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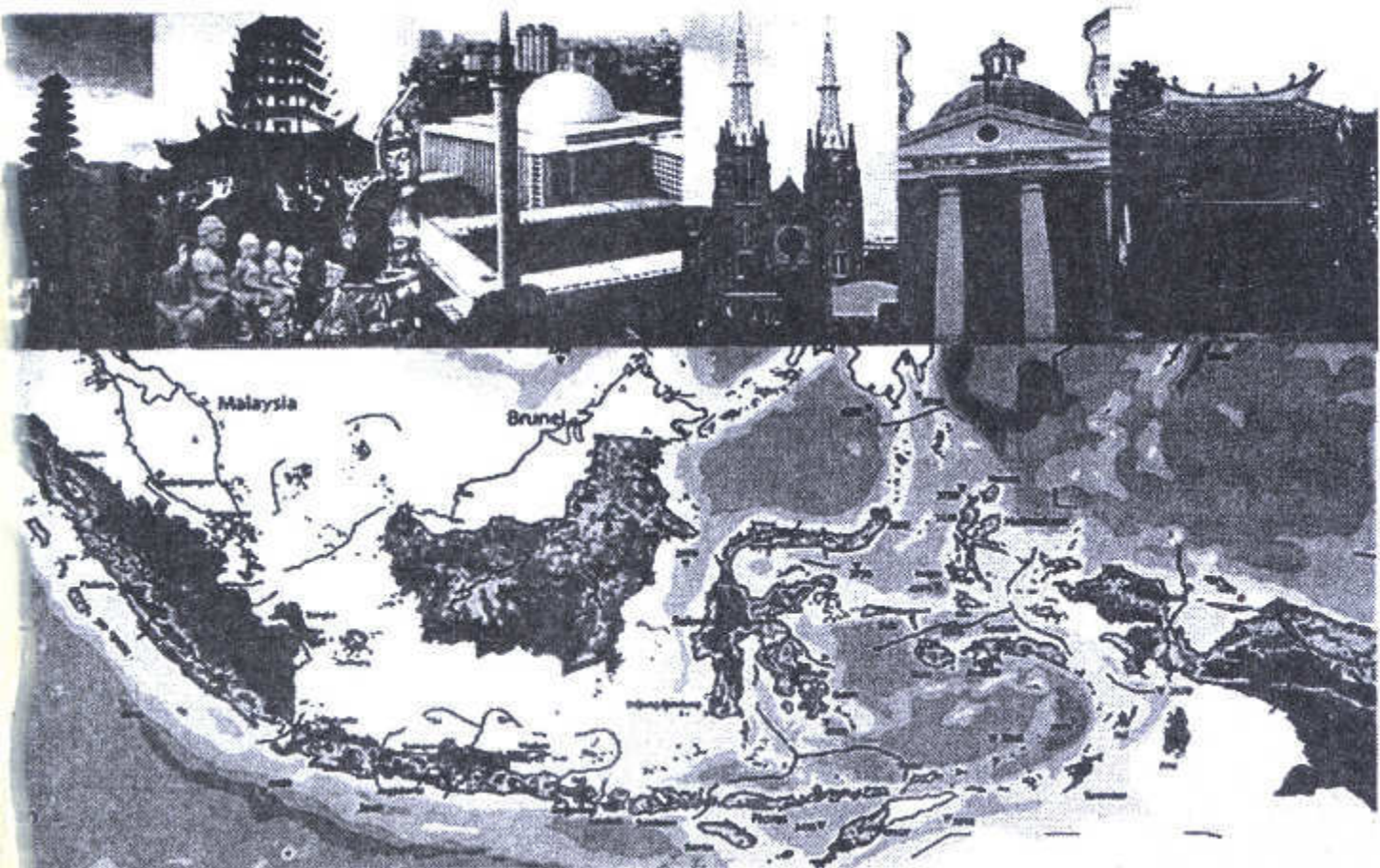


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EDITORIAL NOTES

This edition is concerned with the problems of Muslim movements and social history in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. The purpose of this edition is not totally different from the previous edition that is to promote the cultural heritage of Islam in Indonesia in particular and the world-wide in general. Apart from that, it is certainly to develop ideas relating to the development of Islamic thoughts and movements, social history as cultural heritage in order to be widely known, read and reviewed by the academic community at large.

