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State and Religion: Considering Indonesian Islam as Model of Democratisation for the Muslim World

Liberales Institut

Syafiq Hasyim

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Syafiq Hasyim

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Introduction

Since the fall of Suharto in 1998, Indonesia has been noticed by the international community as the largest Muslim country in the world (Mujani & Liddle 2004, pp. 110-11; Ananta et al. 2005). This recognition is because Indonesia has hinted more progress and improvement in democracy and human rights than other Muslim countries such as Turkey, Egypt and Pakistan. Freedom of press, the implementation of fair general elections, the distribution of power among the state institutions (*trias politica*) and some many others are main indicators depicting the rapid democratisation of Indonesia. Besides that, as the largest Muslim country in the world – with approximately 200 million-Muslim population – the Muslim people of Indonesia do not demand the implementation of sharia state, but rather commit to democracy which is implemented in the form of Pancasila state¹ as the choice of their political system. This is of course the distinctiveness of Indonesian Islam. It is true that there are many Islam-based parties and organisations, but there has no one political party or one of mainstream Islamic organisations that want to overtly change Indonesia from Pancasila to an Islamic state. Radical ideas screamed by small militant groups of Indonesian Islam such as Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI, Indonesian Liberation Party), Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI, Council of Indonesian Muslim Fighters), Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT, Community Helpers of God) to enforce the political system of Islam – caliphate and a total implementation of sharia system [*Islam kāffā*] – and are not strongly welcome by Indonesian Muslims.

To the fine model of Indonesian Islam, German Chancellor Angela Merkel seems to agree that Indonesia remains a beautiful country for its respect to religious diversity and pluralism and as a successful model for a Muslim democratic country in the world.² The last event, on 31 May 2013, although Indonesian human rights activists and also moderate Muslim groups had immensely protested this honouring, but AFC (Appeal of Conscience Foundation) in New York remained endowing "World Statesmen Award" to Mr. President Susilo Bambang Yudoyono (acronymised with SBY). This award was endowed to praise the success of SBY in nurturing religious freedom and tolerance in Indonesia. All the above impressions and wishes indicate that the international community still believe Indonesia as the largest Islamic democratic and tolerant country in

1 The elaboration on the Pancasila state will be seen later.

2 <http://www.dw.de/merkel-signals-religious-tolerance-in-indonesia/a-16088132>, viewed on 17 November 2013.

the world that can be a mirror or example for other Muslim countries regarding how to manage peacefully relationship between religion and the state. However, on the different side, some reports on the implementation of human rights especially religious freedom presented by local and international NGOs such as Setara Institute, CRCs of Gajah Mada University, and Human Rights Watch indicates that some challenges for democracy because of shariatisation movement of some aspects of Indonesia (Setara Institute 2010; Cholil et al. 2009b; Human Rights Watch 2013).

The contrasting national phenomena of Indonesia mentioned above have caught me into the battle of a narrative: "whether it is true or not that Indonesia can be claimed as successful country in managing relation between religion and politics (the state)?" This article seeks to highlight how the state and religion (Islam) integrate and disintegrate each other and what a creative advantage and disadvantage are resulted from the attachment and detachment of religion from the state or the state from religion in the context of Indonesian politics. To know that, this article emphasises the history of Islam or the making of Indonesian Islam and its compatibility with the principle of modern state applied in this country considering that Islam in Indonesia is rather different from Islam in some Islamic Middle East countries. The role of Islamic civil society organisations in promoting a "different Islam" in Indonesia is also elaborated here besides also the role of Islamic political parties. This paper also sees how Pancasila as the sole ideology of the state and how different groups has competed for this ideology in the post reform era, the revitalisation of Islam indicated by the emergence of Salafi-Wahhabi groups and how all these determine a connection between Islam and state in the current and future circumstance of Indonesian politics.

Compatibility between Islam and Modern State

Jose Casanova stated that public religion is compatible with modernity – democracy and civility (Casanova 1994). This statement is rather different from the dominant discourse of sociology that usually designates religion in an asymmetrical position to the state or politics. The colonial sociology has long been in pessimistic way in understanding the emerging role of religion especially Islam in the public and legal sphere of such Islamic country.

In the Western Christian tradition, the relation between religion and the state is clearer than in the Muslim tradition. Stipulated by their bitter experience on the politicisation of religion by Churches in their Middle Ages era, the Western Christianity reached at a conclusion regarding the need of separating the domain of religion from the domain of the state (secularism). The history of Islam does not have similar issue with this, therefore, whether or not religion is part of the state or whether or not Islam has a particular imposed form of the state” remains debated until the present situation.

Theoretically speaking, the position of Muslim scholars regarding separation between Islam and the state is divided into two groups. First, those who believe that Islam prescribes a specific form of state which is claimed to have reference to the history and tradition of the Prophet Muhammad and his predecessors. From this point, Islam and the state is one-united entity or popularly called political Islam. This discourse is for instance propagated by Abu A'la al-Maududi, Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb (Kurzman 2002). These Muslim scholars argue that the injunctions of the Qur'an about the unity of Islam and the state are clearly mentioned. They also refer to the leadership of Muhammad as a historical fact about that he was the political leader of his community. Interestingly, the sovereignty of God's governance is often resulted from a literal understanding on Islam (*zāhiriyya* and *ḥarfiyya*). Second, those who believe that Islam does not suggest a specific form of Islam and the state. This group argue that what have been done by Prophet Muhammad in his era was not his situation as the leader of the state, but as *imām* (spiritual leader) of his community. This discourse is propagated by 'Alī 'Abd al-Rāziq (Egypt), Sa'id al-'Ashmawi (Egypt) (Shepard 1996, p. 39), Muhammad Arkoun (France), Abdurrahman Wahid (Indonesia) and Nurcholish Madjid (Indonesia) and many others. These thoughts are a result of contextual thinking of Islam.

Each group is claiming that their opinion is more legitimate and has strong fundamental basis in the tradition of Islam than other groups. It is evident in the practice of Muslim community in implementing the matters of their statecraft which is also divided along with the theological debate of Islamic discourse as mentioned above. First, Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, Jordan, and some others prefer to have an Islamic state, locating Islam as sole source of state normativity. In this system, the most referred-values in the statecraft are sharia values. God's law is the supreme law, indeed. Second, Indonesia and Turkey take a different adherence to the connection between Islam and the state. The Muslim people of Indonesia and Turkey can accept their state to become as a neutral state, perceiving a state as a non-aligned

space to the intervention of religion. Both Indonesia and Turkey do not use Islam as sole source of the state's legitimacy.

