Islam and Politics in the 20th Century Scholarship: A Journal Review of Indonesia

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Abstract

Discourse on Islam and politics during the 20th century is inseparable with related scholarly publications about Indonesia, taking time on that period. Reviewing "Indonesia", a journal issued by Southeast Asia Program Publications at Cornell University, this writing mainly aims to report the notion of how Islam and politics were being represented in the international scholarly works. Three categorizations of sub-themes are gained by evaluating two numbers of "Indonesia", they are (1) group and hierarchy, (2) perception and knowledge dynamics, and (3) public figure. The categorizations are used as a framework in analyzing how the notion of Islam and politics was internationally perceived through scholarly works issued during that period. The result shows that the impression of the notion of Islam and politics tends to be perceived as a power for promoting groups formation. The power distribution is another critical substance which can be derived from the group formation. The role of religion, to this extent, can easily be used as a legitimate source for any critical political decision. Societal segregation can be considered as a result of a certain kind of discrepancies in the realm of power distribution among several groups of people. In other words, the role of Islam is very critical in shaping the political expression of the people in Indonesia.

Keywords:
Islam and politics, Group and Hierarchy, Public Figure

Introduction

The notion of Islam and politics in Indonesia during 20th century was widely perceived through myriads spectacles. One of the critical sources supporting this issue can be found by analyzing two numbers of international Journal during that period. By reviewing two numbers of *Indonesia*, a journal published by Southeast Asia Program Publications at Cornell University, issued in April 1993 and October 1993, three categories are gained through evaluating the journal's content.

Categorizing the sub themes of this journal was mainly done by analyzing the closest relation between the article's content and the possible categorization. Three categorizations are found: (1) Group and Hierarchy, (2) Perception and Knowledge Dynamics, and (3) Public Figure. These three categorizations are differently appeared in the article's content. I propose the three categorizations in order to give a general view on what is being represented in the journal's content. Providing general analysis, the proposed categorizations are not intended to really give a detail view on each article. However, the detail about the categorization's percentage can be seen in the following diagram:
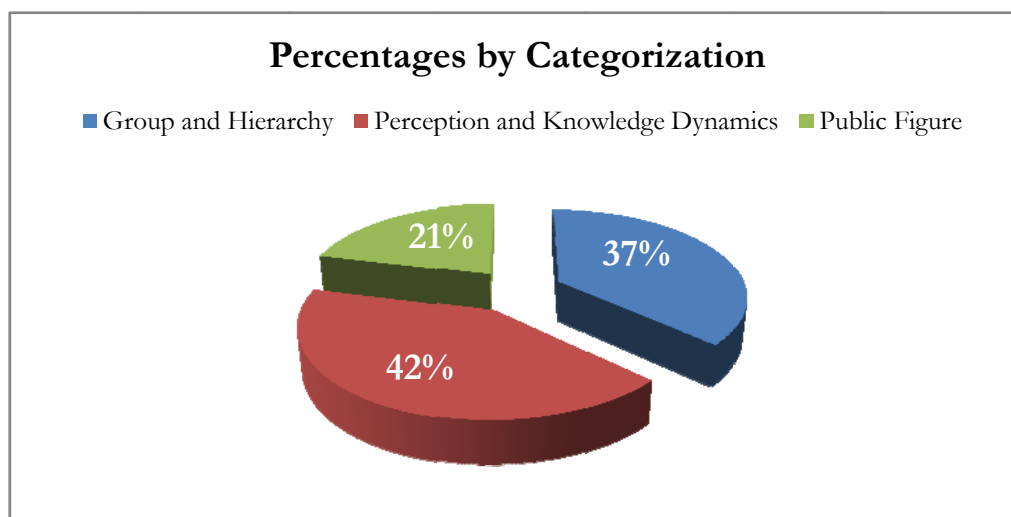

Figure (1) Percentages of Three Categorizations

By reviewing 19 articles from the two numbers published by the journal, as we can see from the diagram above, the categorization of "Perception and Knowledge Dynamics" has the highest percentage, which is 42%. The second mostly occurred categorization is by relating the notion of Islam and politics on 20th century with the concept of "Group and Hierarchy", which emerged at the percentage of 37%. The least occurred category throughout the two publications is "Public Figure" with the percentage of 21%.