Studies on this edition include a few posts on “The *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* in Southeast Asia: The Literature of Malay-Indonesian ‘Ulama’ and Reforms”, “The Meccan Fatwas and the Globalized Discourse of Exclusion: The Case of Anti-Ahmadiyah Movements in Indonesia”, “Women, Leadership, and Mosque’s Cultures: Indonesian Heritage in New York City”, “Adat, Islam, and Dakwah Movement in Bayan, North Lombok”, “مباحث الإيمان”, “على نظرة أهل السنة والجماعة”, “Hajj Transportation of Netherlands East Indies, 1910-1940”, and “تطور المسلمين في بورما بعد استقلاله”.

The first article is written by Azyumardi Azra on *Ahlusunnah wal Jamaah* in Southeast Asia. This study focusses on the literature used by Malay-Indonesian Ulama and reforms performing their idea to their society. Azra highlights that the Malay-Indonesian ulama were mostly responsible for earliest reforms of Islamic teaching and Muslim life in the archipelago.

Further study is written by Dadi Darmadi focussing on the historical and global contextualization of intolerance towards religious minority group, such as Ahmadiyah, and it analyzes the recent increased animosity towards them in Indonesia. Dadi Darmadi argues that to understand the current persecution of Ahmadiyah one must begin with an examination of the early

transnational efforts to marginalize Ahmadiyah and their effects on Muslim communities. The Meccan fatwas in focus – and their reproduction – provide an example of the ways in which such globalized discourses of exclusion regarding a particular religious group were strategically framed and mobilized in i.e. Lahore, Mecca and few other places, and how these historical and theological factors at play could provide more insight into the rising political intolerance and the criminalization of religious views in Indonesia.

The third article is written by Fakhriati which talks of the use of certain papers in the writing of Islamic manuscripts in Aceh. The article argues that there are two types of Acehese manuscripts' papers: traditional and imported papers with unique and spesific images of watermark. The dominant watermark appeared in the imported papers were crescents which symbolized the typical characteristics of the Islamic sign. Studying on such papers indicates the relationship between the country of producers and the country of of the the paper user.

The next article is written by Erni Budiwanti which discusses about local customs, religion and the reaction of Tuan Guru as teachers and leaders for traditional Islamic school (*Pesantren*). Tuan Guru had took significant role as a cultural broker. They acted not only for teaching religious matters, but transformed local customs to acceterate global need for maintaing ecological balance. The mission has put them into two dilemma. On the one side, they attempt to alter local customs which had many sacral values, and on the other sides, they solve community problem on education and treat enviromental balance.

Further article is written by Sofyan Hadi which studies on manuscript of *Khabar Nazam Usiyat* collected by family of Syekh Muhammad Said Bonjol, Minangkabau, West Sumatra. He concludes that this manuscript contained a model of Al-Gazali's *Tasawuf Akhlaqi*. This manuscript emerged as a response and critics to theological concept occurred at that time in Minangkabau.

Further article is written by Erlita Tantri which highlights on mechanism of Hajj Transportation and its significance in Netherlands East Indies, from 1910 to 1940. From her research, she concludes that during the above period, the role the Dutch colonial to hajj took an important part which they regarded as economical and political issue which effected to colonial sustainability.

The next article is written by Ali Fahrudin which is about the history of arising Rohingya Muslims in Burma and their *jihad* for seeking their authority. In his works, Ali argues that Rohingya Muslim had no status in their country which then posited them in low level of the Burma community. They in fact should have the right as other community.

THE AHL AL-SUNNAH WA AL-JAMAAH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: THE LITERATURE OF MALAY-INDONESIAN 'ULAMA' AND REFORMS

By Azyumardi Azra

Abstract

Muslims in Southeast Asia are overwhelmingly dominant by group of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah (Aswaja)*, the so-called *Sunni*. They contributed a great deal to the formation of distinct Islamic tradition that can still be observed today. In Indonesia, the history of the *Aswaja* can be considered as the continuous consolidation of orthodoxy which appeared through some successive reforms and *santrinization*. This consolidation has, of course, played important role for strengthening Malay-Indonesian ulama relationship. This study focusses on the literature used by Malay-Indonesian Ulama and reforms performing their idea to their society. This study argues that the Malay-Indonesian ulama were mostly responsible for earliest reforms of Islamic teaching and Muslim life in the archipelago.