Although Islam is not totally embedded within the political system of Indonesia and Turkey, both countries are not anti-religion in their daily political and legal practices. The state law of Indonesia and Turkey, for instance, remains giving a space for the practice of religion or belief. In Indonesia, for instance, Islamic personal laws are accommodated their practices in the court of sharia (Indonesian: *Mahkamah Syariah*) and it applies only for Muslim people. Although it is not yet admitted as the state law, Indonesia also has drafted the Compilation of Islamic Law (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*, KHI). In Turkey, Islamic personal laws are regulated under the portfolio of *Diyanet* (Office of Religious Affairs) which is actually also for Muslim people (Rabasa & Larrabee 2008, p. 12; Rubin & Çarkoglu 2013).

The accommodation of certain religious practices and legal provision in the domain of the state for certain religious adherent are based on an argument that every people or believer has rights to be protected their religion or belief. This is of course an argument which is also promoted by the modern democratic countries. In short, because both Indonesia and Turkey see that Islam is compatible with democracy, therefore, a democratic political system is enough for them.

Although Muslim people do not have a bitter experience with their religion as it was faced by the European Christian society in the historical past of Dark-Ages, but to some extent, in the modern era, the discourses and practices of Islam that favours Islam as both religion and state system on one hand and Islamic theocratic countries that strictly apply Islam as their sole system on the other hand are facing complexities living in the modern democracy. Most of them have problems in dealing with some practices of democracy that literally seem to be in the opposite direction from what they practice and think of their political Islam. In the Islamic theocratic countries, when the political Islam contradicts democracy, argument derived from the political Islam is prioritised because it refers to the law of God and the law of God never falls into mistake, whilst democracy is more probably wrong. In the classical debates of Islamic theology (*kalām*), the law of God is the supremacist law, *lā ḥukma illā Allāha*, there is no rule but God. The Qur'anic verse, *wa man lam yahkam bimā anzala Allāhu fa ulā'ika hum al-kāfirūn*, anyone who does not rule with God's law are judged idolaters, is employed by the propagators of the pro-sharia state groups as argument that Islam orders a specific model of governance. The most prominent representatives of this model in the modern Islam are (1)

Sunni-Wahhabis government in Saudi Arabia³ (Vogel 2000) and (2) Shi'a-Islamic Republic of Iran (Brunner 2011; K. Farsoun & Mashayekhi 1993).

Both sides of the Sunni-Wahhabis Saudi and Shi'is Iran, although there are different in their Islamic belief-system, are having similar concept on the supremacy of God's law. Both countries are also very active in propagating and stipulating their ideas for other Muslim countries to apply their model of Islamic theocratic state. Because of their strict adherence to their literal interpretation of Islamic concept on the unity of Islam and the state, the presence of their discourse and practice are creating incompatibilities. Most of the modern states are embracing the supremacy of human consensus, not the supremacy of God's law. Most of their problems are solved under the consideration of human consensus. But this is not for the Islamic theocratic countries. Therefore, in this regard, it is understandable if the pro-sharia groups are restless or even in conflicts to both the ideas and practices of democratic states. The Taliban group of Afghanistan and Pakistan have problem with religious freedom and women rights in particular and with secular system generally (Skaine 2002). Al-Qaeda also has a serious problem with a secular state system which is also happening with the Hezbollah group in Lebanon (Harik 2005). Al-Qaeda claims that democracy has failed in Afghanistan and they use this failure as a space for eschewing international Jihadism (Morgan 2007, p. 64).

Their disagreement or contention to the products of modernity is mostly based on their understanding that the Western world through democracy and human rights are dominating the Muslim world. To make a counter of balance or to end the domination, they struggle for promoting Islam or sharia as the world system. Unfortunately, to some degree, method and strategy they employ for promoting their ideas are not always based on a peaceful means such as through dialogue, discussion and exchange of experience and discourse, but through violence and enmity. It also creates an image that Islam is the source of violence. The al-Qaeda and Taliban for instance are deploying violence as vehicle for challenging the secular ideas of the West or those who are defined by them as group that follow more or less system and ideas of the West that separate religion and the state. In this regard, what the pro-sharia groups are putting Islam *vis a vis* human-created ideology. Theologically speaking, this strategy degrades the position of Islam which is beyond ideology. Unfortu-

3 Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt (Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb) and Jama'ati al-Islami of Pakistan (Abu A'la al-Maududi) are also considered as the model of the political Islam, but their resonance is not quite strong in other Muslim countries. The first ruling by the leader of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Mohammad Morsi was toppled by the military regime of Egypt.

nately, the model of al-Qaeda and Hezbollah or the model of Wahhabi-Saudi regime and Islamic Republic of Iran are often associated by the international community with Islamic terrorism and radicalism.

The above image is closely related with what Casanova reveals that religious movements – Islamic movements – in the 1980s have created a public discourse that religion was depicted as source of Islamic militancy and radicalism. Jurgen Habermas calls this circumstance as an unexpected of revitalisation of faith and belief (Siebert 2010, p. 295). The most repeated images covered in the international media to legitimise the given theoretical statements is cases of the Iranian Revolution 1979 and some Islamic insurgencies like al-Qaeda terrorism and Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. In fact, these Islamic groups assume that democracy is crafted by human being therefore Muslim believers are not recommended or even banned to follow this model for their political system. The Wahhabi regime of Saudi Arabia for instance sees that the practice of the political Islam by other Muslim countries as deviant too when it is not in accordance with the values of Wahhabi Islam. On the different side, the *Shi'a* Islam also views that the concept of Islamic Republic of Iran is the only legitimate political system within Islam. They makes truth-claim on a system which they prefer to by intentionally capitalising religion. They know that a truth-claim which is based on religion is more easily perceived by Muslim people than a truth-claim which is based on democracy because religion-based truth claim is revealed by God whilst democracy is based on human consensus. All everything which is literally mentioned in God's law are not the subject of change, whilst all everything which is created by human beings the sovereignty to interpret it belongs to the human beings and this is not *shar'ī* (not based on sharia). In short, it can be said here that Islam is compatible with the modern democratic state when this religion is implemented through contextual approach. Islam which is understood and implemented based textual approach will have more difficulty in dealing with democracy and modernity. Indonesian Islam is mostly implemented through the contextual approach.