For more detail, the journal categorizations are discussed in the following sections of this paper. The discussion is presented using the sequences as follows: discussion on articles related to "Perception and Knowledge Dynamics"; discussion on articles related to "Group and Hierarchy"; followed by discussion on articles related to "Public Figure" categorization. I emphasize that categorization proposed in this writing is just intended to ease the conceptual understanding on what is actually being represented in the journal's content, in a general view. Furthermore, the writing may hopefully provide a general view on how the discourse about Islam and politics was being internationally represented through scholarly works about Indonesia during the 20th century.

Perception and Knowledge Dynamics

Being the most occurred categorization, the notion of Perception and Knowledge Dynamics emerged in 8 from the total of 19 articles in the Journal of "Indonesia" Number 56 and 57, or at the percentage of 42%. Articles being categorized into this group contain Islam and politics on the 19th and 20th century as being tightly related with people's perception on self and others, identity shaping through knowledge transfer, descriptions of historical sites, and some dynamics as an impact of the interfered of a certain kinds of groups in an area. In addition, the introduction articles in the publication No. 57 is also being included in this category, because the

scholarly introduction to other articles can also be considered as mostly related to the category of Perception and Knowledge Dynamics.

The first article discussing Perception and Knowledge Dynamics can be seen through the writing of H. M. J. Maier, entitled "From Heteroglossia to Polyglossia: The Creation of Malay and Dutch in the Indies". The article mainly implies the identity shaping through the dynamics of linguistic ability which finally results segregating effects among groups of people:

> "The efforts which Authority undertook in the first half of this century to impose order on the linguistic flexibility and to create clearly defined languages in the Indies had a double face. On the one hand, the position of Dutch was solidified; towards the end of the nineteenth century it turned away from tolerance and heterogeneity and surrounded itself with an aura of privilege and exclusiveness. On the other hand, Malay and the other vernaculars were defined and restricted, thus developing along lines Authority had not foreseen. In literature, the mirror of the Indies, a corresponding gap evolved: in Dutch novels that deal with the Indies, the natives are treated with growing hostility and distrust, in Malay novels the Europeans are largely absent" (Maier 1993: 57-58).

The shaping of linguistics ability can be seen in the identity shaping which finally renders group segregation. Linguistics ability, in this extent, can be used to symbolize identities of several groups which finally renders the access to the differences among those groups.

The second article discussed in this section mainly contains knowledge dynamics throughout a review of doctoral theses in Leiden University. Through an article entitled "A Short Review of Doctoral Theses on the Netherlands-Indies Accepted at the Faculty of Law of Leiden University in the Period 1850-1940", Pompe denotes how the Netherland-Indies is being perceived in the scholarly works during the period of 1850-1940. For instance, during the period of 1881-1900 the doctoral theses show a greater variety of topics, with one of the remarkable

scholarly developments by the topic of "indigenous legal systems in the archipelago" (Pompe 1993: 77). In addition, the notion of *adat* law is also included in a doctoral thesis of V. E. Korn (1924), by making a case study on "Balinese *adat* law to date, divided by subject and region" (Pompe 1993: 83). This article implies how the condition in Netherland-Indies is diversely responded through scholarship writings in the realm of law diachronically.

The third article in this category notably discusses about the architecture of Prambanan temple. Written by Jacques Dumarçay and Michael Smithies, an article entitled "The Beamwork Illustrated at Prambanan" implies the detail of Prambanan temple's architecture by making attempt to reconstruct the beam placement. Furthermore, considering the material used for making beam works, Dumarçay and Smithies state that in beam works, "it was not necessary to insert intermediary trusses because the ridge-pole was compressed throughout by the rafters inserted in the stringer whereas" (Dumarçay and Smithies 1993: 8). The third article mainly tells about Prambanan architecture in the realm of beam construction by making relation on groups of people that used the similar kind of construction at that period.