Keywords: Sunni, Malay-Indonesian ulama, and Islamic reform.

Introduction

The history of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah (Sunni)* in Indonesia since at least the late twelfth century when local population converted to Islam *in masse* is the history of the continuous consolidation of orthodoxy. The consolidation through some successive reforms and *santrinization*, no doubt, had a lot to do with the important role played by the Malay-Indonesian 'ulama'.

Despite all reforms, renewal, and various streams of Islamic thought and praxis coming from other parts of the Muslim world to the Nusantara particularly in the last three decades, Southeast Asian Muslims remain loyal to the doctrines of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*. In fact Southeast Asian Muslims have been very successful to develop and empower '*Wasatiyyah Islam*', middle path Islam.

Sunni: Religion and Power

Southeast Asian Islam is overwhelmingly Sunni, the followers of which are also commonly called '*Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah (Aswaja)*'. Since the late 12th century, wandering Sufi teachers and traders -- coming mostly from Arabia e.g. the Hijaz, Iraq, and Egypt -- introduced Sunni Islam to Southeast Asia. As a result, Sunni Islam is now also adhered to by the bulk majority of Muslims throughout Southeast Asia. There were assertions from certain history writers in the Malay-Indonesian world that Shi'ism was also introduced to the archipelago in the seventh and eighth centuries; if fact they, like Hasymi, asserted that the Shi'is founded the Peureulak Kingdom in the Aceh area after expelling the Sunnis. But, there is no convincing evidence that could support this assertion (Azra 2000).

In the contemporary times, the success of Ayatullah Khomeini's Islamic revolution in Iran has inspired a limited number of Muslims in Indonesia to adopt Shi'ism. Since the early 1980s a number of Shi'i foundation have been established in various cities in the country; a growing number of Indonesian students have travelled to Iran in search for Shi'i Islamic knowledge; and many publications on Shi'ism have also appeared. Despite all of these efforts, it seems that there is no strong evidence that many Indonesian Sunni Muslims converted to Shi'ism. Whereas the Shi'is are free in Indonesia,

they face a great deal of difficulties in other countries in Southeast Asia. In both Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam, Shi'ism is regarded as a deviant teaching and, therefore, the governments in the two countries keep watchful eyes on Shi'ism and its possible spread in their countries.

The fact that bulk majority of Southeast Asian Muslims are from *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* have contributed a great deal to the formation of distinct Islamic tradition that can still be observed today. Doctrinally speaking Southeast Asian Muslims generally follow the Ash'arite theology (*kalam*), Shafi'ite school of law (*madhhab*), and the Ghazalian Sufism (*tasawwuf*). The Muslims who adhere to these schools of Islamic thought and practices, mentioned above, again, are called the followers of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, those who follow the way (*sunnah*) of the Prophet Muhammad and hold fast to the unity of Muslims (*jama'ah*).

Even though *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* is the dominant Islamic group in Southeast Asia, it is important to point out that in Indonesia, since its independence on August 17, 1945 the state does not make it official. In fact Islam itself is not the official religion of the state, despite the fact that the bulk majority of the Indonesian people are Muslims. The state, instead, officially recognizes the existence of religions in the 1945 Constitution, which contains *Pancasila* (five pillars), the first pillar of which is the belief in One Supreme God. In fact all other four pillars of *Pancasila* are regarded by virtually all of Muslim leaders—if not all—as compatible with Islamic principles and teachings. As far as Islam and other religions are concerned, the role of the state is confined to administrative matters rather than interfering in theological and doctrinal issues of any religion.

In contrast, in Malaysia, where Islam is made the official religion, the state recognizes the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*

as the only valid doctrine. In fact religious matters have been in the hands of the *kerajaan* since the time of British colonialism. The *kerajaan* plays the deciding role not only in administrative matters, but also in doctrinal ones (Gullick 1992; 1987; Milner 1995). It is the *kerajaan* which controls and decides the most valid interpretation -- according to the doctrines of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah -- and bans any other interpretation and practice of Islam regarded as invalid (*sesat*) such as the Dar al-Arqam. In contrast, the Dar al-Arqam has never been banned in Indonesia and, in fact, it gains new momentum in this country after the fall of President Soeharto in 1998.