History of Indonesian Islam

Regarding connection between Islam and the state, Indonesian Islam is different from Islam implemented in both Saudi Arabia and Iran. Although the variety of international Islamic discourse prescribing the importance of unifying Islam and the state in a single entity (*al-dīn wa al-dawla*, Islam is a religion and

the state) has also landed in the land of Indonesia, but this idea is not popular among ordinary Muslims of Indonesia. Instead of adopting *al-din wa al-dawla* for their political system, Indonesian Muslims prefer to have the Pancasila state. Indonesian Islam relatively shares and coexists peacefully with democracy and civility. Robert Hefner, an American anthropologist, describes Indonesian Islam generally as a civil Islam, which is compatible with democracy (Hefner 2001; Hefner 2011). Many observers associate the civility of Indonesian Islam with the historical process of Islam comes to Indonesia. This section is intended to highlight how its propagators transfer and then develop Islam as the greater religion in the archipelago of Indonesia.

Although historians are still dissenting in their opinions regarding when Islam comes to Indonesia, but most of them agree that peaceful process and means are the ways of Islam to arrive in this archipelago. It means that there had no wars and significant tension between the propagators of Islam – coming from Middle East, India and Persia – and the local people of the archipelago who have already had local religions and beliefs with them. Commerce, mix-marriage and other cultural encounters were very effective in this regard. Besides that the role of *ṣūfi* is very determinant in imposing moderate aspect into Indonesian Islam. All these factors are causing Islam in Indonesia are different from Islam in other places.

It is true that Indonesia has had some Islamic kingdoms such as in Aceh, South Sulawesi, Central Java and many others, but Indonesian Muslims prefer to adopt principles of a modern state that refer to the tradition of nation-state in the West than their system of governance. In such period, it has also been a different colour of Islam in Indonesia that tended to use formalistic approach as the strategy of disseminating Islam which was evident through the role of the Padri movement in Minangkabau, West Sumatera, in the 19th century (Parlindungan 2007; Hadler 2008). The Padri movement was a local group of this region struggling for hostility to the Dutch colonialism as their main objective. However, besides fighting against the Dutch colonialism, however, many historians state that the Padri movement favoured Wahhabism (an Islamic stream whose tenet is based on the thoughts of Muḥammad b. 'Abd. Wahnāb, an advisor for the kingdom of Ibn Sa'ūd of Saudi Arabia) (Hadler 2008). The Padri movement did not get a strong resonance in Indonesia. Although Wahhabism comes from the high land of Islam, using Ernest Gellner's thesis on "high Islam" vs. "low Islam" (Gellner 1992; Gellner 1983), but it is not too popular among Indonesian Muslims who are mostly the adherents of Shāfi'i school of Islamic law. In addition, some Indonesian local ulama blame that Wahhabism is not part of Islam (Abbas 1999). The rejection of the local

ulama to Wahhabism makes this movement did not gain ground in Indonesia. In addition, historically speaking, the establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama was a response to the excessive Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia that prohibited pilgrims for conducting ziyāra al-qubūr (vising graveyard) of Prophet Muhammad's companions (Arabic: *ṣaḥāba*). The traditionalist Muslims who felt that visiting the graveyard of pious people especially Prophet's companion and saints is recommended in Islam. This is one of many reasons why the Nahdlatul Ulama was established.

Besides the Wahhabism in Minangkabau, Indonesian Islam had an experience with local Islamic rebellion movement in West Java. The Darul Islam and Tentara Islam Indonesia (DI/TII, Abode of Islam and Indonesian Islamic Army) was local and indigenous groups of Islamic rebels that strived for the establishment of Islamic state in Indonesia. The leader of this group, Kartosuwirjo stated the necessity of having an Islamic state in West Java. On 7 August 1949, Kartosuwirjo declared an Islamic state which was not only in the area of West Java, but also in whole of Indonesia (Federspiel 2009, p. 189; Formichi 2012). The government of Indonesia was officially stating that the Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia was an illegal organisation. Mohammad Natsir, the Leader of Masyumi Party as well as the chief of investigation to this movement stated a disagreement to the method of insurgency used by Kartosuwirjo through the Darul Islam for the foundation of an Islamic state, but Natsir did not condemn Kartosuwirjo (p. 190). The similar rebellions not only happened in West Java but also in Aceh and Makassar (Aspinall 2009; Dijk 1981).

Although some historical experiences of Islamic radicalism have been with Indonesian Islam, but its moderate characteristics remain solid and stronger than its radicalism. It can be said here that moderate aspect that went together with the first coming of Islam to Indonesia is really embedded and acceptable in this country. The given historical facts are then often used by historians to claim the distinctiveness of Indonesian Islam from other Islam in other Islamic countries. Besides that, this fact is also employed to judge the later development of Islam in Indonesia as a moderate and open Islam. What the moderate Islam means is that Islam which is able to combine and integrate the teaching of Islam and the tenet of modernity and democracy. As the citizens of Indonesia of course the group of moderate Islam is dealing with religious politics, but the way the group interpret and implement the religious politics is different from the group of political Islam. The group of moderate Islam strives for more substantive issue of Islam. Their interpretation on Islam is revealing that Islam is compatible with democracy and human rights because both Islam and democracy are evolving the similar substance

that is the dignity of human being. The balanced Islam (Arabic: *tawāzun*) is Islam which is objectively located in accommodating the sacred and the mundane. The Arabic terms *tawassuṭ* (moderate) and *tawāzun* (balance) which are familiarly used by Indonesian Islamic organisations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama are reflection of the moderatism of Indonesian Islam. All the given characteristics of the moderate Islam above is basically based on notion that Islam cannot be qualified into a specific form of the state. Islam is religion and the position of religion is divine and above all everything including democracy. Religion is immutable, but democracy is mutable. Therefore, the moderate Islam views that locating Islam in a certain forms of ideology – state system – is degrading the values of Islam.

