Reader*, ed. C.M. Elliot (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 188.

²⁰ D.J. Sullivan, *Private Voluntary Organisations in Egypt: Islamic Development, Private Initiative and State Control* (Gainesville: University Press of California, 1994), 8-9.; Augustus Richard Norton, *Civil Society in the Middle East*, ed. Augustus Richard Norton (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995).

in fostering democracy in Indonesia.²¹ Similarly, while Amin Abdullah asserts Muhammadiyah in the context of the Western discourse on civil society because its commitment to civic virtues and democracy,²² Falaakh perceives the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) as a part of civil society that plays an important role in the Indonesia democratisation.²³

With regards to the Indonesia civil society, Hefner warned the danger of the rising un-democratic civility which could lead democratisation to the other way around. He mentioned that “civil association is necessary, but never sufficient to guarantee a civil-democratic politics.”²⁴ This warning is a serious one since we have seen in various places that religion-inspired civil society can easily become a problem of democratisation and degenerate into communal violence. Therefore, Verena Beittinger-Lee offers a critical categorisation of Indonesia civil society, including a model to define the sphere of ‘uncivil society’ more closely and to identify several subcategories of uncivil society Indonesia, ranging from vigilantes, militias, paramilitaries, youth groups, civil security task forces and militant Islamic (and other religious) groups, ethno-nationalist groups to terrorist organisations and groups belonging to organised crime.²⁵ In addition to that of Lee, Hadiwinata urges that in analysing civil society in Indonesia, both “good” and “bad” elements of civil society must be considered as a package of Indonesia civil society.²⁶

²¹ Nakamura Mitsuo, *Islam and Civil Society in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001).

²² M. Amin Abdullah, “Muhammadiyah’s Experience in Promoting Civil Society on the Eve of the 21st Century,” in *Islam and Civil Society in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001), 43.

²³ Muhammad Fajrul Falaakh, “Nahdlatul Ulama and Civil Society in Indonesia,” in *Islam and Civil Society in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001), 33.

²⁴ Robert W. Hefner, *Democratic Civility: The History and Cross-Cultural Possibility of a Modern Political Ideal* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1998), 9.; Mitsuo, *Islam Civ. Soc. Southeast Asia*.

²⁵ Verena Beittinger-Lee, *(Un) Civil Society and Political Change in Indonesia A Contested Arena* (-: Roudletge, 2013)..

²⁶ Hadiwinata, “From ‘Heroes’ to ‘Troublemakers’? Civil Society and Democratization in Indonesia.”, 279-280

The Islamists and Democracy

The democratisation has reached Asia since 1980s and Indonesia was relatively late in responding the trend which Huntington calls ‘the third wave of democratisation’.²⁷ The 1997 Asian financial crisis crumbled the Indonesia economic and political structures and provoked a massive protest, demanding the authoritarian regime of New Order, under Suharto, to put to an end. Since the collapse of the regime in 1998, Indonesia has started the project for a democratic politics through free election by which political parties enabled to compete, media-freedom and guaranteed the political sovereignty of its citizens.

However, together with the wave of democratisation in Indonesia, it is noteworthy that Indonesia also contends for the abuse of religion, ranging from the religion-based conflicts, violent attacks, terrorism as well as the massive establishment Islamist organisations that challenge democratisation and threaten Indonesian plurality through claimed-jihad activities. Furthermore, those Muslim organisations claimed representing Indonesian Muslim voice and demanded to “bring Islamic political mission back” in the country. Using Islamic symbols, the groups invited Indonesians to challenge both the Christian-Jews project to secularise Indonesia through democratisation as well as invited their fellow Muslims “to join the caravan” through jihad against enemies of Islam.

Among those Islamist organisations, *Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia*/MMI (the Indonesian Mujahidin Council) is the most active Islamist group. It takes its roots from Kartosuwiryo’s spirit to establish an Indonesian Islamic state in the 1940s.²⁸ The organisation was founded as a result of the First Congress of Mujahidin in 2000 and headed by two prominent Islamic activists, Irfan Suryahardi Awwas and Abu Bakar

²⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave Democratisation in the Late 20th Century* (London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 21.

