

# Comparison of The Political Perceptions Between Radical Islam and Moderate Islam in Indonesia in The Reform Era

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## Abstrak

Era reformasi telah menjadi saksi bagi munculnya beragam bentuk pemikiran dan aksi politik yang dilakukan oleh umat Islam di Indonesia. Secara umum aksi dan pemikiran itu diwakili oleh dua model pandangan, yakni pandangan radikal dan moderat. Kalangan radikal, yang dalam tulisan ini diwakili oleh beberapa ormas Islam kontemporer berpandangan bahwa agama Islam memiliki sebuah alternatif yang kongkrit bagi bangsa Indonesia untuk menuju sebuah perubahan, sehingga sudah sepantasnya jika ajaran Islam diaplikasikan secara *kaffah* (menyeluruh). Sementara kalangan moderat, yang diwakili oleh partai politik Islam, meski secara umum menyetujui bahwa Islam memiliki konsep didalam kehidupan politik, berpandangan bahwa aplikasi yang hendaknya dilakukan harus bersifat kontekstual dengan melihat kenyataan sejarah dan keragaman sosial dan budaya bangsa. Tulisan ini berupaya untuk membedah pemikiran politik kedua kelompok ini dengan mengetengahkan persepsi keduanya seputar masalah peran Islam dalam politik, hubungan syari'ah dan negara, keberadaan Pancasila dan demokrasi.

The collapse of the New Order in Indonesia has provided extensive freedom for Muslims to express their political interests. The resurgence of Islam in the Reform era, at a philosophical level, has revived some old discussions about the relations between Islam and politics, including the issues related to Syari'ah Islam (Islamic Law) and an Islamic state. Meanwhile, in the practical context, such resurgence has also highlighted some interesting facts, one of them being the phenomenon of the revival of the Islamic political parties and the presence of radical Islamic mass organizations which to some extent have some opposite aims.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the reform era has been a witness of two models of Islamic political expression which to some extent dominate the political face of Islam in Indonesia. On the one hand, through their political parties, Islamic communities have

demonstrated their capability to run a democracy by competing peacefully in the elections and parliament, within the framework of the Republic of Indonesia and the spirit of nationalism. On the other hand, some Islamic groups, represented in particular by some new Islamic organizations, conduct demonstrations and activities, sometimes using violence, while encouraging the idea of the establishment of Syari'ah Islam (*Islamic Law*) and an Islamic state. These expressions basically indicate two faces of Islam in the reform era, which not only demonstrates two different methods but also importantly reflects the existence of two kinds of Islamic perceptions.

With regard to such phenomena, this paper will compare political perceptions of political parties and some radical Islamic social organizations. These perceptions mainly are assumed as an important basis for their political statements and actions.

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<sup>1</sup> Khamami Zada, *Islam Radikal, Pergulatan Ormas-Ormas Islam Garis Keras di Indonesia*, (Bandung: Teraju, 2002), pp.77-78.

There are two main issues that will be discussed: the state and democracy. The reason for observing these issues is simply because these are elements which have become the basis for political thinking on the part of some people or groups. Moreover this paper will observe some Islamic political parties namely Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party/PPP), Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (National Awakening Party/PKB), Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, (Prosperous Justice Party/PKS) and Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party/PAN)<sup>2</sup>; and some Islamic organizations such as Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defender Front/FPI), Forum Komunikasi Ahlusunah Wal Jamaah/Lasykar Jihad (Communication Forum of the Followers of the Sunnah and the Community of the Prophet/FKAWJ and Jihadi Islamist Militia/LJ) and Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (Indonesian Mujahidin Council/MMI).

It is important to note that obviously each political party and Islamic society organization conducts and believes in various visions and specific objectives. However, while there are some differences perspectives and approaches and actually no sorts of media that formally bind all parties or organizations into the specific groups, each new Islamic organization in the national political reality to some extent demonstrates similar actions and opinions, and

this also occurs in the case of political parties. Thus it is possible to categorize them in to two different groups. It is also important to understand that these new Islamic organizations are actually not representing all Islamic organizations in Indonesia. Their existence actually merely represents some similar organizations and even though they are minority, the existence of these groups proves the presence of radical Islam in Indonesia. Moreover, before observing each group, I will first examine some definitions about radical Islam and moderate Islam.

### **Radical Islam**

In an academic context, the term "Radical Islam" sometimes is expressed in other ways. Some scholars use different terms, for example, "fundamentalism", "revivalism", "neo-revivalism", "neo-fundamentalism", "Islamist", "conservative Islam"<sup>3</sup>. Meanwhile in Indonesia this group sometime is labeled as "Islam Militan" (Militant Islam), "Islam formalistik" (Islam Formalistic), "Islam Totalistik" (Islamic Totalistic), "Islam kanan" (Right Islam), "Fundamentalisme Islam" (Islamic Fundamentalism), "*Islam Skriptualisme*", (Islamic Scriptualism), or "Islam Radikal" (Islamic Radical)<sup>4</sup>. In general these terms are

<sup>2</sup> Some people might reject the existence of PAN and PKB as Islamic Parties but some observers still believe that PKB and PAN can be regarded as Islamic Parties. They use some label for those parties such as "Islamic Pluralist Parties", "Islamic Spatial Parties", "Islamic Moderate Parties" or "Islamic Inclusive Parties". See for example in Greg Fealy, "Islamic Politics: A Rising or Declining Force", in Damien Kingsbury and Arief Budiman, *Indonesia the Uncertain Transition*, (Adelaide: Crawford House Publishing). See also Kuntowijoyo, "Peta Politik bagi Umat", in Deliar Noer, et.al, *Mengapa Partai Islam Kalah?*, (Jakarta: Alvabet, 1999). M. Arsekal Salim, "Fragmentasi Partai Islam", *Kompas*, 26 Juni 1999. Zainal Abidin Amir, *op.cit.*, Kamarudin, *Partai Politik Islam di Pentas Reformasi*, (Jakarta: Visi Publishing, 2003), Lili Romli, dissertation, *Partai Politik Islam Era Reformasi dan Piagam Jakarta Dalam Sidang Tahunan MPR 2000*, (Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Indonesia, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> See for example John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.), Lawrence Davidson, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), Robert W Hefner, "Islam in an Era of Nation-States, Politics and Religious Renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia", in Robert W. Hefner (ed.), *Islam in an Era of Nation-States*, (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), pp.3-40. Mansoor Moaddell and Kamran Talattof, eds., *Moderate and Fundamentalist Debates in Islam*, (New York: Palgrave 2002), see also Oliver Roy, *The Failure of Islamic Politics*, and Basam Tibbi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism*, Jamhari and Jajang Jahroni, (eds.), *Gerakan Salafi Radikal di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2004), Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy, *Joining the Caravan? The Middle East, Islamism and Indonesia*, (Alexandria: Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Din Syamsudin, "Usaha Pencarian Konsep Negara dalam Sejarah Pemikiran Politik Islam", in *Ulumul Qur'an*, No.2 Vol. IV, 1993. M. Syafi'i Anwar, *Pemikiran dan Aksi Islam Indonesia: Sebuah Kajian Politik Tentang Cendekiawan Muslim Orde Baru*, (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995), pp.143-184. Bachtiar Effendy, *Islam dan Negara Transformasi*

applied to designate new Islamic groups in the contemporary era, from 1960s up to now, which to some extent have different activities and thoughts from the previous Islamic mainstream groups.

The meaning of Islamic radical might show a discrepancy, but even though there is no single definition, principally the tendency to implement uncompromising, literal and extreme approach, in understanding Islam and conducting their ideal, sometimes committed to use violence ways are viewed as common attitudes for the radical. Moreover these groups have a typical characteristic and basically attempts to seek a new synthesis of thinking which is based on Islamic sources and try to find similarity from Islamic history and offer it as an alternative paradigm (different from the West) to be the basis for Islamic communities in creating Islamic institutions (such as government, education, social and economic institutions)<sup>5</sup>. In the political context, Fazlur Rahman indicates that radical groups, similar with the moderates, acknowledge the role of Islam in politics. Nevertheless, different to the moderates, these groups are essentially eager to revitalize the existence of the Islamic communities of the past. The radicals regard the historical experience of the Islamic community, mainly at the start of Islam, as the only authoritative condition for Muslims<sup>6</sup>.