Pancasila State

Although Indonesia has had established historical ties with Islam, this country does not espouse Islam as its political system. Since its independence from the Dutch colonial government in 1945, Indonesia declared as a non-theocratic state. The founding father of this country had chosen Pancasila as ideological and philosophical foundation of this country. The Pancasila state means that the polity of Indonesia follows the principles of Pancasila – from “Panca” meaning five, “Sila” meaning principles or verses. Pancasila contains (1) Belief in One God (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*) (2) Just and civilised humanity (*Kemanusiaan yang adil dan beradab*) (3) the unity of Indonesia (*Persatuan Indonesia*) (4) Democracy guided by wisdom, consensus, and representativeness (*Kerakyatan Yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan, Dalam Permusyawaratan dan Perwakilan*) (5) Social justice for whole people of Indonesia (*Keadilan Sosial bagi seluruh Rakyat Indonesia*). Pancasila as the ideological foundation of Indonesia has been disputed in the early historical formation of this country. Based on that explanation above, there is neither clear evidence about the use of the word secularism (Indonesian expression: *sekularisme*) nor the word Islam in the ideology of Indonesia.

However, the preference of Pancasila as the ideology of the state is not a simple issue in the historical history of Indonesia. Historically speaking, in the early independence era, the founding fathers of Indonesia in talking about the state ideology were divided into two groups: First, those who wanted to formulate Indonesian as an Islamic theocratic state by applying sharia for those who were Muslims. Second, those who wanted to set up Indonesia as a non-Islamic

state, but nationalist and secular state. The Islamist group felt that with Pancasila, Indonesia cannot be called secular state, because the first statement of Pancasila is "Belief in the One God." The concept of the "One God" here is then attempted by Muslim groups to be associated only with the concept of *tawhīd* (theological conception on the unity of God in Islam). In legitimising this, the first group used an argument that the contribution of Muslims to the independence of Indonesia in 1945 had to be paid proportionally and it can be done through forming Indonesia as sharia-based state. This is what they call a proportional gift for Indonesian Muslims as demanded by Mohammad Natsir from Masyumi party (Dzulfikriddin 2010; Luth 1999). The nationalist group accepted Pancasila because it means that Indonesia cannot be named as "an Islamic state" because in fact there is no a clear injunction within the Pancasila that the state has to refer to the tenet of Islam. Although "Belief in One God" is mentioned here, but it is not meant that this sentence is solely addressed to the God of Muslim people. This second groups (nationalist) argued that Indonesia is not only a state for Muslims but also for all citizens of Indonesia regardless of their religion, gender and race. Regardless of minority or majority, all of them are struggling for the independence of Indonesia so they also have same right to have a state according what they want. In the debate, the second group gave a warning to the Islamic group if they want to force Indonesia as sharia-based state, the second group would create their own state separating from the territory of Indonesia. The Islamic groups promoted for using the *Piagam Jakarta* (Jakarta Charter) as the ideology of Indonesia while nationalist group rejected and preferred to Pancasila. The Jakarta Charter has similar verses with Pancasila, but with additional seven words in the first verse stating obligation for Muslim to carry out sharia for its adherents, "*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa dengan kewajiban menjalankan syari'at Islam bagi pemeluk-pemeluknya.*" (Darmaputera 1988, pp. 151-3; Ramage 2005). Finally, it is agreed that the ideological foundation for Indonesia is Pancasila, not the Jakarta Charter.

During the Suharto era (1966-1998), there is no such as an important constitutional movement against the use of Pancasila as the sole ideology of Indonesia. Although many Islamic groups did not agree with this legal decision, they just kept silence due to the oppressive policy of Suharto regime to their movement. Those who continued to struggle the supremacy of sharia use a different strategy and means such as done by Jema'ah Tarbiyah (literally means group of education) and the network of NII (Negara Islam Indonesia, Islamic State of Indonesia). The Jema'ah Tarbiyah has a ideological inclination to Ikhwān al Muslimin (Muslim Brotherhood), (Machmudi 2008), while the NII was associated as a continuation of local Islamic rebel, DI/TII (Darul Islam/Tentara

Islam Indonesia (Dijk 1981; Formichi 2012). These two Islamist movements have struggled from clandestine zones to strive for making sharia for becoming the principle ideology of Indonesia. Different from the NII, most members of Jema'ah Tarbiyah has transformed their idea on sharia enforcement into the form of a political party, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS, Prosperous-Justice Party) (Machmudi 2008).

Actually, Pancasila is not claiming Indonesia as a secular state, but it does not also claim this country as an Islamic state. However, it can be said that the practice of Indonesia as a state is like what the secular state does in many places. One principle that Pancasila implies is its neutrality among different religions. The first verse of Pancasila, "Belief in One God," for instance, is expressed in the word "Ketuhanan" which in English lexicon is similar with "Godness." Based on this first verse of Pancasila, theoretically speaking, the legal system of Pancasila neither suggests the implementation of sharia or religious law, nor object to the proposal of accommodating Islamic law or other influence of other religions to the legal system of Indonesia as far as it is in line with the principle of Pancasila. Indonesia has, for instance, some rulings on sharia such as on Islamic personal laws, but all of them apply only for Muslim believers.

How is about the institutionalisation of religious authority into the form of Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA)? Indonesia establishes the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the national cabinet since its independence in 1945, but the function of the MORA is not designed to regulate and adopt a certain idea of religious doctrine into the legal system of Indonesia, but to manage and facilitate the practice of religions. Although the Ministry of Religious Affairs has tried to perform its task in neutral and objective means, but the nuance of Islamisation remains sensible. The politicisation of the MORA for the interest of Muslim groups often happen because the officials of MORA are not able to translate the principle of the Pancasila neutrality into the daily bureaucracy of the MORA. The use of the MORA as a space for Muslim groups to do the Islamisation of Indonesia is the matter of political contestation. The tendency of politicisation of the MORA will always become the phenomenon of Indonesian politics. This is a consequence of choosing democracy as the political model of Indonesian polity.

Indonesian Islam in Public Sphere and the State

When Indonesia decides to become the Pancasila state, the state is not responsible for the doctrinal issue of religions including Islam. As a consequence of Indonesia for being non-a sharia state, therefore, the promotion of Islam in the public sphere of Indonesia is chiefly initiated by Islamic civil society organisations like Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. In this system, the matters of religion are not the domain of the state, but rather the domain of civil society or public sphere in Jurgen Habermas's term (Baxter 2011). Therefore, it is important to start the discussion by mentioning general social, cultural and political formation of Indonesia. Religiously speaking, as most populated Muslim country, Indonesia is, perhaps, different from other Muslim countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan or even Malaysia. With the number of Muslim population which is around 86 % out 240 millions of total population, Indonesia is a country with uniqueness especially in relatively separating the territory of religion from the state.