²⁸ Syaifudin Zuhri, “Transnationalising Jamaah Islamiyyah,” *Al-Jami’ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 48, no. 1 (2010): 45–80, <https://aljamiah.or.id/index.php/AJIS/article/view/105/127>.

Ba'asyir.²⁹ While the former is a well-known activist of '*usra*' (literally means "nuclear family or cell"), a clandestine activism of Islamic activists during the reign of the New Order government, the latter figure was believed to be '*amir* (leader) of *Jamaah Islamiyyah*, a dangerous terrorist group responsible for a number of bombing attacks in Southeast Asia.

However, unlike most observers and scholars who centralise their analyses to Ba'asyir playing the most important roles in setting up the MMI (ICG, 2003), I urge that Abu Jibril Abdurrahman, the older brother of Awwas, is the architect of MMI. He travelled to Pakistan and joined the Afghan war in 1985 and studied weaponry and war strategies at one of the centres of *al-Qaeda's* training, Abu Sayyaf, in Afghanistan. In 1999, Jibril founded *Laskar Mujahidin*, a small well-armed unit, headed by a number of former Afghanistan fighters and graduates of *Jamaah Islamiyyah's* military training camp in the Philippines. The *Laskar* reportedly had several meetings with a top leader of al-Qaeda, Ayman Az-Zawahiri, and received thousands of dollars of aid from Osama bin Laden to build a new military base in Poso, replacing the *Hudaibiyah* camp in Mindano which was destroyed during aggressive military attacks of the Philippine authorities. When Indonesia has just begun a new political step in democratisation, the *Laskar's* networks joined a conference in Yogyakarta on 5-8 August 2000 by which the MMI was declared to be founded.

Despite the above network-based perspective, in the light of the structural politics, the establishment of the MMI was a result and a consequence of the Indonesia political transition from authoritarian regime to democracy. The blurred and uncertain "rules of game" after the downfall of the New Order regime benefited the networks in order to

²⁹ The 2000 appointed Awwas as the chairman of executive body of the MMI (*tanfidziyah*) and Ba'asyir as the spiritual leader (*amir*) of the council. On July 2008, Ba'asyir resigned from his position and founded his *Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid* (JAT). It has been argued that the resignation is a consequence of conflict of authority over the council and different interpretation of *imamah* system in addition it demonstrates the turning point of Ba'asyir to the *Jamaah Islamiyyah* Statute, *Pedoman Umum Perjuangan Jamaah Islamiyyah* (PUPJI). See Syaifudin Zuhri, "Transnationalising *Jamaah Islamiyyah*," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 48, no. 1 (2010): 45–80.

establish an organisation.³⁰ However, the fruit of democratisation does not lead the MMI to accept democracy as it considers the concept as unacceptable and against Islam. Fauzan Al Anshari, the MMI spokesperson, argues that the principles of democracy are against the *shari'a* as democracy leads Muslims to fall into faithlessness. He gives three reasons for this argument; first, democracy bases its decision on *tasri al-jamahir* (the majority-based decisions) and *shuro* is based on God's rules (Q. al-Ma'ida: 49). Second, democracy is a *thogut* system which insists to rule on the basis of man-made constitution –not on the *shari'a*. Consequently, this implies that the constitution is higher than the *shari'a* itself and this is against Islam (Q. al-Nisa': 59). Third, democracy is a political model descended from secularism which separated religion from socio-political affairs and is being used as a shield by those who refuse to live in accordance with the *shari'a*.³¹

Likewise, Awwas (2004), the chairman of MMI, maintains that democracy is a godless political system (*sistem kafir*) and it is a political system which was used during the European colonialist period in order to break up and subjugate Muslims. Awwas insists that Muslims have to change democracy into a system of Islam or *syuro*. There are three obvious principles which make democracy against *syuro*; 1) democracy places sovereignty in the hands of the people, while *syuro* puts sovereignty of the hand of God, 2) in a democratic system, the truth is a result of the majority decision, whereas *syuro* invites the truth from God, 3) while democracy assumes that all people are the same and have equal rights, *syuro* differentiates people on their qualities. In a democracy, a prostitute has an equal voice in voting to an '*ulama*. It proves that democracy is an irrational system, Awwas claims.³²

³⁰ Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), 48-56.