It is important to point out that the Sunni doctrines in Southeast Asia, or at least in Indonesia has undergone some changes despite a great deal of continuity. In Indonesia, since the 1980s at least there have been a lot of "convergence" of the teachings and practices of various groups of Muslims. This is due mainly to the fact that there is no institution or Muslim group and organization that can claim as having the most valid interpretation of Islam. Not least important, various streams of Islamic thought coming elsewhere from the Muslim world have contributed to the "hybridity" of contemporary Islamic thought and practices in Indonesia.

In comparison, in Malaysia and Brunei, the *kerajaan* has tended to resist religious changes, and maintain Sunni "traditionalism". In Brunei Darussalam, the doctrines of Sunnism are integrated into the national ideology called "MIB" (Melayu, Islam, Beraja, or Malay, Islam, and Kingship). The Malay rulers are continuously very sensitive to what they would regard as "deviant teaching" ("*ajaran menyimpang*"), and take very harsh measures against any group considered to deviate from the official Sunni doctrines (Abdullah 1997; 1990).

Reforms and Renewal:

Islamic Thought of Malay-Indonesian ‘Ulama’

Islamic reform (*islah*) and renewal (*tajdid*) are not new among Muslims in Southeast Asia. There are internal factors such as new interpretation of Islam as well as external factors like the increased encroachment of Western power in the area that inspire reforms and renewal of Islam in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago from at least the 17th century onwards.

Some scholars like Noer (1973) for instance, argue that Islamic reforms took place only since the early 20th century. But I will argue that the first wave of Islamic reforms and renewal took place as early as the 17th century with the rise of the networks of the ‘ulama’ of Southeast Asia and the Haramayn (Mecca and Medina), and beyond. Through a number of Malay-Indonesian ‘ulama’ involved in the ‘ulama’ networks, reforms and renewal were introduced in Southeast Asia that brought Islamic beliefs and practices from certain mixture with local beliefs and practices to become more shari’a-oriented ones.

The second wave of Islamic reforms in Southeast Asia took place from roughly the late 18th to early 19th centuries with the rise of the so-called Padri movement in West Sumatra, aiming at purification of Islamic beliefs and practices from a mixture with local traditions (*adapt*), using radical approach. Seemingly influenced by Wahabism, the Padri launched wholesale reform through violence; but in the end the Padri failed to have a significant impact on the course of Islam in the area because of strong resistance from Muslim communities.

The third wave of Islamic reforms and renewal came to the shores of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago in the early 20th century with the introduction of the so-called ‘Islamic modernism’ (Noer 1973). Heavily influenced by such

reformists as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida, modernist Muslim movements gained momentum in Southeast Asia.

Looking back to the history, the consolidation of Sunni tradition in Southeast Asia took place mostly in a much stronger way from the 17th onwards. Since this period, there lived a number of Malay-Indonesian students—later became 'ulama—who obtained their education for many years in the Holy Land (Mecca and Medina). They were involved in the cosmopolitan networks of the 'ulama' centered in Mecca and Medina, and had their connections in Africa, South Asia, Central Asia and, of course, Southeast Asia. Most of them returned to the archipelago and became the most important channels of transmission of Islamic doctrines from Arabia to the Malay-Indonesian world (Azra 2004; 2007; Ishak & Othman 2000; Laffan 2003).

The most important among these Malay-Indonesian 'ulama' were: Nur al-Din al-Raniri (better known in the Malay-Indonesian world as Nuruddin ar-Raniri), 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkili (Abdurrauf Singkel), Muhammad Yusuf al-Makassari (Syekh Yusuf Makasar) all lived and enjoyed their career in the 17th century; then 'Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani (Syekh Abdussamad Palembang), Daud al-Patani (Southern Thailand), 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Abd Allah (better known in the Malay Peninsula as Tok Pulau Manis Trengganu), Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari (Syekh Arsyad Banjar), Muhammad Nafis al-Banjari (Syekh Nafis Banjar) all lived in the 18th century; and Ahmad Rifa'i Kalisalak (Ahmad Ripangi of Pekalongan Central Java), Muhammad Nawawi al-Bantani (Nawawi Banten), Muhammad Mahfuzh al-Termasi, Muhammad Saleh Darat al-Samarani, Ahmad Khatib Sambas, Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi, Hasan Mustafa Bandung and some others who gained their fame in the 19th century.