In daily life, Indonesian Muslims usually affiliate to one of many Islamic organisations (civil society organisations). Second largest of Islamic civil society organisation, Muhammadiyah was established in 1912 in Central Java, even before the formation of Indonesia as an independent nation-state, then the first largest Islamic civil society organisation, Nahdlatul Ulama was formulated in 1926 in East Java. The majority of Indonesian Muslims are the active members of these two organisations. Both Muhammadiyah and NU are giving social, religious and education services for their members. If Muhammadiyah has thousand schools, universities or higher educations, and hospitals, NU has thousand *pesantren* (traditional Islamic boarding schools or *madrasa*). Religious orientation of Muhammadiyah is rather modernist or puritan (the influence of Islamic modernism in Middle East, Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, Muḥammad 'Abdu and Rashīd Riḍā) in its Islamic orientation and Nahdlatul Ulama is rather traditionalist and syncretic (Nakamura 2012; van Bruinessen 1994). However, this typology is not representing the total Islamic style of both organisations. To some degree, Nahdlatul Ulama is more modernist than Muhammadiyah and Muhammadiyah is more traditionalist and conservative than Nahdlatul Ulama. Interestingly, both organisations are self-generating income and independent from the state intervention. Their sustainability not depends on the auspice of the state, but on their own strength. Despite the different facts, both organisations are now the first and second largest Islamic organisations in Indonesia. As civil society organisations, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama have contributed and supported Indonesia as a Muslim

country that accommodates and adjust the principle of modern polity. The difference of both is that the former orders the religiosity of their members by following *madhāhib* (Islamic schools of Islamic) especially Shāfiī school of Islamic law, the latter refers to the Quran and Sunna (the tradition of Prophet Muhammad), no obligation for the member of Muhammadiyah to refer to *madhāhib*. Both Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama organisations have their own social and cultural bases. The Nahdlatul Ulama is more attracting rural Muslims because this organisation provides religious precepts that the rural adherents of Islam feel comfortable with their local and vernacular tradition. Indonesian urban Muslims adhere more the religious interpretation model of Muhammadiyah because the spirit of Islamic reformism that fulfil the need of urbanity. It is claimed that the member of these two Islamic organisations are more than 50 % of total population of Indonesia. Therefore, their position in the constellation of Indonesia's cultural and political issues is really considered by the state.

In relation to their support to the Pancasila state, since their inception, both organisations have tried to develop "Islam ramah" (Indonesian expression: smiling Islam). Of course, tension between both Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama on one side and the state of Indonesia on the other side have ever occurred, but it has never been into a serious disagreement and contention between both Islamic organisations on one hand and the state on the other hand. In fact, both Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama – when it has changed again into civil society organisations since 1984 – never argue about the need of transforming Indonesia from the Pancasila state to an Islamic state even both have in such period of time ever had different understanding on the use of Islam as foundation of the country. Muhammadiyah had been long putting Islam as its ideological foundation, but in 1985, Muhammadiyah changed and declared Pancasila as its sole organisational foundation. One year before Muhammadiyah, in 1985, Nahdlatul Ulama had declared Pancasila as the ideological foundation of the organisation. The change of its ideological foundation from Islam to Pancasila is a proof of both organisations for their commitment to the form of Indonesia as a state that manages separately the domain of religion and the domain of the state.

Besides the role of Islamic civil society organisations, a limited separation between religion and the state was also influenced by the Suharto policy. By oppression and undemocratic method, limited or *ad hoc* separation between the authority of religion and the authority of the state are quite clear. Suharto firmly and strictly rejected any effort or attempt that wanted to bring religion out from the private sphere. For Suharto, the place of religion was in the

private arena, not in the public one. Suharto remained allowing the practice of worship in the public space, but it has to be adjusted with the rulings of the state.

Suharto did not welcome to the use of Islam as the foundation of Indonesian politics. Therefore, from 1984 to 1998, Suharto, for instance, obliged all political parties and Islamic organisations to refer to Pancasila as the sole ideology of their organisations, or called *asas tunggal*. The *asas tunggal* was a political hint for the prohibition of using religion in the public and legal sphere of Indonesia. During this period, all Islamic organisations and political parties use Pancasila as their sole ideology. In the 1990s, however, Suharto turned his tendency to provide a space for the revitalisation of Islam which was evident through his permission to his closest Minister, B.J. Habibie, to lead Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia (ICMI, Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals). Although the ICMI was an organisation for modernist Muslim intellectuals, but its formation was a precursor for the presence of Islam in the public arena (Hefner 1997, p. 75). The sympathy of Suharto to Islam increased when the support of military group slowly decreased.

Since the establishment of ICMI, the Suharto regime was friendly to Islam. Muslim bureaucrats and politicians have started to be accommodated in the administration of the state and in the ruling party (Golkar: Golongan Karya). Some observers associated this movement as the mobilisation of *kaum santri* (social category for Muslim community who learned their religion) to politics. It was true that many modernist Muslim intellectuals gained occupied good positions in the Golkar party like Habibie, Din Syamsuddin and many others. However, the presence of ICMI is still far from being judged as the resurgence of formal Islam. Besides that, the voice of Muslim intellectuals was not monolithic with the ICMI regarding the mobilisation of Islamic politics. Abdurrahman Wahid, Jalaluddin Rahmat and MH. Ainun Nadjib were examples of Muslim intellectuals who preferred to stand neutrally and criticised the phenomenon of bureaucratisation of Islam which was promoted by the ICMI.