Meanwhile According to some observers there are at least seven characteristics of this group<sup>7</sup>. (1) Believing Islam to be a totalistic, comprehensive and holistic doctrine. This means all dimensions of human life have been arranged in Islam. (2) Their tendency to believe in the integral relations between Islam and the state. (3) Implementing literal approaches to understanding Islam and believing in Islamic teachings literally. (4) Considering that the precedent of the era of the Prophet is the best and ideal reference for human kind for all time. (5) Having a strong tendency to promote Islam as an alternative ideology for Western Ideologies (which are regarded by them as destructive theories for the world). In the same context, they also refuse to use Western terms. (6) Regarding the concept of pluralism in a narrow perspective, by considering the Islamic faith as the only key factor that distinguishes Muslims groups from other groups. (7) Fighting for their interests by using Islamic symbols and radicalization.

Based on these characteristics, this group tends to have a pessimistic tendency concerning the political concepts from a Western viewpoint such as nation state and democracy. Meanwhile

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*Pemikiran Praktik Politik Islam di Indonesia*, (Jakarta, Paramadina, 1999). Yusril Ihza Mahendra, *Modernisme dan Fundamentalisme dalam Politik Islam, Perbandingan Partai Masyumi (Indonesia) dan Partai Jamaat-i-Islami (Pakistan)*, (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999). Martin Van Bruinessen, "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Soeharto Indonesia", *South East Asia Research*, 10,2, pp. 117-154. Greg Fealy, "Islamic Radicalisms in Indonesia: The Faltering Revival?", in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2004*, (Singapore: ISEAS, 2004). R William Liddle, "Skriptualisme Media Dakwah: Suatu Bentuk Pemikiran dan Aksi Politik Islam di Indonesia Masa Orde Baru", in Mark R. Woodward (ed.), *Jalan Baru Islam, Memetakan Paradigma Mutakhir Islam Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan 1999), Barton, Greg, *Indonesia's Struggle Jemaah Islamiyah and The Soul of Islam*, (Sydney: UNSW, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> John L. Esposito, *Ancaman Islam, Mitos atau Realitas?* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), pp.134-135.

<sup>6</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, (Bandung: Ganesha, 1984), p. 338.

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<sup>7</sup> See for example in Greg Fealy, "Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia: The Faltering Revival?", in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2004*, (Singapore: ISEAS, 2004), pp. 4-5. R William Liddle, "Skriptualisme Media Dakwah: Suatu Bentuk Pemikiran dan Aksi Politik Islam di Indonesia Masa Orde Baru", in Mark R. Woodward (ed.), *Jalan Baru Islam, Memetakan Paradigma Mutakhir Islam Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan 1999). Johannes J.G. Jansen, *The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997). Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, "Nature and Characteristics of Modern Islamic Movements", in Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, (ed.), *Modern Islamic Movements, Models, Problems and Prospects*, (Kuala Lumpur: A.S Noordeen, 2000). Zada, *op.cit*, pp. 87-100. Azyumardi Azra, *Pergolakan Politik Islam: Dari Fundamentalisme, Modernisme hingga Post-Modernisme* (Jakarta: Paramdina, 1996), pp.109-110. Yusril Ihza Mahendra, *Modernisme dan Fundamentalisme dalam Politik Islam, Perbandingan Partai Masyumi (Indonesia) dan Partai Jamaat-i-Islami (Pakistan)*, (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999), pp.31-33. Jamhari and Jajang Jahroni, (eds.), *Gerakan Salafi Radikal di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2004), pp.30-31.

due to their literal approach in understanding Islam and their tendency to emphasize Islamic symbols (in line with their ideal to make Islam as an alternative ideology), radicals tend use Islamic idioms in their ideas and actions, including the idea of creating an Islamic State.

Meanwhile in an Indonesian context the emergence of these groups actually are based on two reasons<sup>8</sup>. Firstly there is an internal reason (from inside the Muslim communities). The emergence of radicals is actually an expression of disappointment toward the current Muslim communities' way of life, which in the radicals' opinion, has deviated from Islamic teachings. Secondly is an external factor. The presence of the Islamic radical groups is also a response to the existence of the secular regime and "the Western occupation", which in their opinion has created injustice for Muslims and harmed their interests. In the reform era some of the new Islamic organizations in Indonesia today can be categorized in this group, including FPI, Laskar Jihad, JI and MMI<sup>9</sup>.

### ***Moderate Islam***

In general, Islamic moderate can be regarded as Muslims who conduct an attitude and a perspective that eagerly strive to implement every aspect of Islamic teachings in *Al-Qur'an* and *Sunnah* adjusting to new developments of human civilization<sup>10</sup>. In the political context, Rahman indicates that moderate Islam can be regarded as the way of thinking which basically supports the idea of Islam as a social religion. This means the moderates believe that Islam is more than just a "private religion"

which has no relation with social problems. Accordingly, in the moderates' point of view, Islam is a doctrine that provides political and social guidance for its followers.<sup>11</sup>

However, in implementing this idea, the moderates have at least two tendencies. Firstly, they tend to emphasize the spirit of Islam rather than symbols. Thus for them the essence of politics or the state is more important than its form or name. This is because in their opinion, in terms of politics, Islam actually guides its followers to establish the spirit of Islam and not Islamic institutions. Secondly, they tend to be tolerant with other perspectives outside Islam, in order to create a proper system for Muslims. This is because, for the moderate, every Muslim has a fundamental right that allows them to think without restraint in order to create political ideas and even political structure<sup>12</sup>. Based on this perspective the moderate, according to Esposito "willing to participate within the system and see change from below"<sup>13</sup>.

There are some factors which actually push a group to take moderate way in their statements and activities. *Firstly*, the political situation which is generally still dominated by other popular political ideals or interests. Study conducted by Steve Bruce shows that in the situation where religious movement or movement is still minority and have to struggle to be accepted by the majority, the rational choices that they should take have to involve compartmentalisation, accommodation and conflicting expectations. This means principally they have to take moderate way<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Fealy, *op.cit.*, p.3. Zada, *op.cit.*, p.95-97 .

<sup>9</sup> About the explanations for each organizations see S Yunanto, Yunanto, S, et.al, *Gerakan Militan Islam di Indonesia dan Asia Tenggara*, (Jakarta: The Ridep Institute-Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2002). See also Fealy, *op.cit.* pp.8-13

<sup>10</sup> Anwar Harjono, dkk, "M. Natsir, Sumbangan dan Pemikirannya untuk Indonesia", dalam *Media Dakwah*, 1416H/1995, pp.110-111.

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<sup>11</sup> Rahman, *op.cit.*, pp. 332-337.

<sup>12</sup> A. Mukti Ali, *Beberapa Persoalan Agama Dewasa Ini*, (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1988).

<sup>13</sup> John L. Esposito, "Claiming the Center, Political Islam in Transition", in *Harvard International Review*; Spring 1997; 19, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Steve Bruce, "The Moral Majority: the Politics of Fundamentalism in Secular Society, in Lionel Caplan, *Studies in Religious Fundamentalism*, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1987)

Secondly is ideology factor. In terms of ideology, the moderates tend to apply some main characteristics<sup>15</sup>, that is, they believe that Islamic teachings for *mu'ammalah* (social matters), basically provide universal and broad outlines only and consider that Islamic traditions in politics which were applied by Prophet Muhammad and *thabiin* (his close friends who lived during the same period as the Prophet) – in particular in the era of the Khulafa-Rasyidin (the first four successors of the Prophet) era – bind Muslims in terms of principals. Moreover, the moderates regard as positive the existence of difference and honour pluralism, mainly as a part of God's will. They tend to refuse the “black and white view” of people and society and believe in the right of Muslims to acquire wisdom from various sources, including from the West.