Another article belongs to this category is written by Bernard Sellato, entitled "Collective Memory and Nomadism: Ethno-Historical Investigations in Borneo". This article is based on an 18-month (1979-1981) study among central Borneo ethnic groups which is aimed at "reconstructing these groups' histories, over a 20,000 sq. km. region and as far back in time as possible" (Sellato 1993: 155). One of the results of this research is related to the concept of how collective memories actually shape the current condition of social structure, as being implied by Sellato "in groups with a strong social stratification, a relative idleness allowed the nobility to keep oral tradition alive" (Sellato 1993: 169). This research represents the natives' awareness of historical details in a group of people

which is tightly related to the current societal behavior. In other words, historical awareness contributes to how people act on their culture.

By categorizing numbers of articles in the group of Perception and Knowledge Dynamics, I presumably consider that the content of articles mainly imply on the notion of how people consider the concept of Islam and politics in the realm of perception and on the realm of knowledge transfer, which finally tend to be related on identity shaping and access distribution. In other words, this category represents that the notion of Islam and politics was perceived as being related to the concept of identity.

Group and Hierarchy

The second category occurs in 7 out of 19 articles in total, or reaching the percentage of 37%. Articles belong to the category of Group and Hierarchy are mainly related to the notion of Islam and politics at the 20th century with the discourse of who the dominant groups are and how the power is being taken over by a certain group of people. In this extent, the role of Islam or religion in general is to define members of the dominant group and give a legitimate basis on the power implementation in a certain area. Some articles related to the category are further be discussed in this section.

The first article on Group and Hierarchy category is written by Robert W. Hefner, entitled "Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class". Taking a context in 1990, at the new order regime, Hefner implies on the formation of "Association of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals (ICMI, *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Se-Indonesia*), as a "poignant moment in the political and cultural history of New Order (post-1966) Indonesia" (Hefner 1993: 1). The formation of ICMI remarks a great change on a political realm on that period that can be seen through a phenomenon of a "more complex attitude toward Islam" which can be perceived as a change on managing Islamic

appearance in public political realm (Hefner 1993: 32). Islam somehow became restrictedly managed in political realm but freely expressed its symbol in public. For instance, in 1990, "the government finally allowed Muslim school girls to wear *jilbab* (religious veils) to classes" and in 1991, "President Suharto became Haji Muhammad Suharto, after his celebrated pilgrimage to Mecca" (Hefner 1993: 32). In other words, the emergence of ICMI remarks myriads of changes in public appearance of Islam. In the realm of politics, Islam appeared restrictively by following a certain kind of regulation. In the realm of identity, Islam notably appeared to be more freely in public realm, which was signified by the use of *jilbab* and the name changing of President Suharto.

Another article in this section is written by the editors' team of Indonesia Journal, entitled "Current Data on the Indonesian Military Elite: January 1, 1992-August 31, 1993". The article mainly evaluates the composition of the Military Elite in Indonesia for 1,5 years, by looking at the ethnicity, age and religious backgrounds. The editors imply that "60% at the supra-Korem level, and 64% at the Korem level, are Javanese" (The Editors. 1993: 119). The further data on the military elite's composition can be seen in the following table:

	Supra Korem	Korem	Total
Javanese	38	20	58
Sundanese	3	5	8
Toba Batak	2	2	4
Minangkabau	3	0	3
Madurese	3	0	3
Menadonese	2	1	3
Acehnese	2	0	2
Buginese	1	1	2
Torajanese	1	1	2
Balinese	1	1	2
Chinese	2	0	2
Mandailing Batak	2	0	2
Sipirok Batak	1	1	2
Butonese	1	0	1
Siakese	1	0	1
Unknown	6	7	13

Source: The Editors, 1993, p. 120.