³¹ Fauzan Al-Anshari, "Demokrasi Syirik," *majelis.mujahidin.or.id*.

³² Irfan S. Awwas, "Kajian Ahad Pagi", 30 December 2004. A similar statement was proposed by Abu Hanif through "Kajian Ahad Pagi", 15 May 2005.

Discourses on Jihad

The MMI places its movement within the framework of “*manhaj 'iqoma al-din*” (method of upholding religion). The *manhaj* is based on the presumption that Islam is the absolute and truthful religion which was revealed by God to His last Prophet, Muhammad. This last God-revealed religion contained the most comprehensive rules and regulations by which human beings must lay their whole lives in both al-Qur'an and the *sunna* (the Prophet's traditions). Human beings, principally, were created by God to fulfil their duties as human beings: to devote their lives to God and follow the Prophet's examples. In doing so, humans must submit themselves to serving God in a complete manner (*kaffa*), devoting their lives and aims in order to achieve God's blessings (Q. al-Rum: 30). Therefore, the MMI claimed, humans cannot run away from three obligations: 1) Islam must be accomplished purely, without intervention of man-made teachings and laws, 2) Islam must be performed totally (*kaffa*), 3) Islamic teachings must be performed through powerful Islamic sovereignty as well as Islamic government.³³

The above three elements, the MMI claimed, cannot be accomplished without struggle and self-sacrifice. Therefore, the first *'amir* of MMI, Ba'asyir (2005) claimed, Muslims should give their total efforts in order to achieve God's aid (*nasr Allah*) (Q. Muhammad: 7) the political victory of Islam in the shape of Muslim's political domination and the complete implementation of God's laws. To bring the above into existence, *nasr al-din* (spreading religion) and *tamqin al-din* (bring Islam into political domination) are two further obligations for every Muslim, under the guidance of al-Qur'an, *sunna* and *khulafa' al-rashidin's* (the four rightly guided caliphs – the Prophet's companions) instructions. While *nasr ad-din* means total efforts aimed at spreading Islam, *tamqin al-din* refers to all attempts and actions to bring Islam to political domination. The MMI

³³ Irfan Suryahardi Awwas, *Da'wah Dan Jihad Abu Bakar Ba'asyir* (Yogyakarta: Wihdah Press, 2003), 235.

claims that jihad is the only method to accomplish the duty of achieving political domination, as Ba'asyir urged.³⁴

Similarly, Abu Jibril Abdurahman (*personal Video Cassette Documentation of the author*) believes jihad as the only way of upholding Islam politically. It is claimed as the only way to overcome the current crisis and to save all Muslims in this worldly life and hereafter.³⁵ In one occasion of his sermons, Jibril maintained:

Jihad is the only way to place Islam into political domination. It is the only means to uphold God's religion. The basic teaching of Islam to uphold religion is through written words (*kitab*) and the sword. Even all prophets were obliged to uphold God's religion by sword as stated in the Qur'an³⁶

Jibril further explains the literal meaning of jihad is: 1) to make every effort and to devote every power to participate in the field war; 2) to make a serious effort and devoting all power to fight against the enemy; 3) strength and power. Practically, he continued, jihad means: 1) to fight against the infidels in order to elevate the word of Allah and to work in God's path, or to fight against the infidels and to help mujahidin who are in war. The meaning of *fi sabillillah* (in the God's path), that is attached to the word jihad, is "war". Jihad, he claims, is the only good deed, which has become the bastion and the saver of Islamic teachings and can never be replaced by any other kind of good deed.³⁷

Furthermore, Jibril asserts that jihad is an obligation duty for every Muslim to perform and whoever neglects this obligation and says that these times are not the time for committing jihad has already fallen into infidelity. Jibril said:

³⁴ Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, "Sistem Kaderisasi Mujahidin Dalam Mewujudkan Masyarakat Islam," *geocities.com*, 6.