By having these characteristics, it can be seen that the moderates tend to be tolerant with western ideas in politics, and this which is reflected by their agreement toward the concept of democracy and a nation state<sup>16</sup>. Moreover, still in the context of the state, moderates consider that the transformation of Islamic values to the governmental system is more important rather than the establishment of an Islamic state<sup>17</sup>. In the reform era some Islamic Parties, even though they derive from many political

mainstream, in the practical context, tend to practice a moderate point of view.

The characteristics of the moderates in general, according to Bahtiar Effendy, cause most of the Islamic political parties in Indonesia to use “substantial approach” political in their thinking and actions<sup>18</sup>. These Islamic parties include PPP<sup>19</sup>, PKB<sup>20</sup>, PKS<sup>21</sup> and PAN<sup>22</sup>. It is also important to note that research conducted by Research Centre of the Institut Agama Islam Negeri, Syarief Hidayatullah, (Universitas Islam Negeri Jakarta), indicates that from the main aims and programs of the Islamic political parties in Indonesia today most of them have the quality of functional-substantialistic rather than formal legalistic. This means, theoretically the main purpose and program of the majority of Islamic parties are not dedicated to establishing an Islamic state, instead striving to include Islamic values and spirit into the national political system<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Regardless the main core of their ideology, at the surface level or political activities most Islamic parties tends to become modernist – rather than traditionalist or fundamentalist – which adhere most of modernist's political attitude characteristics. About the discussion of the comparison traditionalism, modernism and fundamentalism see for example. See such characteristic in Ahmed S. Mossalli, in “Modern Islamic Fundamentalism Discourse on Civil Society, Pluralism and Democracy”, in August Richard Norton, ed., *Civil Society in The Middle East*, Volume I, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), pp.99-119. See also Mahendra, *op.cit*, pp.28-31.

<sup>16</sup> See this kind of conclusion for example in Anders Uhlin, *Oposisi Berserak, Arus Deras Demokratisasi Gelombang Ketiga di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Mizan, 1998), p. 74. Umaruddin Masdar, *Membaca Pemikiran Gus Dur dan Amien Rais Tentang Demokrasi*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1999), pp.53-54.

<sup>17</sup> Mahendra, *op.cit*, p. 308.

<sup>18</sup> Bahtiar Effendy, *Islam dan Negara Transformasi Pemikiran Praktik Politik Islam di Indonesia*, (Jakarta, Paramadina, 1999).

<sup>19</sup> See for example, Syamsuddin Haris, *PPP dan Politik Orde Baru*, (Jakarta: Gramedia Widia Sarana Indonesia, 1991).

<sup>20</sup> See for examples, Munib H Muhammad, (ed.), *Pro Kontra Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa*, (Jakarta: Fatma Press, 1998). A. Effendy Choirie, *PKB Politik Jalan Tengah Nahdhatul Ulama Pemikiran Islam dan Gerakan Kebangsaan Pasca Kembali ke Khittah 1926*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Ciganjur, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> See for examples, Ali Said Damanik, *Fenomen Partai Keadilan: Transformasi 20 Tahun Gerakan Tarbiyah di Indonesia*, (Bandung: Teraju, 2002). Aay Muhammad Furkon, *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, Ideologi dan Praktis Politik Kaum Muda Kontemporer*, (Bandung: Teraju, 2004). Nandang Burhanuddin, *Penegakan Syariat Islam Menurut Partai Keadilan*, (Jakarta: Al-Jannah, 2004).

<sup>22</sup> About PAN see for example, Maschab, Mashuri, *Anda Bertanya PAN Menjawab*, (Yogyakarta: DPW PAN DIY, 1998). Wirman Syafri and Imron Nasri, (eds.), *Merangkai Sejarah Menatap Masa Depan Refleksi Kelahiran Partai Amanat Nasional*, (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah & Litbang PAN, 2003).

<sup>23</sup> See in Kamarudin, *Partai Politik Islam di Pentas Reformasi*, (Jakarta: Visi Publishing, 2003), p.86. Please also see the similar conclusion in Litbang Kompas, *Partai-Partai Politik Indonesia, Ideologi, Strategi dan Proram*, (Jakarta: Kompas, 1999).

## A. Islamic Radicals' Political Perspectives

### *The relations between Islam and the State*

For radicals, Islam is unique and such uniqueness actually is caused by its function in societal life and activities. According to the MMI, Islam teaches people from the matters of self purification (as individuals) and as a part of the *ummah* (community)<sup>24</sup>. Based on these basic perceptions and also the fact that Islam has a set of laws that in the practical context can be clearly used as a direction and groundwork in managing the state, in terms of the role of Islam in the state, the radical groups clearly believe that Islam has to be used as a formal foundation of the state.<sup>25</sup>

Irfan S. Awwas, the chairman of MMI states that: "Islam regulates all dimensions of humankind, including society, economics and politics. From this point, we as Muslim believe that Islam has a conception about the religion and state relations". Moreover, consider to the radicals, the life of the Prophet Muhammad as a leader in Medina demonstrated to Muslims how Islamic teachings can be implemented totally in a state. Such Islamic teachings and the Prophet's role have deeply inspired Muslims to believe that indeed Islam has close relations with the state and its problems.

Such principle is clearly represented by Abu Bakar Baasyir's statement which says:

"...According to the example of the prophet Muhammad, Islam must be wedded to the government, to the nation, it must take in the law of the state – this was the example of the prophet. It must not be purely a personal matter. Don't follow the police, don't follow the nation, don't separate Islam from nation, that is wrong."<sup>26</sup>

As a consequence of this perception, for the radicals, the separation between state and religion is intolerable and absurd, in fact they believe that Islam for all intents and purposes is a religion and also a state (*al-Islam din wa daulah*). As stated by the LJASWJ, "politics is a main part of Islamic teachings and Al-Qur'an and Sunnah have to be the Judge"<sup>27</sup>. Based on such opinions the radical groups really believe in the integral relation between Islam and state.

### *Syari'ah Islam and an Islamic State*

For the radicals, because of the exact role of Islam in the state, it is natural for Muslims to demand Syari'ah Islam (as an inextricable element in Islam) as foundation of their state. In addition they consider only Syari'ah Islam as a divine law which is decreed by God to be used in every aspect of life, and thus, has become a must for every Muslim to implement it and also reject any kind of "man-made laws". In an Indonesian context the implementation of Syari'ah Islam has become very likely, because by its nature Syari'ah Islam can be implemented universally especially for a country in which Muslims are in majority, like Indonesia.

Moreover, by their textual and literal characteristics in understanding Islam, the radicals refuse to comprehend and interpret Syari'ah Islam in a substantial way. In other words they reject any compromise in the context of Islamic teachings. This is because for them, every dimension of human kind has been clearly explained in Al-Qur'an and Sunnah, while the words of God stated in Al-Qur'an and Sunnah are also obvious. What all Muslims need is just to ensure their willingness to follow every single word of God's teachings. Laskar Jihad believes that the duty of every Muslim is just follow and implement God's law<sup>28</sup>.

By establishing Syari'ah Islam as a foundation of the state automatically, according

<sup>24</sup> Ika Rochjatun Sastrahidayat, "Syari'ah Islam Menuju Indonesia Sejahtera", in *Bulletin Risalah Mujahidin*, 06/March 2001, p.5

<sup>25</sup> Khamami Zada, *Islam Radikal Pergulatan Ormas-Ormas Islam Garis Keras di Indonesia*, (Bandung: Teraju, 2002), p.102.

<sup>26</sup> See such Baasyir's statement in Batley, Breck, *The Complexities of Dealing With Radical Islam in Southeast Asia, A Case Study of Jemaah Islamiyah*, (Canberra: Strategic and Defense Studies Centre, 2003), p. 87.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p.103.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p.122.

to Habib Rizieq the chairman of the FPI, society has established an Islamic state<sup>29</sup>. In line with this opinion MMI states that “Islamic state is a state that implements Islamic Law formally. On the other hand, a state that not using Islamic Law is not an Islamic State, even though its institutions use Islamic names”. For Islamic Radical groups, an Islamic state is an entity that every Muslim has an obligation to create. This is because it is merely an Islamic state that in line with the God’s will. For Muslims who reject this idea, essentially their commitment to Islam is questionable, or even for Baasyir they can be regarded as infidels<sup>30</sup>.