Based on the table above, we can see that Javanese is the dominant ethnicity in comparison to other races among the military elites group. The second dominant ethnicity is Sundanese, although with a big difference in number compared to the number of Javanese. The domination of Javanese in military elites group can definitely represent a broader discourse, about who tend to be grouped as the members of the dominant groups. In other words, the linkage of power can be seen from the distribution of certain groups of people, through this data.

The third article in this section is written by Denys Lombard and Claudine Salmon, which is entitled "Islam and Chinese". Lombard and Salmon imply that the context started at the 14th-15th centuries which may bring impact on "the relationships that were able to exist between the expansion of Islam in the East Indies and the simultaneous formation of

"Chinese" communities" which tends to be presented as an opposition (Lombard and Salmon 1993: 115). During the enculturation between Chinese and Islam, a group of *Peranakan Muslim* is notably emerged as a "subculture" which can be seen in some architectures of mosques in Java, such as "Mesjid Pacinan of Banten" (Lombard and Salmon 1993: 121). In other words, despite the cultural difference and the splitting tendency of Chinese community from the rest of society, assimilation was being noticed. The assimilation is somehow strongly influenced by political power, such as an "edict ordering the Chinese in certain districts to convert or face the death penalty" that was implemented by Diponegoro (Lombard, D., and Salmon 1993: 129). The notion of ethnic segregation and group formation is being represented in this article. Related to the current phenomenon, the contesting group of Chinese and Islam can historically be tracked, even from the time of 14th–15th centuries.

The second categorization mainly represents how the notion of Islam and politics is perceived as a tool for promoting groups formation and determining power distribution among those groups. Fractions due to the differences in the realms of identity and power distribution definitely emerge as a consequence from discrepancies in the relation between those different stakeholders. In other words, the notion of religion and politics can be used as a power for generating a movement, through the identity-based sense of belongings.

Public Figure

The category of Public Figure is the least occurred sub-theme, with the number of 4 articles out of 19 total articles, or at the percentage of 21%. Articles belonged to this category mainly imply the role of a certain public figure in a certain period. In addition, the articles about a certain public figures are somehow also intended as a tribute for the people. However, talking about the role of Islam and politics in the 20th century

cannot be separated from some influential figures that took important roles in myriads of historical events of Indonesia.

The first article in this category is written by Anton Lucas, entitled "In Memoriam: Buddy Prasadja (1944-1991)". In this article, Lucas describes the figure of Buddy Prasadja as an intellectual person who was interested in research conducted by Lucas. In this article, he also explains the short biography of Buddy Prasadja, which can partly be seen as follows:

> "In 1974 Buddy Prasadja went to America for postgraduate study at the New School for Social Research in New York, and subsequently at the University of Wisconsin at Madison where he gained his Master's degree. Finding the academic environment not conducive to further graduate study there, he returned to the University of Indonesia to do a stint as vice- chairman of the Department of Political Science, to teach, and to do more village-level research. During the 1980s he spent much time at the University of Leiden. Returning in mid-1991, already ill, he spent the remaining months of his life with his sister in Jakarta, and was buried in the family graveyard in a village south of Klaten in Central Java" (Lucas 1993: 170).

Being related to politics in the realm of education, Prasadja is mentioned as an important figure in this article. In addition, the short biography of Prasadja is also written in the Indonesia Journal, as a tribute.

In the second article, "In Memoriam: Mohammad Natsir (1907-1993)", George McT. Kahin writes a short biography of Mohammad Natsir. Kahin states Natsir as "undoubtedly had more influence on the course of Islamic thought and politics in postwar Indonesia than any of his contemporaries" (Kahin 1993: 159). In addition, Kahin also embeds the opinion of Natsir about people influencing his thoughts, including "Mohammad Abduh, the famous Egyptian Islamic reformist (who had close ties to Jamal al-Din al Afghani) and his follower Rasjid Rida, editor of Al Manar, then perhaps the most influential Modernist Islamic journal

worldwide" (Kahin 1993: 160). The biography is also intended as a tribute for Mohammad Natsir, a political figure, who died on 6 February 1993 in Jakarta.