During the reform era of Indonesia, the role of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah remains very significant in making and sustaining Indonesia as a moderate and democratic Muslim country. Besides NU and Muhammadiyah, we have Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Council of Indonesia Ulama, MUI). MUI is not an official state fatwa agency, but an independent ulama organisation. It has been formulated since 1975, but had gained its momentum since the birth of freedom in this country in 1998. If in the Suharto the MUI acted as the servant of the state (Arabic: *khādim al-ḥukūma*) since the era of reform

MUI changes to become the servant of Muslim community (Arabic: *khādim al-umma*). MUI states that there is no an Islamic state for Indonesia. In 2006, MUI declares that being the NKRI (Unitary State of Indonesian Republic) is a best choice for Indonesia. The given explanation seems to affirm that the three organisations (Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama and MUI) do agree with a separation between religion and state (MUI 2011). In fact, I should also realise that Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah and also MUI have contributed very much to the balanced relation between Islam and the state. However, some critical points since the reform era should be addressed here in relation to the legal interpretation of MUI on the finality of the Pancasila state for Indonesia. For MUI, its commitment to Pancasila state does mean that the application of sharia as the law of Indonesia is totally denied. MUI assumes that sharia can be implemented in the national state law as far as it is procedurally and constitutionally done through democratic process. Adopting sharia into the state law of Indonesia is like adopting customary and also Western law into the state law of Indonesia as happening for many decades of Indonesian legislation process.

Islam in the Political Sphere

Besides affiliating with Islamic organisations, the Indonesian Muslims are also members of political parties. The active participation of Indonesian Muslims in politics is visible from the electoral turnout of each general election which is more than 70% since the reform era of Indonesia. Interestingly, the Indonesian Muslims are not only active in Islamic parties, but also secular and nationalist parties. It is evident in the result of the general elections in which most Indonesian Muslims are giving their vote to secular parties namely Partai Demokrat (Susilo Bambang Yudoyonos' party) Golongan Karya (Golkar, Functional Group), Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDIP, Indonesia's Demorccay Partay for Struggle) and Partai Demokrat (PD, Democrat Party). Islamic parties such as the PKS, Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP, United Development Party) Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN, National Mandate Party) and Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB, National Awakening Party) did not gain votes traversing the nationalist parties.

In the era of Sukarno, with the multiparty system, there were two big Islamic parties; Masyumi and Nahdlatul Ulama.⁴ The Masyumi party was established in

4 The Nahdlatul Ulama was established in as *jam'iyya* (Arabic expression for gesselschat) in 1926. When Islamic party Masyumi was established, this first largest Islamic organisation was founder of this party. The Nahdlatul Ulama divorced from the Masyumi and established as an independent political party.

the era of Indonesia under the Japanese occupation in 1945 and was a result of Islamic solidarity among Indonesian Islamic organisations (Vickers 2013, p. 126). Since the beginning, this party was supported by both modernist and traditionalist Muslims. But later on, the traditionalist Muslims found it own party by reviving Nahdlatul Ulama since 1952 as a political party (Bush 2009, p. 49; Vickers 2013). Both parties were struggling for Islamic agenda, inserting the political platform for bringing the values of Islam into the constitution of Indonesia. However, the Masyumi party uses the Jakarta Charter (Piagam Jakarta) as its primary symbolic agenda (Mujani & Liddle 2004, p. 111; Feener 2007, p. 141). Although the Masyumi party gained significant vote (20,9 %) and Nahdlatul Ulama in the second (18,4 %) (Nakamura 2012; Assyaukanie 2009, p. 188), but they were not successful in imposing their sharia agenda. Instead of surviving, the Masyumi party declined due to the involvement of its cadres in Islamic rebellions the outer Islands in 1956–1958 and Sukarno disbanded it in August 1960. The Nahdlatul Ulama was fused into one Islamic political party called Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party) since the 1970s. However, both Masyumi and Nahdlatul Ulama were evident about how the aspiration of having a sharia-based state has been struggled for the agenda of Indonesian Muslim.

Suharto introduced a policy of *fusi politik* (political fusion) which was envisioned to unify or simplify (Indonesian: *penyederhanaan sistem partai*) different political parties which were based on different ideological and religious sentiment into one party. The objective of the political-fusion policy was actually first to change multiparty system to two party system and second to reduce the role of primordial issues such as religion and ethnicity from the politics of Indonesia. Suharto learnt from the multi-party system of Sukarno era that created much of instability of national politics (Hadiwinata 2006, p. 115). It seems that Suharto knew that the multiparty system endangered his presidency. In this regard, Suharto was specifically afraid about an uncontrolled move of *politik aliran* (stream politics). When Suharto took a political leadership of Indonesia from Sukarno, the politics of *aliran* (Indonesian expression for stream) which were grouped along with ideology, religion, and ethnicity were quite robust. Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Indonesian Communist Party) represented the ideology of communism, Partai Nasionalis Indonesia (Indonesian National Party, PNI) represented nationalism, the Masyumi and Nahdlatul Ulama represented Islam (ibid.). Suharto did not want to see that the politics of *aliran* broke up Indonesia into tension, hate, and conflict among groups of the different *aliran*. Therefore, Suharto limited the number of political party into three parties. Included in this policy were Islamic parties. The NU party and other small Islamic parties such as Parmusi, Perti and others –the Masyumi

was banned in the late era of Sukarno –were fused into United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan: PPP). The PPP was the only Islamic political party vehicle for Indonesian Muslims. In short, what Suharto introduced in his policy on the fusion-politics was actually empowering the practice of secularism in the governmental system of Indonesia. Religion-based parties were still allowed, but they should struggle for not based on their religion, but based on national ideology (Pancasila).

It is true that Suharto's policy indicated its success in maintaining the stability of politics, but it had to be paid with the stagnant or oppressive situation to the life of democracy and freedom. The Suharto policy enlightens us that the political stability of Indonesia which is created through an oppression or undemocratic means will actually produce a pseudo stability. It is evident in Indonesia when Suharto left power in 1998 in which Indonesian people are facing a political euphoria that to some extent depicting the fragile foundation of the pseudo democracy which was set up by Suharto. Many of Suharto legacies were revisited by the coming of reform era. Indonesian people left Suharto for welcoming a new era called the era of *reformasi*. The term *reformasi* is an Indonesian expression for a new era that favours democracy and human rights. The multi-party system has revived again since this era and President Habibie (1998–1999) promoted more space for religious freedom by giving rights for Muslim people to use Islam as the ideological foundation of their parties. Many Islamic organisations that have kept silence in the Suharto era are going to expose their identity into public that they are using Islam as their ideological foundation.

Reform Era: Revitalisation of Islamic Ideology?

Suharto resigned from the presidency of Indonesia in 1998 because of mass and student movements and Habibie replaced his presidential position according to the Indonesian law. Habibie's presidency made the escalation of the ICMI politics become advancer which was evident in some important positions which are given to the main activists of this organisation such as taking strategic ministries like Wardiman Djojonegoro (Minister of Education), Muslimin Nasution (Minister of Forest), Adi Sasono (Minister of Cooperation). Of course, their presence in the ministerial cabinet of both Suharto and Habibie regime was very significant for the mobilisation of Islamic politics. However, their agenda remained under the jargon of making Islam compatible with the needs of the modern state administration, not for the establishment of an Islamic state.