Moreover, in the context of what kind of system Muslims should conduct, radicals indicate the *Khilafah* system (kind of an Islamic governmental system) that were practiced since the era of the Prophet Muhammad and Khulafa Rasyidin (the prophet’s best friends) era up to Khilafah Usmaniyah (Ottoman Emperor) as the best examples for Muslims. Furthermore, in terms of governmental system, they indicate that Islam, based on the experience of the Prophet and Khulafa Rasyidin clearly provides some arrangements, for instance the mechanism of *Bai’at* (electing by oath) to choose the Amir (the leader of the state)<sup>31</sup>. Such mechanisms essentially demonstrate that Islam has a set of laws to manage a state in detail.

### ***The Nation State and Pancasila***

By believing such perspectives, Islamic Radical groups in essence wish for the existence of the state based on universal values (in Islam), which basically is freed from “the nation-states’ partition”. According to them, the existence of the nation state actually is not acceptable in Islam. This is because such a concept not only has inflicted a loss for Islam by dividing Muslims around the world into nations, but also is

Western-made (secular) and importantly does not exist in the era of Glorious Islam<sup>32</sup>. By accepting these ideas, therefore, this can be understood if in general the radicals feel reluctant in responding the existence of the nation state<sup>33</sup>.

Moreover, their disinclination toward the nation state is also caused by their common obsession about the reestablishment of the *Khilafah*<sup>34</sup> or supra-state institution, which happened in Islamic history. In such conception actually, they believe that Islamic community will have merely one authority that serves and protects all Muslims in the world. Such an institution is believed to be the as a best medium for Muslims and their communities, for not only ensuring the implementation of Islamic teachings and ideals, but also reestablishing the real Islamic communities which are based on the spirit of universal brotherhood.

In line with this stand, thus they believe that the existence of the nation state is not “final” or, according to Hegel, an “ultimate goal” for Muslims. According to Awwas all Muslims have to strive for establishing an Islamic state in their countries, which eventually will be a step stone to attain a specific and global aim that is *Khilafah Islamiyah*<sup>35</sup>. Moreover Fealy indicates that even though these groups up to now still seem to acknowledge the existence of The Republic of Indonesia and tend to not bother about the existence of the nation state, at the bottom of their hearts they still keep the obsession of the supra-state institutions<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 132.

<sup>33</sup> Ahmad S. Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb*, (Lebanon: the American University of Beirut, 1992), p.218.

<sup>34</sup> The last *Khilafah* is Ottoman Empire or *Khilafah Usmaniyah*, before was abolished by Kemal Attaturk, the Father of the modern Turkey in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>35</sup> Irfan S. Awwas, “Megapa Harus Negara Islam?”, [http://members.tripod.com/darul\\_islam/mengapa](http://members.tripod.com/darul_islam/mengapa).

<sup>36</sup> Greg Fealy, “Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia: The Faltering Revival?”, in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2004*, (Singapore: ISEAS, 2004), p.5.

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p.114

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Baasyir in S. Yunanto, *op.cit*, p.46

<sup>31</sup> Zada, *op .cit*, p. 113

Another consequence of this logic, in an Indonesian context, is that they tend to avoid the existence of the Pancasila (Five Pillars), as the nation's uniting ideology. For the radicals, Pancasila is meaningless, because in fact such ideology has never been an "inspiring guidance" for Indonesians and Muslims in particular. Compared to Islam, radicals believe that Pancasila is less inspiring than Islam. According to Rizieq, Islam is the real ideology that inspired many young Muslims to liberate and also unite Indonesia. He mentions that Indonesia in 1945 was actually liberated by nothing but the yells of "Allah Akbar" (God Almighty) from the Muslims freedom fighters<sup>37</sup>. Moreover, for the radicals, Muslims in Indonesia should not accept Pancasila, by remembering that such ideology in essence was made by human. By accepting Pancasila Muslims will potentially become infidels because essentially they recognize teachings other than those of God. Ja'far Umar Thalib says:

*"We don't like Pancasila because it means that Islam is the same as other religions. This is not so. We believe that Islam is the highest religion and the best"*<sup>38</sup>.

Based on their opinions, the concept of a nation state (or anything related to nationalism) is not acceptable. However, the obsessions for establishing an Islamic state, as a step toward Khilafah Islamiyah, still exist. This actually also demonstrates that the radicals always have commitment toward Muslims everywhere (Indonesia, Southeast Asia, Afghanistan, Palestine, etc.) the global sense, rather than merely in the one particular state.

In order to establish Syari'ah Islam, at a society or local level, the radicals tend to use extra parliamentary movements, which

sometimes disobey the formal rules and even use some violence, which in some cases is a response to the violence from some groups toward them. This can be seen, for example, from some "sweeping" actions conducted by the Islamic Radical groups in Jakarta. Hefner indicates this also includes raiding bars and hotels<sup>39</sup>.

While at a national level, with the purpose of proposing their idea about the implementation of Syari'ah Islam and the establishment of an Islamic state, the radicals not only conduct some demonstrations individually, but also together with some other Islamic society organizations and Islamic factions in the parliament propose the return to the constitution of the seven words in the Piagam Jakarta (the Jakarta Charter), that is "...kewajiban menjalankan Syari'ah Islam bagi para pemeluknya (the obligation for adherents of Islam to implement Islamic law)"<sup>40</sup>. Moreover, in relation to their literal perspective toward the verses of Al-Qur'an and Sunnah and also as a part of maintaining Islamic Law, the radicals refuse to accept the existence of a woman as President<sup>41</sup>.

In addition, with regard to the idea of Khilafah (trans-national state), today some radical groups have developed some international and regional networks; this includes Hizbut Tahrir (at an international level) and Jamaah Islamiyah (at a regional level). Some of this networking is suspected by authorities as being related to some terrorist groups conducting their missions in the Southeast Asian region<sup>42</sup>.

### ***Democracy and Islam***

According to Islamic Radical groups' perception, the main problem of democracy is

<sup>37</sup> See in Erros Jafar, "Indonesia Merdeka Diawali Pekik Allah Akbar Bukannya Haleluya", in <http://swaramuslim.net>

<sup>38</sup> Zachry Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia, Crucible of Terror*, (London: Lynne Rienner, 2003), p. 69.

<sup>39</sup> Hefner, *op. cit.*, p.146

<sup>40</sup> Zada, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p.141

<sup>42</sup> See for example, ICG Indonesia, *Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia: The Case of the "Ngruki Network" in Indonesia*, (Jakarta: ICG Indonesia Briefing, 8 August 2002).



its main principal that basically believes in the concept of people's sovereignty<sup>43</sup>. By using this system, essentially the political system and activities will really depend on the voice of the people (which is represented by the phrase "*Vox Populi Vox Dei*" or according to Abraham Lincoln, government by, from and for the people). This concept is actually the fundamental idea of democracy, as distinguished from other types of government.

In Islamic teachings, one of the main principals is belief in God's sovereignty. According to Islam, God is the beginning and the end and only on him can all human kind depend. In this conception actually there is no room for other elements beside God that have the right to be sovereign. In other words, the concept of people's sovereignty is contradictory to Islam. Moreover, the militant groups believe that Al-Qur'an and Sunnah are the ultimate source of law that has arranged every aspect of human kind. Thus, all Muslims do not have to be worried about looking for other sources as their guidance for life<sup>44</sup>. Rizieq indicates them only some minor aspects of life are not arranged in detail in Al-Qur'an and Sunnah, and Muslims are still permitted to conduct *Musyawarah* (discussion) with regard to these details, accordingly, Muslims in general have to be subject to God's law and His sovereignty<sup>45</sup>. In this standpoint, the concept of democracy which allows (the majority of) people to have their own opinions and run their activities based on their thoughts and interests (which to some extent demonstrates the people sovereignty) is not acceptable.