³⁵ Abu Jibril Abdurahman, *Zaman Jibad, Video Cassette Documentation*, and Abu Jibril Abdurahman in "The MMI's Tabligh Akbar" in Payakumbuh, West Sumatra.

³⁶ Abu Jibril Abdurraman, *Kajian Abad Pagi*, 13 March 2005.

³⁷ Abu Jibril Abdurraman, *Daurah Syar'iyah*, 16 October 2005.

Blazing be the spirit of Muslims in waging war (*qital*) in order to destroy unbelievers and God's enemies. Jihad is not performed through economy, politics or socio-cultural movements because all those have been possessed by unbelievers. War is the only way to fight them. The prophet Muhammad was sent to wage war and, nowadays, many people say that it is not the age for war. Those people are condemned by all angels and all human beings. Therefore, all of you do not be afraid of waging war because Allah Almighty has both the most powerful strength and most poignant tortures.³⁸

Jihad, according to Jibril, is an eternal duty for every Muslim to perform. Not only because it is the only way to place Islam dominating, but also due to the eternal adversary between Islam and the enemies of Islam.³⁹ As an individual duty which every Muslim is obliged to join the activities, jihad is aimed to eradicate the enemies of Islam, ranging from non-Muslim people to the political structures of the state. For Murtasyid, an activist of the MMI, for example, the current enemies of Islam are catholic pastors, Christian priests and missionaries who promote their religion and continually try to convert Muslims to their religion. None of the Indonesian Christians can be categorised as *dzimmī* (protected people), therefore it is an obligation to fight against them, as he said:

The unbelievers who are God's enemies are all the Indonesian Christians. All of them are not *dzimmī*, but *harbi* (enemy) people whom we must fight against. They are people who have insulted us and made this country based on their system. They are not living under Islamic governance and not paying *jizya* (tax for protection). Through their system, those unbelievers have made us suffer because of our religion.⁴⁰

Murtasyid further suggests that the enemies of God are not only the Christians, but also those who proclaim themselves to be Muslim but reject implementation of the shari'a. "These groups, such as the Liberal Islam Networks (*Jaringan Islam Liberal*), have poisoned our fellow Muslims. "We have to fight against them and they deserved to be killed," Murtasyid

³⁸ Abu Jibril Abdurrahman, "Kajian Abad Pagi", 13 March 2005.

³⁹ Abu Jibril Abdurrahman, "Kajian Abad Pagi", 13 March 2005

⁴⁰ Ali Murtasyid, LPD Malang, *Interview*, 14 October 2005.

emphasised.

In addition, Jibril pointed at the enemies of God on a state level which not only categorised the western states, especially US, but also Indonesia. Western states, he said, are always against Islam. “They put mujahidin in prison and want to eliminate the spirit of jihad from their hearts; they persecute and destroy Muslims everywhere. Therefore, every Muslim is obliged to wage war against this oppression and cruelty of the West.⁴¹ Furthermore, Jibril claimed, Muslim rulers who have not applied the *shari’a* are perceived as being against the *shari’a*, including the Indonesian regimes. He considers these regimes as infidel governments and calls for jihad against them, as mentioned:

In Indonesia, those who reject God’s law are Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Yusuf Kalla and all their ministers. They have avoided the truthful *tawhid* as Allah states in the Qur’an (*al-Mumtahana*: 4). They have fallen into infidelity and there is a long-lasting adversary between us and them until they repent, forswear and uphold God’s laws.⁴²

Moreover, in conducting jihad, Jibril asserted that every Muslim is allowed to do terror. He mentioned that terror is one form of jihad which is not prohibited –if not to mention recommended- for Muslims to perform as he mentioned:

Syaikh Abdullah Azzam said that those who have knowledge and are not conducting war, they are in sin. Jihad is an obligatory duty for Muslims to commit as the obligation for Muslims to have fasting in Ramadhan. Those who refuse this obligatory duty are henchmen of Jews and Christians who eternally fight against us. Therefore, you must not be afraid of fighting in a battle because those enemies of God will always fight against you. Anyways, they are always afraid of you, as Allah stated (Q.S *al-Hasr*: 13). Furthermore, Allah initially commanded every Muslim to be a terrorist, as Allah stated in the Qur’an (*’Ali Imran*: 151). Terrorist in Arabic is *irhab*, which means “to terrify or to terrorize”. By becoming a terrorist, you make all enemies of God frightened and you will be God-blessed terrorists.⁴³

⁴¹ Abu jibril Abdurraman, *Daurah Syar’iyyah*, 16 October 2005 as mentioned also by one leading figure in the MMI circle, Alawi Makmun, *Daurah Syar’iyyah*, 17 October 2005.

⁴² Abu jibril Abdurraman, *Daurah Syar’iyyah*, 16 October 2005.

⁴³ Abu jibril Abdurraman, *Daurah Syar’iyyah*, 16 October 2005

Conclusion

It is important to be well-alarmed, as Norton asserts, about the existence of civil society. Although civil society is a necessarily condition for democracy, it is not a sufficient one because it might not always lead to democratic civility.⁴⁴ As other Muslim countries, Islam in Indonesia has played a major role, either as the democratisation machine or defective factor. The MMI resembles an Indonesian Muslim organisation which uses openness of political opportunity structure and democratisation to consolidate the mission and found an organisation. But, admittedly, the MMI also becomes a threat to democratisation because it not only challenges the democratisation process, threatens the Indonesia pluralism, but also it campaigns for hatred and violence. Therefore, broadly speaking, the essay concludes that civil society is a sphere where not merely “good” for society at large, but sometimes it becomes “a threat” for society and democratisation and the definition of Indonesia civil society should include two opposed categories: “bad and good” as Hadiwinata suggested or “civil and uncivil” society as Beittinger-Lee offered. The MMI as explained above is an example how a civil society organisation threatens democratisation and becomes a problem for Indonesian plurality and democracy.

References

- Abdi, Supriyanto. “Muslim Politics and Democracy in Indonesia.” *Millah: Journal of Religions Studies* 7, no. 1 SE-Articles (August 31, 2007): 77–93. <https://journal.uii.ac.id/Millah/article/view/4278>.
- Abdullah, M. Amin. “Muhammadiyah’s Experience in Promoting Civil Society on the Eve of the 21st Century.” In *Islam and Civil Society in Southeast Asia*, 43. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001.
- Al-Anshari, Fauzan. “Demokrasi Syirik.” *Majelis.Mujabidin.or.Id*.
- Alagappa, Muthiah. *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia: Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space*. Edited by Muthiah Alagappa. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.

⁴⁴ Augustus Richard Norton, *Civil Society in the Middle East*, ed. Augustus Richard Norton (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 9.