In the post Suharto era, some current developments of Indonesian Muslim politics and public sphere now are heading to different direction, being more oriented to the enforcement of sharia. This tendency has begun with to the deregulation of Indonesian politics introduced in the transitional era of Habibie that deminished a state legal ruling stating a compulsory for all Muslim organisations and political parties for basing their organisation on Pancasila. Habibie learnt from the previous regime that a close control through the use of Pancasila as *asas tunggal* (sole ideology of the state) has become a means of oppression of the ruling regime to mass organisations and political parties. In a democratic state, mass organisations and political parties should be protected their freedom including expression their beliefs within politics.

As response to this policy, many mass-Islamic organisations and political parties change their ideology from Pancasila to Islam such as PPP and MUI. To give an impression for Muslim voters, the PPP reemploy Ka'aba as its party symbol. The PPP originally used Ka'aba as its symbol, but in the Suharto era, this symbol was replaced with stars (Indonesian: *bintang*). The MUI also changed its ideological foundation from Pancasila to Islam after 23 years since its inception in 1975 with Pancasila. Some new Islamic parties and Islamic organisation are also established, using this opportunity. So far, it is true that they employ Islam as their ideology, but there has no one among them that has seriously tried to struggle for the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia. The most important Islamic party of the Indonesia's post Suharto era is Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS, Prosperous Justice Party). This party becomes very important for Indonesia because it was established under the influence of Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwān al-Muslimun) of Egypt. Many people who predicted that the establishment of PKS is intended to undergo the ideology of Islamism, orienting for an Islamic polity, is not yet totally true until the article is written. In addition, the PKS has declared as an inclusive party that not only accommodate Muslim as its members, but also non-Muslims. The PKS also nominates non-Muslim candidates either for governor or major or for parliament members in non-Muslim dominant areas such as Manado, Papua and some others. The PKS states that this party follows the principle of plurality and diversity as which are unavoidable hard fact of Indonesia. The PKS claims that there is no tension between the vision of PKS as an Islamic party with the condition of Indonesia as a plural and diverse state (Rahmat 2008, pp. 228-29). A similar statement was also introduced by Hidayat Nurwahid (the former president of PKS) that his party supports and agrees with

pluralism.⁵ This is an important key word for Indonesians to indicate about the acceptance of diversity of religions. Other Islamic parties – PPP, PKS and PAN – also are only rhetorically struggling for sharia, but practically they do nothing with sharia issues. This situation indicates how strong influence of “secular” concept is in the Indonesian politics.

However, it should be noticed here that the political situation in the post of Suharto resignation does not merely symbolise the era of openness, but also the era of revitalisation of religion or ideology for the Muslim groups of Indonesia. This is more related to the emergence of Islamic organisations than Islamic political parties mentioned above which are striving for quite radical Islamic ideology such the FPI, MMI, HTI and many others because. Their presence is different from that of Islamic parties which are open for being controlled by public through the general elections. If the public does not like them, they can give their vote for other parties. But with Islamic organisations, the public cannot control them because they are not competing in public politics. Their-membership is floating and not proven in the general elections. Many issues on religious violence and discrimination to the minority groups in the post reform era of Indonesia are currently propagated by them.

Some local NGOs observed that the situation of religious has decreased since the reform era (Cholil et al. 2009b; Cholil et al. 2009a; Setara Institute 2012; Setara Institute 2010). This situation was of course in contrast to the era of Suharto. The increasing power of the religious authority in the public sphere due to the political openness of this country since the reform era is more tangible. Many Islamist organisations, which are not oriented to sustain or even against Indonesia as the Pancasila state, are tolerated to establish and propagate their thoughts in both public and legal sphere. We have seen many and many Islamic Indonesian organisations like this, but few examples I can mention here for instance Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI, Council of Indonesian Mujahidin), Front Pembela Indonesia (FPI, Indonesia Defender Front) and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI, Islamic Liberation Party) and others.

To some degree, since that era, some role of the state are taken over by the role of these Islamist organisations either formally or informally. In the Suharto era, it had never been seen how non-elected organisations could raise their order and control in the public sphere. What we often see is that how the FPI or other Islamic organisations play role as moral police (Arabic: *muhtasib*)

5 <http://megapolitan.kompas.com/read/2012/03/20/07074670/Hidayat.Nurwahid.soal.Pluralisme.di.Jakarta>, viewed on 23 November 2013.

and how the MUI fatwa that bans such freedom of belief and religion which is guaranteed in the state constitution of Indonesia can be accommodated within the state law. MUI whose commitment to the Pancasila state in the era of Suharto was highly visible, now it tends to change to a different direction. MUI now is the main supporter of endorsing the inclusion of sharia norm into the legal and public sphere of Indonesia. The MUI for instance is very active in promoting the legislation of sharia into the state law of Indonesia. Now, we have legislated sharia banks and also halal lifestyle into our laws. The sharia bylaws in some regional governments have begun to emerge since the reform era in 1998. There are almost 200 regional governments – provincial and district level – that adopt sharia in their local regulations. We have also some rulings that accommodate a particular belief – Sunni Islam – to ban other belief system such as has happened with Joint Ministerial Decree on the limitation of Ahmadis activity in Indonesia.

More than that, in 2002, some Islamic parties initiated to amend the Article 29 of the Basic Constitution of Indonesia with Jakarta Charter (Piagam Jakarta, a charter that obliges Indonesian Muslims to apply sharia) or with Medina Charter (Arabic: *ṣaḥīfa madīna*). This amendment was not only demanded by the Islamic parties, but also supported by extra parliamentary movements of Islamic organisations such as the FPI, HTI and MMI. This is actually a usual process within democratic state like Indonesia in which the parliament has rights to propose and amend such law. Problem arises when the parliament propose law which threatens the basis foundation of democracy. Fortunately the parliamentary session rejects this proposal and Article 29 of the Constitution remains unchanging up until nowadays. However, it does not mean that a number of challenges that wants to delegitimise Pancasila will end up.