Based on their conception about God's sovereignty and the role of Al-Qur'an and Sunnah as a comprehensive source of law, the radicals tend to reject the concept of democracy. According to Awwas, democracy is an *infidel*

system, which is not only inspired by secular and Western teachings, but also in the context of Indonesia has caused the failure of Muslims to establish an Islamic state<sup>46</sup>. For them, what happened during the 1950s and at the beginning of the reform period has shown that the democratic system (which is prominently represented by the existence of parliament) cannot be trusted for Muslims to reach their goals, especially in dealing with the establishment of an Islamic state.

Moreover, democracy is also recognized as a system that has the potential to threaten the implementation of Islamic teachings. Logically, by accepting the opinion of the majority as the foundation of its policy, the government has to implement any interests of the majority. This means, the government will potentially put into service many opinions, including those which basically contradict God's law. This situation, in the opinion of Islamic Radical groups' will endanger all people and Muslims in particular. Because, for example, if the majority agree to legalize prostitution or alcoholic drinks (that are strongly prohibited by Islam) the government has to implement these laws and all society has to accept them without any exceptions.

Moreover for the radicals *the majority* is not everything in Islam. In fact for them the model of government which basically glorifies the majority is unidentified in Islamic history. For radicals, in Islam the most important thing is the truth and this is actually nothing to do with popularity. In fact, Islamic history demonstrates that the Prophets and their followers were always minorities, who fought against the infidel majorities<sup>47</sup>.

### **About Pluralism**

As regards the democracy, the acknowledgement of pluralism becomes important. The radicals' viewpoints on the

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<sup>43</sup> This is the basic idea for all radicals to reject the idea of democracy. See for example in Fauzan Al-Anshari, "Demokrasi Syirik", in [www.majelis.mujahidin.or.id](http://www.majelis.mujahidin.or.id)

<sup>44</sup> Zada, *op. cit.*, p. 134

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p. 135

<sup>46</sup> S Yunanto, *op. cit.*, p.53

<sup>47</sup> Zada, *op. cit.*, p 131

existence of non-Muslims and other group and their opinions about what Muslims should do in treating these groups can be used as indicators for their thinking about pluralism. In responding to the existence of non-Muslim groups, the Islamic Radical groups base their opinion on Al-Qur'an and the experiences of the Prophet during his government in Medina and Khulafa Rasyidin.

Islamic Radical groups believe that an Islamic State will be tolerant with minorities and non-Muslim groups. This is because, Al-Qur'an and Sunnah, teach the obligation to protect the rights of the non-Muslim groups. The Prophet, for example, during his rule prohibited Muslims for troubling non-Muslims who lived together with them or had no intention to bother Muslim. Moreover according to Awwas in an Islamic State in the era of the Prophet society was heterogeneous, including Jews and Christians. Thus for him the existence of non-Muslim groups is not a problem at all<sup>48</sup>.

However, it is important to note that principally these groups concede two main groups in society, that is the Muslim group and non-Muslim group. Radicals consider that for non-Muslim groups there are two categorizations: firstly the group which has the intention to fight against Muslims and secondly the group willing to make peace and disposed to live together in harmony with Muslims. According to Baasyir, every Muslim has to be ready to fight against the first group and must protect the second group. For the second group, which is called as Dzimni (the non-Muslims who live in Muslim communities peacefully), every Muslims have to build a good relationship and be willing to work together in the spirit of affection, peace, tolerance and harmony. Even, Muslims have to provide and protect proper rights for them, including the right to conduct their faith and religions<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, p.113

<sup>49</sup> For more detail see for example in Sermon by Abu Bakar Baasyir in Solo, Indonesia, 18 October 2002, in Batley, *op. cit*, pp.84-88.

However, it is interesting to note that in the political context, the rights of the non-Muslim in radicals' sense are basically limited. In their logic and of course in relation to the Prophet's history, it is difficult to accept a non-Muslim as their leader in any case. Thus in the radicals' point of view it is hard to find an opinion that implicitly or explicitly agrees to provide rights for non-Muslims to attain position at a higher level, for example as their President or members of parliament.

From their opinions about the non-Muslims groups, it can be concluded that in general their acceptance toward pluralism is not total. Moreover, this attitude is essentially in line with their rejection of democracy, because democracy requires not only an admission of minority or other groups but also a willingness to give equal political opportunities and access to every single group. As materialization of their opinions about democracy which has a strong tendency to reject it, most Islamic Radical groups promote the idea of refusing democracy. Research conducted by Ridep indicates that "this promotion" uses some media both electronic or prints including websites (for example [www.laskarjihad.or.id](http://www.laskarjihad.or.id) for Laskar Jihad ASWJ or [www.majelismujahidin.or.id](http://www.majelismujahidin.or.id) for MMI), publisher (Jihad Press), cassettes and CD (consist of the speech from some organization's leader)<sup>50</sup>.

### ***Postscript: Radical's situation post 2004 Election***

In the era of the government of the President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the radicals still put their foremost attention to religious matters. However/Nevertheless, their political activities at the national level appear to be confined compared to the role that has been played by the political parties. This because not only related to the political theme of the subject raised, which is to some extent seem to be

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<sup>50</sup> S. Yunanto, *op .cit*, p.125

exclusive and particular, but also due to their political articulation mechanism, which tends to be run from outside the system, that in the end causes their sound and the effects of their demand were covered by other issues.

Meanwhile, the political lobbies established by the radicals and some Islamic political parties as well as social organization still will be mainly focused on attempts to the Islamic Law establishment and the Jakarta Charter issue. In the first topic, the radicals at heart still have an opportunity to create this ideal at the local governmental level, particularly in some provinces or districts which are the main characters of their population or society potentially support the establishment of the Islamic Law, such as Nangroe Aceh Darussalam, South Sulawesi or some areas in West Java (Garut, Cianjur, Tasikmalaya). Their role will potentially cover some degrees, from supporting “the formal political contract” that will legitimize Islamic Law as a main foundation for any laws and regulations; to at the small scale continually fight against social wickedness by making alliance with other Islamic organizations or moving alone.

In relation to the Jakarta Charter issue, although these groups will keep on playing as a part of its main supporters, it seems clear that their movements will find a serious impediment by the fact only a small number of the Islamic political parties that will still hold up this issue. This situation is by no means overlooked by the radicals. In fact given such situation the symptom of what Oliver Roy said as “neo fundamentalism”<sup>51</sup>, that is attempts to leave formal political practice activities and return to join a cultural movement at the grass root level, in particular mending religion understanding for individual and society, will be a realistic pace for radicals in the next future. The symptoms of

this become clearer for example, by the fact that the political activities of these groups at a national level tend to considerably decrease post 2004 president election compare to the previous years. Up to mid of 2005, at surface level radicals’ movements relatively focus on cultural issues as their participation in *Kongres Umat Islam* or cultural activities related to attempts in defending Islamic symbols in cultural field.<sup>52</sup>

It seems clear that in the situation where stable political situation exist – which is indicated by the solidity of political party, the unity of the national elite and where the tension among society caused by economic and political disparity relatively decrease – the role of the radicals seem to reduce. In the next couple years, however, the future of these groups cannot be ignored. While these groups actually only represent minority, their existence is still appealing<sup>53</sup> and will have a chance to keep on moving at the civil society ground.

The role of the government of course by no means obstructs the growth and movement of the group by implementing force endeavors, which academically proved in fact harden militancy attitude of these groups<sup>54</sup>. On the contrary, the government has to keep on giving a democratic chance and opening dialog with these groups, while constantly encourage the

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<sup>52</sup> It can be seen for example from the cases of Dewa (one of the famous musical groups today) which accused by FPI has despised Muslim by using sacred symbol in Islam (one of the God’s names) in their show and in the label of their cassette. See this case in “Dewa Vs FPI Menyoal Logo Laskar Cinta” [www.setv.co.id](http://www.setv.co.id)

<sup>53</sup> Research conducted by Freedom Institute about “The attitude and perception of society toward phenomenon of Islam Radical movements and actions” shows that “radicals’ point of view” has attracted some people, particularly the youth and indicates that the radical’s idea is popular enough at the grass root level, even though its just still minority compare to the moderate Muslim. See this conclusion in “Pro-Demokrasi tak Sebesar Pro-Toleransi”, [www.islamlib.com](http://www.islamlib.com)

<sup>54</sup> See Arjomand, Said Amir, “Unity and Diversity in Islamic Fundamentalism”, in Marty, E Martin and Scott Appleby, *Fundamentalism Comprehended*, (Chicago: The UCP, 1991).