In the third article, Marcel Bonneff and Susan Crossley write an article entitled "Ki Ageng Suryomentaraman, Javanese Prince and Philosopher (1892-1962)". Prince K.A. Suryomentaraman (KAS) was an influential philosopher that fifteen years after his death on 1962, many people still considered themselves as "*Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa*" or the disciple of "science of the psyche" (Bonneff and Crossley 1993: 49-50). Being recognized as a man spreading spiritual teaching, KAS was considered as an influential figure in the realm of religion in that period. Moreover, after the death of KAS, his elder son continued to lead the "Kawruh Jiwa Movement (or Kawruh Beja, the "Science of Happiness")" in order to be "best able to keep alive his father's memory" (Bonneff and Crossley 1993: 50). The whole life story about KAS, as well as his philosophical thinking, is written in this 22-page article.

In the fourth article, entitled "The Second Life of Bung Karno Analysis of the Myth (1978-1981)", Pierre Labrousse writes about the life of Sukarno after 1978. This phenomenon was remarked by the moment on 1978 which is signified by "the announcement of the construction of a funerary complex in Blitar dedicated to the Father of the People (Bapak Rakyat)" that can also be said as "marks the end of this period and the officially controlled liberation of Sukarno's memory" (Labrousse 1993: 175). After the funeral of this influential figure, Sukarno tends to be associated with certain kinds of image: supernatural powers, the great lovers (*pecinta agung*), and the memory about the tragedy of Sukarno. To the supernatural extent, the figure of Sukarno is used to be related as an ancestor of Paku Buwono X, Sarinah, Sunan Kalijogo, and the Kings of Pajajaran. This image can also be considered as the "invention of ancestors serves, of course, not only to legitimate power, but also to designate

moral and political models serving as reference" (Labrousse 1993: 179). In addition, as being considered as the great lover, the image of Sukarno is also related with "the ease of his success with women, due as much to his fascinating personality as to his position as president" (Labrousse 1993: 181). Along with the success image of Sukarno, people are also being embedded with the image of tragedy happened to Sukarno. One of the influential images is related to "the pains and hardships of Sukarno's parents in the raising of their son, with the image of the poor family, thrifty and virtuous, making sacrifices in order to ensure their son's academic and social success" (Labrousse 1993: 185). In this article, a commemoration of Sukarno is represented by using several points of view.

The third category mainly implies on how the notion of Islam and politics is being related with influential public figures. In addition, by looking back at the biography of the people, the readers can make a reflection about a total life story and achievements that were contributed by those public figures. In this extent, the notion of Islam and politics can also be perceived as being related to influential people and monumental events. This can also be said as a popular way in which history tends to be represented in the general sphere.

Conclusion

The discourse about Islam and politics in the 20th century in Indonesia Journal can be related to several categorizations. As the categorization with the highest percentage, "perception and knowledge dynamics" appears in numbers of articles, by representing how the concept of Islam and politics is perceived as a source of dynamics in the realm of knowledge changing and perception about differences. The second most occurred categorization is "group and hierarchy", which mainly represents the notion of Islam and politics which tend to be related to the concept of ruling group and power distribution. The least occurred category, which

is "public figure", is mainly represented by articles denoting some public figures by also making relation to the role played by those people. The three categories are practically related.

By reviewing Indonesia Journal, it can be concluded that the impression of the notion of Islam and politics tends to be perceived as a power for promoting groups formation. In addition, the power distribution is another critical substance which can be derived from the group formation. The role of religion, in this extent, can easily be used as a legitimate source for any critical political decision. Societal segregation can be considered as a result of a certain kind of discrepancies in the realm of power distribution among several groups of people. In other words, the role of Islam is very critical in shaping political expression of the people in Indonesia.

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