The phenomena I would suggest as new threats to the democracy of Indonesia. Some afflicting issues related to their influence the decreasing democracy of Indonesia are for instance the issuance of some governmental decrees banning or limiting the activities of the deviant groups. Their threat to the minority groups are also stipulated by the MUI fatwa in 2005 that listed some deviant groups that should be demolished from Indonesia (MUI 2011, pp. 34–114). After the Joint Decree on the restriction of Ahmadiyah was signed by Minister of Home Affairs, Minister of Home Affairs and General Attorney in 2008, many violence and persecution not only affect the Indonesian Ahmadis, but also other minority groups. The Joint Decree was intended to regulate the Indonesian Ahmadis, but it gives a spiral impact to regulate other minority groups that are judged by Islamic organisations as deviant Islam (*kelompok sesat*). Many Ahmadis are killed and their mosques are destroyed; 2 million of

Shi'i adherents in Indonesia are under the control of the Sunni group; part of them who are living in Madura, a small island behind East Java province, are forced to leave their land; their houses and properties are destroyed by their neighbouring Sunni group. 500 churches are forced to close in between January 2005–December 2010; the increased authority of non-elected religious groups in the legal and public sphere of Indonesia; policing and ordering morality in the public sphere; they act as Moral Police, controlling deviant groups (Indonesian: *aliran sesat*), attacking discotheques and cafes selling alcohol, prostitution areas and also blocking "house of worship" that has no building permit (Human Rights Watch 2013).

Indonesian Salafi-Wahhabi Groups and their Question on the Pancasila State

The current challenge for the democratic and harmonious relation between the state and religion is not from the majority of Indonesian Muslims, but from the revivalism of Salafi-Wahhabi group of Indonesia. It is quite obvious that those who are protesting Indonesia are protesting and criticising the existing form of Indonesian state have ideological and theological connection with the Salafi-Wahhabi. The group who kept silence in the Suharto era is now getting a right momentum since the resignation of Suharto. Although their figure is very few but their voice is very loud in media. The Salafi-Wahhabi group of Indonesia delivers a hate speech to Pancasila in many occasions and places that they have. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Leader of Jama'ah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia, promotes at many times to delegitimise the Pancasila state form of Indonesia. He stated that Pancasila is *kafir* (idolatry) ideology.⁶ As Muslim, Indonesians should reject the use of Pancasila as the principle ideology of their state. The Indonesian Muslims should be back to the concept of sharia state. Abu Jibril, a collaborator of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir released a controversial statement that "those who follow Pancasila as state ideology will go to the hell." Abu Jibril who is an advisor of Islamic radical organisation, Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), delivered this statement in a mosque that belongs to the state. In fact, the state never reacts seriously to any discourse, campaign, hate-speech that challenge or denigrate to the authority of Pancasila.

6 <http://www.voa-islam.com/news/indonesiana/2013/08/14/26257/ustadz-baasyir-pancasila-adalah-ideologi-syirik-haram-diamalkan/>, viewed on 16 November 2013.

The Salafi-Wahhabi group of Indonesia are very aggressive and provoking in persuading the people of Indonesia to question the Pancasila as the ideology of the state, but unfortunately, they are not clear enough for the importance of establishing Islamic political party for containing their mission. In this regard, they are divided into two largest groups; first, those who views that the establishment of sharia party are important and second, those who views that party system is against Islam because it is not based on the Qur'an, but on democracy. The first group seem to be inconsistent because if they want to change the ideology of Indonesia from the Pancasila to a total sharia law, they should struggle from within the existing system. This is actually problem dealing with the Salafi-Wahhabi. In Indonesia, there is PKS who strive for Islam from within the agreed system, but this party, although whose tendency to the Muslim Brotherhood⁷ is obvious, but the PKS cannot be totally claimed as Salafi party. Some lovers of Salafi-Wahhabi who are not anti-politics affiliate with the PKS, but their membership are not among their elite group.

What I want to say here is that statement like this is prevalent and it indicates that the state form of Indonesia is still being contested by different interest groups and in the process of making. All I mentioned above are consequence of becoming democratic state. My theoretical argument here is that democracy besides creating a favourable situation for lesser role of religious authority in the public sphere – because of its secular tendency –, it also opens a possible space for religious authorities to present in the public sphere. I agree that the increased tendency of religiosity has nothing to do with quality of democracy, but the growing and even more increasing presence of religious norm in the public and legal sphere would create problematic issue regarding the future of Indonesian democracy and also religious freedom. A fact that the Pancasila state as a middle way or middle system of the state seems to be unable to stop some groups of Indonesia for recontesting a space for their ideology in the state. The position of Pancasila places religion as human rights therefore using specific form of religious teaching of a specific religion which is adopted into the legal sphere.

7 The Muslim Brotherhood is an Islamic movement and political party which is associated with Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Quṭb.

Conclusion

The relation between Islam and the state in Indonesia is not static, but dynamic. What we have seen in the Indonesian politics today is not always fixed, but it can change from one to another circumstance. It depends much on many factors ranging from cultural and legal issues. All the factors determine the model of relation between Islam and the state. But it seems difficult that the people of Indonesia will change the state form of Indonesia. This difficulty is not only because of the rejection of Indonesian people to have an sharia-based state, but because of some conceptual changes on sharia state that happen within the sharia propagators. Some Islamic organisations that struggle for changing Indonesia to a sharia state are no longer concerned with the state form of Indonesia, but rather interested to install sharia within the existing state law although the state form itself is not an Islamic state. Therefore, an important agenda for them is not to form an Islamic state in Indonesia, but promulgating sharia legislation into the state law of Indonesia. The given facts for instance are as evidenced in some conceptions of the FPI, MMI and MUI. Based the given explanation, a closer relation between Islam and the politics would not only symbolised through their amalgamation in an official form of a sharia state, but also in the sharia-infiltrated state law.

The number of Islamic radical groups wanting Indonesia to enforce sharia law is few, but if the majority groups of Indonesian Muslims keep silence, the radical group would think that the majority group agree with them. Therefore, the success of sustaining or changing a relatively democratic circumstance of Indonesian politics not depends the struggle of the Islamic radical group, but importantly on the struggle of the majority Indonesian people that do not agree with them. What can be done by the mainstream groups of Islam in Indonesia in spending their active engagement in the public and legal sphere for maintaining Indonesian Islam which is moderate, democratic and non-discriminative.

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