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<sup>51</sup> Roy, Oliver, *The Failure of Political Islam*, (London: President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1994).

Islamic mainstream groups to be in contact with any Muslim groups which have a potent to support these groups and establishing a productive relation with them.

## **B. Moderates Islam's Political Perspectives**

### ***The relations between Islam and a State***

In general, the moderates believe that Islam is relevant to the political life. This is basically related to one obligation for Muslims, in particular, to create a high-quality system for humanity in God's favor. Attempts to make such a system in Islam are actually regarded as a part of the religious service (*ibadah*), particularly in the "horizontal" context or in terms of social relations among human kinds (*habluminannas*)<sup>55</sup>. According to M. Amien Rais, the chairman of PAN, Islam cannot be separated from politics because this is a part of human activities that in essence has been clearly guided in Islam<sup>56</sup>. In line with this opinion, PKS believes that Islam is not a religion that merely arranges the relationships between God and His creations, but also provides guidance for its followers to manage their activities and every dimension of life<sup>57</sup>.

However, even though they believe in such inextricable relations between Islam and a state, they actually emphasize that this relations are actually not have to be always obligatory in the formal context. This is because basically Islam does not provide detail regulations for such

relations. According to them, what Islam provides for Muslim in politics principally an obligatory recommendation to create a system that is based on the spirits of Islam such as justice, equality and consensus<sup>58</sup>. Moreover, most of the moderates do not see any kind of fixed and formal shapes of political system that is mentioned in Al-Qur'an and also Sunnah. Due to this situation, the moderates then consider that Islam only offers some general rules in politics and provides freedoms for its followers to be creative in their political life.

By using this point of view, the moderates believe that to bring about the *spirit* of Islam is the true obligation for Muslim. In other words, in the political context, for them if such a thing has existed, essentially Muslims have done their obligation. This kind of perspective, according to Bahtiar Effendy, today becomes the general characteristics of Indonesian Islamic political parties<sup>59</sup>.

There are at least two implications from these points of view. Firstly, because in essence they tend to strive for establishing the spirit of Islam in the state (rather than creating a formal Islam) they tend to take moderates attitude in dealing with the role of the Syari'ah Islam. Secondly, in connection with this attitude, even though they believe in Muslim's obligation to create an ideal social entity in line with God's favor, the idea of establishing an Islamic state and using Islam as an Ideology of the state, in their opinion, are not urgent.

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<sup>55</sup> Fazlur Rahman, says that if the obligation to conduct fasting for every Muslims is explained merely in one verse in Al-Qur'an, while a third of the Al-Qur'an contains the explanation and obligation for Muslim with regard to create good systems for human kind.

<sup>56</sup> M. Amien Rais, "Wawasan Islam tentang Ketatanegaraan", dalam *Cakrawala Islam*, (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), pp.51-52

<sup>57</sup> Dewan Pimpinan Pusat Partai Keadilan, *Jati Diri Partai Keadilan*, (Jakarta : Pustaka Tarbiyatuna, 2002). See Abu Ridha, Untung Wahono, Syamsul Balda, *Politik Dakwah Partai Keadilan*, (Jakarta: DPP PK, 2000).

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<sup>58</sup> Rais, *op. cit*, p. 55

<sup>59</sup> Bahtiar Effendy, *Teologi Baru Politik Islam, Pertautan Agama, Negara dan Demokrasi*, (Yogyakarta: Galang Press, 2001), pp. 58-59. See also the similar conclusions in Kamarudin, *Partai Politik Islam di Pentas Reformasi*, (Jakarta: Visi Publishing, 2003), p.86. Please also see the similar conclusion in Litbang Kompas, *Partai-Partai Politik Indonesia, Ideologi, Strategi dan Proram*, (Jakarta: Kompas, 1999).

## Syari'ah Islam and an Islamic State

With regard to the role of Syari'ah Islam, the moderate groups believe that essentially Syari'ah Islam is nothing but a true guidance for every Muslims<sup>60</sup>. However, in relation to the connections between Syari'ah Islam and Muslims activities, it has generally understood that not all of human kind activities are arranged in details in Syari'ah Islam. Some of human's activities are indeed arranged in details, but for others Islam guides them in the general context, this including political and state activities.

In relation to such a situation, particularly for the last matter, in Islam God actually provides Muslims a freedom to develop a method of thought which has to be not only in proportion to Islamic teachings but also rational and objective. In this process, actually Muslims are permitted to use the common ideas in their time. In other words, essentially for most moderates it is actually possible for Muslims to implement "a synthesis system" from many political thinking mainstreams, including from the Western viewpoints. Thus in the political context, in essence, the meanings of Syari'ah Islam can be multi-interpretative and contextual.

By believing this essence of Syari'ah Islam, the moderates actually want to demonstrate that in the political context the terminology of Syari'ah Islam is basically beyond the fixed Laws. It contains many opinions and perceptions, which ensure that Syari'ah Islam is not a strict mechanism for all Muslims around the world. In fact, for the moderates, in terms of politics, Syari'ah Islam offers many universal values, rather than a set of arrangements in details. Because of these perceptions the moderates conclude that the maintenance of Syari'ah Islam is an obligation in the context of implementing Islamic universal values.

Based on their perspectives above, with regard to the idea of establishing an Islamic state, the moderates fundamentally believe that the attempts to establish such a state must be understood as an effort to create an institution filled with the spirit of Islam. In this standpoint the moderates actually want to say that the fundamental of the state is more significant, for Islam, rather than name. In other words, for them no matter about the form of the state is, so far as such a state is conducting these spirits, this state can be regarded as an "Islamic State". By this viewpoint the moderates actually seems to be consistent in emphasizing substance rather than symbol. Rais says:

*"For me without Islamic label but in essence we can demonstrate that we are able to build a fair economics system, honest law system, a non-feudal education system, that's what Islam want. So it is easy. I will not emphasize the label, but the vision. Because it is possible to create a state without Islamic label but in fact it is more Islamic"*.<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, besides their tendency to the substance of Islam, their understanding about Islam reveals that the establishment of an Islamic state formally is actually not an obligation for Muslims. This is because such an order is not clearly mentioned in both Al-Qur'an and Sunnah; in fact the words of "Islamic State" actually do not exist in these Islamic sources. While what was demonstrated and developed by the Prophet Muhammad in Medina, according to the moderates, was merely an "Islamic society" which was guided by the Islamic universal values, which is in fact even not called as "an Islamic State" by The Prophet<sup>62</sup>. Due to such circumstances, for the moderates, an Islamic state is not urgent to follow

<sup>60</sup> For the parties' perceptions about *Syari'ah Islam*, see for example, Abdul Asri Harahap, *PPP: Sintesa Nasionalisme dan Religiusitas*, (Jakarta: Integritas Dinamika Press: 2004), pp. 137-170. Nandang Burhanudin, *Penegakan Syari'ah Islam menurut Partai Keadilan*, (Jakarta: Al Jannah, 2004), pp. 91-142

<sup>61</sup> Lihat dalam Idy S. Ibrahim, *Amien Rais Membangun Politik Adiluhung*, (Bandung: Zaman Wacana Mulia, 1998), p. 90

<sup>62</sup> Anis Matta says that The Prophet Muhammad never used the term "Islamic State". In fact he just calls his state as "*Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah*" and not "*Al-Madina Al-Islamiyah Al-Munawwarah*". Furkon, *op.cit.*, p.234.

because in essence it just a creative idea from some Muslim scholars which is based on their interpretation of Islam.