- Arato, Jean L. Cohen and Andrew. *Civil Society and Political Theory*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.
- Awwas, Irfan Suryahardi. *Da'wah Dan Jihad Abu Bakar Ba'asyir*. Yogyakarta: Wihdah Press, 2003.
- Ba'asyir, Abu Bakar. "Sistem Kaderisasi Mujahidin Dalam Mewujudkan Masyarakat Islam." *Geocities.Com*.
- Baso, Ahmad. *Civil Society versus Masyarakat Madani: Arkeologi Pemikiran 'Civil Society' Dalam Islam Indonesia*. Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 1999.
- Baynes, Kenneth. "Review of Civil Society and Political Theory." Edited by Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato. *Political Theory* 21, no. 3 (April 10, 2023): 544–547. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/191805>.
- Beitinger-Lee, Verena. *(Un) Civil Society and Political Change in Indonesia A Contested Arena*. -: Roudletge, 2013.
- Budiman, Arief. *State and Civil Society in Indonesia*. Edited by Arief Budiman. 2nd ed. Australia: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies Monash University, 1992.
- Culla, A. *Masyarakat Madani: Pemikiran, Teori Dan Relevansinya Dengan Cita-Cita Reformasi*. Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Pustaka, 1999.
- Elliot, C.M. "Civil Society and Democracy: A Comparative Review Essay." In *Civil Society and Democracy: A Reader*, edited by C.M. Elliot, 21. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Falaakh, Muhammad Fajrul. "Nahdlatul Ulama and Civil Society in Indonesia." In *Islam and Civil Society in Southeast Asia*, 33. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001.
- Hadiwinata, Bob Sugeng. "From 'Heroes' to 'Troublemakers'? Civil Society and Democratization in Indonesia." In *Democratization in Post-Subarto Indonesia*, edited by Marco Bünte and Andreas Ufen, 278. Oxon: Roudletge, 2009.
- Hall, John A. *Powers and Liberties: The Causes and Consequences of the Rise of the West*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986.
- Hanafi, Hasan. "Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society: A Reflective Islamic Approach." In *Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society*, edited by Simone Chambers and Will Kymlicka, 173. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Hefner, Robert W. *Democratic Civility: The History and Cross-Cultural Possibility of a Modern Political Ideal*. New Brunswick: Transaction, 1998.
- . "Islamisation and Democratisation in Indonesia." In *Islam in an Era of Nation-States*, edited by Robert W. Hefner and Patricia Horvath, 112. Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.
- Hikam, Muhammad A.S. *Demokrasi Dan Civil Society*. Jakarta: LP3ES, 1999.
- Huntington, Samuel P. *The Third Wave Democratisation in the Late 20th Century*. London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

- Khilnani, S. Kaviraj and S. *Civil Society: Histories and Possibilities*. Edited by S. Kaviraj and S. Khilnani. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. <https://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/samples/cam031/00065176.pdf>.
- Madjid, Nurcholis. "Menuju Masyarakat Madani." *Ulumul Qur'an* 2, no. 7 (1996): 51–55.
- Mahajan, G. "Civil Society and Its Avatars." In *Civil Society and Democracy: A Reader*, edited by C.M. Elliot, 188. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Mitsuo, Nakamura. *Islam and Civil Society in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001.
- Mulder, Nies. *Southeast Asian Images*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2003.
- North, Peter. "Constructing Civil Society? Green Money in Transition Hungary." *Review of International Political Economy* 13, no. 1 (April 10, 2006): 28–52. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25124060>.
- Norton, Augustus Richard. *Civil Society in the Middle East*. Edited by Augustus Richard Norton. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995.
- . *Civil Society in the Middle East*. Edited by Augustus Richard Norton. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995.
- Schmitter, Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1986.
- Schmitter Philippe C. "Civil Society East and West." In *Consolidating the Third World Democracies. Themes and Perspectives*, edited by Yun-han Chu and Hung-mao Tien Diamond, Larry, Marc F. Plattner, 240. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press and the National Endowment for Democracy, 1997.
- Seligman, Adam B. *The Idea of Civil Society*. New York: Free Press, 1995. <https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691010816/the-idea-of-civil-society>.
- Shaw, Martin. "Civil Society and Global Politics: Beyond a Social Movements Approach." *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 23 (1994): 647–667.
- Sullivan, D.J. *Private Voluntary Organisations in Egypt: Islamic Development, Private Initiative and State Control*. Gainsville: University Press of California, 1994.
- Whitehead, L. "Bowling in the Bronx: The Uncivil Interstices between Civil and Political Society." In *Civil Society and Democratisation*, edited by P. Burnell and P. Calvert, 35. London: Frank Cass, 2004.
- Zuhri, Syaifudin. "Transnationalising Jamaah Islamiyyah." *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 48, no. 1 (2010): 45–80. <https://aljamiyah.or.id/index.php/AJIS/article/view/105/127>.