Furthermore, with the circumstance where the shape of state is not clearly mentioned, Islam actually facilitates easily its follower. This is so because if the permanent form of the state for Muslims had been decreed in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, it will cause a difficult situation for Muslim to implement in the modern era. In addition, in an Indonesian context, the establishment of an Islamic State will gain obstacles mainly from the realities of the plural Indonesia and “internally” many interpretations toward this concept among Muslims. For these reasons, the implementation of an Islamic State today to some extent will potentially trigger unproductive and sensitive protracted debates among people in this developing country<sup>63</sup>.

In addition, according to them with or without the support of the state, Syari’ah Islam actually still can be comprehensively implemented by Muslims. Thus, in M. Hidayat Nurwahid’s (the President of PKS now the chairperson of the MPR) opinion, any perceptions which believe that Syari’ah Islam needs a kind of national constitution’s back up to be implemented is not proportional. Because this indicates that without such a support Muslims can not implement Syari’ah Islam in their life<sup>64</sup>.

Accordingly, because Syari’ah Islam in substance allows Muslims to create states in various forms and names (so far as such states are along the lines of the spirit of Islam), and the creation of an Islamic state is not mentioned in Al-Qur’an and Sunnah, it is clear for the moderates that establishing an Islamic state in Islam is a trivial jargon.

### ***The Nation State and Pancasila***

Based on their perception about the human history which is basically dynamic, the

moderates believe that the existence of a nation state is a sunnatullah (historical reality based on God’s will) that is impossible to be avoided by Muslims today. Besides, for them, a nation state like Indonesia in reality is still conducive for Muslims to implement their religion. This includes conducting Islamic missionary endeavors and attaining many political interests. Because of that, Indonesia as a nation state cannot be regarded as futile or even infidel entity for Muslims.

As a consequence for this attitude, the moderates then regard Pancasila as a national ideology in the positive view. By giving priority to the essence rather than using distinctive symbols of Islam, this group believes that Pancasila is acceptable for Muslims. This is so because for the moderates the relationship between Pancasila and Islam for all intents and purposes does not contradict each other. Even though the moderates acknowledge that both teachings are not at a same level (because Islam is teachings from God, while Pancasila is a man-made ideology)<sup>65</sup>, they believe that there is no a single article of the Pancasila that is contradictory to Islam, which makes necessarily urgent for Indonesian Muslim to replace it with Syari’ah Islam. Thus, for Amien, if all pillars of Pancasila were consistently implemented, it would be good for Muslim communities, because it means Islamic teachings were implemented<sup>66</sup>.

Furthermore Pancasila is also regarded conducive for Indonesia as a plural country. PKB states that by regarding Indonesia as a pluralistic country which consists of many ethnic groups, religions, races; the fundamental of this country must be enacted by the five values of Pancasila that is Belief in the one and only God, just and civilized humanity, the unity of Indonesia, democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the

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<sup>63</sup> Furqon, *op.cit*, pp. 234-235

<sup>64</sup> *Republika*, 18 February 2002

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<sup>65</sup> M. Amien Rais, “Kata Pengantar” dalam M. Amien Rais, ed., *Islam di Indonesia: Suatu Ikhtiar Mengaca Diri*, (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 1989), p. XIV.

<sup>66</sup> Rais, “Tidak ada Negara Islam”, dalam *op. cit*, p. XXIII, see also his statement as the chairman of MPR in *Media Indonesia*, 23 February, 2002.

unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives and social justice for the whole of the people of Indonesia<sup>67</sup>.

As manifestations for these opinions toward the state, the moderates commit to keep maintaining Indonesia as a nation state which is based on Pancasila. This commitment can be seen from their official documents<sup>68</sup>, in fact some of them (PAN and PKB) use Pancasila as their basis<sup>69</sup>. Moreover, also none of them clearly mentions the idea of the establishment of the Syari'ah Islam and an Islamic state in their official documents. In fact most of them reject the idea of returning seven words of the Piagam Jakarta (Jakarta Charter) to the constitution, which will potentially legalize state to conduct Syari'ah Islam formally<sup>70</sup>. Meanwhile, for some Islamic parties, PPP and PBB, that proposes the idea that the main aim of such an effort is to straighten the Indonesia history<sup>71</sup> and actually nothing to do with and Islamic state<sup>72</sup>. In fact the MPR Annual Meeting, PPP, for example stated that:

“...the proposal for the return of the seven words is not intended to create an Islamic state, instead for strengthening Indonesian nationality in the framework of united stated based on Pancasila”<sup>73</sup>.

### **Democracy and Islam**

The Moderate Islam groups believe that Al-Qur'an and Sunnah basically order every Muslims to build justice, affection and equality for human kind. In terms of power relation and governmental problems, these values become “a divine guide” for Muslim to establish proper institutions. Meanwhile, the government conducted by The Prophet Muhammad in Medina actually taught Muslims about the spirit of performing tolerance, honouring difference and maintenance righteousness for all people. Accordingly, moderates believe that any kind of governments established by Muslims should implement those values.

With regard to this perception, the moderates by using the ijtihad process then indicate that the type of governmental system that is close to the Islamic spirits in the modern era is nothing but democracy. This is because, in their opinion, like Islamic teachings, democracy also teaches the spirit of equality, justice and honor plurality, mainly in dealing with the election and decision making process.

Moreover, the acceptance of democracy is also based on the two other reasons. *Firstly* is the philosophical reason. In the philosophical context, the moderates are not bothered about the origin of democracy and do not see it as something that belongs to the Western exclusively. According to Abdul Asri Harahap, member of Dewan Pakar (the expert council) of PPP, democracy in essence is a universal teaching that contains universal values. Thus it is possible for every group to implement democracy, including Indonesian society. In fact

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<sup>67</sup> Musa Kazhim and Alfian Hamzah, *5 Partai dalam Timbangan*, (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 1999), p.246.

<sup>68</sup> About the official documents such as platforms, ideologies and programs of these parties can be explored from examples in Tim Litbang Kompas, *Partai-Partai Politik Indonesia: Ideologi, Strategi dan Program*, (Jakarta: Kompas, 1999), Tim Litbang Kompas, *Partai-Partai Politik Indonesia: Ideologi, dan Program*, (Jakarta: Kompas, 2004) or Zainal Abidin Amir, *Peta Islam Politik Pasca Orde Baru*, (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2003)

<sup>69</sup> See in Dewan Pimpinan Pusat PAN, *Partai Amanat Nasional*, (Jakarta: DPP PAN, 1999) and Platform PKB in Amir, *ibid*.

<sup>70</sup> See in Umar Basalim, *Pro Kontra Piagam Jakarta di Era Reformasi*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Indonesia Satu, 2002), pp. 174-254.

<sup>71</sup> This is in particular regarded to the Soekarno's testimonial that stated UUD 1945 (the Indonesian Constitution) was actually imbued by the Jakarta Charter. To some extent these groups see the restoration of the Charter as correcting an historical betrayal of Indonesia's Islamic struggle, Fealy, *op. cit*, p.4.

<sup>72</sup> Romli, Lili, *Partai Politik Islam Era Reformasi dan Piagam Jakarta dalam Sidang Tahunan MPR 2000*, Thesis, (Depok: FISIP UI, 2001).

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<sup>73</sup> See in Basalim, *op. cit*, p. 184.

he points out the spirit of democracy mainly in line with the Islamic spirit<sup>74</sup>. Meanwhile, with regard to the concept of people's sovereignty, according to PAN this actually is not a big problem for Islam. Because in moderates' points of view the basic purpose of this concept actually is not dedicated to fight the sovereignty of God, in fact this idea occurred as a reflection of opposing the existence of the dictatorship government, which is also essentially rejected by Islam<sup>75</sup>.

*Secondly* is the practical reason. They argue that the backward of Indonesian society today is caused by uncontrolled, exclusive and oligarchy government as conducted by the New Order. Thus, by implementing democracy, the new government system will have the potential to improve people's life in many aspects<sup>76</sup>. In addition, they basically also believe in the mass participation concept which is totally conducted in democratic system will provide the society empowerment<sup>77</sup>. Moreover, in line with this idea PKS believes that democracy, which is mainly dedicated to protect freedom, will give advantages for Muslims in Indonesia. This is caused by the existence of government's guaranty for freedom, Muslim communities will have sufficient freedom rights to develop their thinking and activities, particularly in order to improve people's quality of life and prosperity. In other words, by accepting democracy, in the end Muslims have the opportunity to prove that their existence is the mercy for the universe (*rahmatan lil alamin*)<sup>78</sup>. Thus based on these kinds of perceptions, for the moderates, this is acceptable for Muslims to learn democracy from the Western and apply such a system<sup>79</sup>.

## About Pluralism

With regard to the existence of pluralism, the moderates respond it as an important matter. This is not only because Islamic teachings are concerned, but also in the practical context has become an interest for Indonesia as a plural nation. In the first reason, moderates indicate that pluralism is a part of God's will<sup>80</sup>. In relation to this Islamic teachings encourage every Muslim to value the differences among people. According to PKS, Al-Qur'an Sunnah teaches every Muslims, for example, to respect the rights of non-Muslim, to spread out tolerance and to do justice for all the people<sup>81</sup>. Furthermore, Muhammad SAW taught during his life that Muslim had to have a willingness to sacrifice for the community, in a patriotic sense<sup>82</sup>. Therefore, it is clear that honouring pluralism is a part of Islamic teachings.

Furthermore the moderates consider that honouring pluralism is a proper attitude that has to be developed in order to maintain the existence of Indonesia as a plural nation, which consists of more than one religion (five official religions that is Buddhism, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism and Islam) and hundred of ethnic groups. Thus, basically for the moderates, Muslims cannot avoid the historical situation. According to PKS, national unity is a fundamental principal for developing a nation that is naturally heterogonous. Toward such a principal various communities inside the nation can be united, in the spirit of fraternity and togetherness.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Anis Matta, *Menikmati Demokrasi, Strategi Dakwah Meraih Kemenangan*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Saksi, 2002), pp.22. See also Harahap, *op.cit.*, pp. 109-110.

<sup>75</sup> Harahap, *op.cit.*, pp.114-115

<sup>76</sup> See for example in "Naskah Deklarasi Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB)", in Kazhim & Hamzah, *op. cit.*, p.243.

<sup>77</sup> Matta, *op. cit.*, pp. 21

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 19-23

<sup>79</sup> Asri, *op.cit.*, p.113

<sup>80</sup> In general all Moderates argue for this idea by quoting one of the verses of Al-Qur'an which says that if God wants to make all human races to be a one nation (*Ummat*) he could, but only because of His mercy, He then creates many nations diversity. (Al-Qur'an: Huud 118-119). Such an argument can be found in their official documents.

<sup>81</sup> See Burhanudin, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-78

<sup>82</sup> "Jawaban Soal Penegakan Syariah Islam", *Saksi*, No. 5 Tahun VI, 2003

<sup>83</sup> *Justice Party Basic Principles*, Jakarta: DPP PK 1999



By acknowledging the plural condition of Indonesia, moderates then try to develop a responsive and moderate environment for all. As a reflection of this attitude they are not interested in dividing Indonesia society in only two groups between Islam and non-Muslim. In fact they tend to give opportunity for non-Muslim to improve and exist, by providing access for them to join their parties, and even to attain some position at a top level in bureaucracy and government, such as ministers or members of parliament<sup>84</sup>. Accordingly in terms of pluralism, moderate groups are not only merely recognizing the equality between Muslim and non-Muslim groups but also providing the equal opportunity for non-Muslim groups. Abdurrahman Wahid, the founding father of PKB, for example during his presidential period discarded *Instruksi Presiden* (Presidential Instruction) No. 14/1967 which formally restricts Chinese to perform their tradition.

As a reflection of their opinions about democracy, all of parties use and promote the words and idea of democracy in their official documents. Also in their documents the sentences that honouring pluralism is also easy to find<sup>85</sup>. Moreover, these groups demonstrate their commitment to democracy by joining election properly, and show their eagerness to build good relations with nationalists and non-Muslim groups for examples in their parties, in parliament or in the president election<sup>86</sup>. In addition, these groups also have demonstrated their respects toward the democratic mechanism and any

policies produced, even some of the policies to some extent contradict with their ideals and interests<sup>87</sup>.

## Conclusion

From the explanations above, it can be concluded that, in the political matters, both radical Islam and moderate groups in Indonesia to some extent have some similarities and also differences. The main similarities between them are related to the idea that Islam as a religion has social functions which essentially guide its follower in all dimensions of their life including politics. Moreover, in the political context both radicals and moderates believe in the inextricable relations between Islam and politics. Thus, for them the attempts to separate Islam and politics are absurd and to some extent also contradict to Islam.

Even so, some differences also appear between them, particularly in relation to the perceptions about how deep Islamic teachings should play in the real politics and how Islamic texts should be interpreted to be a basis for Muslim's political activities.

The basic perceptions of the Islamic Radical groups such as emphasizing literal approaches for understanding Islam, concerning text more than context and giving a priority to the era of the Prophet in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century; has influenced their perceptions about Islam as a total and integrated religion and formal relations between Islam and politics. These opinions eventually become a basis for their other opinions such as the urgency of implementing Syari'ah Islam formally, the establishment of an Islamic state and the tendency to be unenthusiastic to the existence of the nation state.

Moreover, in line with their exclusive characteristics such as tend to be literal and

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<sup>84</sup> See for example, Hajriyanto Y. Thohari, "Bangsa Pluralis, Partai Pluralis", *Republika* 19 September 1998.

<sup>85</sup> See in Dewan Pimpinan Pusat PPP, *Ketetapan-Ketetapan Mukhtar IV PPP*, (Jakarta: DPP PPP, 1999). Dewan Pimpinan Pusat PAN, *Partai Amanat Nasional*, (Jakarta: DPP PAN, 1998), Dewan Pimpinan Pusat PK, *Sekilas Partai Keadilan*, (Jakarta: DPP PAN, 1999), Platform PKB in these official documents can be traced in their website see in [www.kebangkitanbangsa.org](http://www.kebangkitanbangsa.org) (for PKB), [www.ppp.org.id](http://www.ppp.org.id) (for PPP), or [pk-sejahtera.org](http://pk-sejahtera.org) (for PKS).

<sup>86</sup> See also "Visi Program Harmonisasi ada di PKB", Muhammad, *op.cit.*, pp.73-81.

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<sup>87</sup> For example, the positive attitudes to parliament after this institution toppled down Abdurrahman Wahid (the chairman of PKB).

textual in understanding Islam, acknowledging pluralism in the narrow perspectives, regarding Western ideas in pessimist way and tend to glorify Islamic history; the radicals tend to have negative opinions of democracy. In general, even though they agree to the concept of Syura (the consensus), which was taught by the Prophet, the radicals generally believe that Islam principally is incompatible with democracy. This kind of perception is actually reflected in their narrow opinion about pluralism, which basically though they honor the existence of non-Muslim groups, the radicals have no intentions to give an equal political access for non-Muslim groups.

Meanwhile, for the moderates, by implementing their perspectives such as regarding Islam as a “substantive guidance” in dealing with the state, believing that Islamic histories as a lesson that do not bind Muslims principally, implementing “contextualization approaches” for understanding Islam and having willingness to be tolerant; they tend to create a moderate perceptions, particularly with regarded to the relations between Islam and state, an Islamic State, Syari’ah Islam and the existence of Indonesia as a nation state with Pancasila as the basis.

In addition, with regard to their viewpoints that honoring pluralism, believing in substance than the name, giving priority to open-minded attitudes and think inclusively; the moderates tend to have a positive reaction to democracy, which is mainly regarded as the systems that in line with the spirits of Islam such as justice, equality and consensus. As a reflection to this attitude, the moderates tend to comprehensively accept and honor the existence of non-Muslim groups by not only acknowledging their existence but also providing trust and an equal access to them.

The phenomenon of the existence of the radical Islamic groups and the moderate Islamic groups (with all their similarities and differences) in the reform era in general not only demonstrates that politics is an inseparable issue

for Muslims in Indonesia, but it also indicates that Islam will never be a monolithic group in this country.

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