Most of them -- if not all -- were prolific writers who produced the earliest works written in the Malay language. To take some examples, al-Raniri was the first writer who wrote a work entitled *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* on *fiqh`ibadah* (rituals); al-Sinkili was the first scholar wrote a work on *fiqh mu`amalah* (social intercourse) entitled *Mir`at al-Tullab* as well as a work on *tafsir* (Qur`anic exegesis) entitled *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*. Taken together, all these scholars produced a great number works relating to various disciplines of Islamic knowledge, such as *fiqh (shari`ah)*, *tafsir*, *hadith* (the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad), *tasawwuf* (Sufism), and *tarikh* (history). All of their works introduced the orthodox teachings of the most authoritative Sunni `ulama` in Arabia or in the area now is known as the Middle East.

Furthermore, all of these great `ulama` and their networks of students played an instrumental role in strengthening the position of Sunni Islam in the Malay-Indonesian world. When they returned to the archipelago together with their students, they founded essential Islamic institutions such as *pesantren* or *pondok*, traditional Islamic boarding schools. It is true that some of *pesantrens* or *pondoks* had been founded since the early period of Islam in the archipelago, but it is from the 19th century onwards these educational institutions gained a new momentum. The continued increased in the number of the returning students and *hajj* pilgrims from the Holy Land, had been mainly responsible for the rapid foundation of *pesantrens* and *pondoks* in various places in the Malay-Indonesian world.

The *pesantren* and *pondok* plays a very crucial role in at least three things. Firstly, the transmission of Islamic knowledge from the `ulama` (or *kiyai* in Java) to the *santris* (students of *pesantren* or *pondok*). The transmission and transfer of knowledge by and large run smoothly since most of the *santris* live in the *pesantren`*s compound. Secondly, the

maintenance of Islamic tradition. As far as the Islamic tradition is concerned, the *pesantren* hold fast to the Sunni doctrines and practices as described above. And the *santris* were taught in the orthodox Sunni tradition. Thirdly, the reproduction of the 'ulama'. One of the most important tasks of the *kiyais* is to prepare their *santris* to become 'ulama' themselves. Of course not all of the *santris* would eventually become 'ulama', but some of them do, and they in turn founded their own *pesantren* or *pondok*. Most of the *pesantrens* or *pondoks* in Indonesia and Malaysia have been associated with "Islamic traditionalism", that in the Indonesian case is generally represented by the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) as discussed below.

I would argue that the Malay-Indonesian 'ulama', particularly of the 17th century were mostly responsible for the earliest reforms of Islamic teachings and Muslim life in the archipelago. It has been widely known that Islam that spread in the Malay-Indonesian world from the end of the 12th century onwards had mixed with local beliefs and practices. This is due to the fact that -- as has been said above -- Islam was introduced mainly by wandering Sufi teachers who had been tended to be very accommodative and inclusive, by accepting pre-Islamic beliefs and practices that continued to hold sway among newly converted Muslims. The 'ulama' from the 17th century onwards through their works and preaching reformed this kind of religious life by introducing a more scriptural oriented brand of Islam. They for instance, appealed for a more shari'ah-oriented Sufism as taught for instance by al-Ghazali. They put a great emphasis on the importance of the shari'ah in Muslims' life.

Second and Third Waves of Reform

The peaceful and moderate reforms among Southeast Asian Muslims were disrupted by the rise of the Padri

movement in Minangkabau area (West Sumatra) in the 19th century. The origin of the Padri can be traced back to evolutionary renewal movement among the leaders of the Naqshbandiyyah Tariqah led by Tuanku Nan Tuo and his students at his Surau Koto Tuo. But some of his students, prominently Tuanku Nan Renceh preferred a more revolutionary way to reform the Muslim life.

Strongly influenced by the Wahhabi ideology in Arabia, Tuanku Nan Renceh, Tuanku Imam Bonjol and other radical 'ulama' introduced radical reforms aimed at purifying Islam in the area from pre-Islamic belief and practices as well as from un-Islamic *adat* (customs). The Padri radicalism was confronted by majority of Muslims led by Tuanku Nan Tuo and his loyal student Shaykh Jalaluddin who preferred peaceful reforms; this in the end resulted in the famous Padri Wars that ended only after the interference of the Dutch (Azra 1988).

Even though the Padris were able to strengthen the position of Islam in the Minangkabau, the radical movement was short-lived and failed to spread elsewhere in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. The Padri was the only precedence of the Wahhabi-like radicalism throughout the region. In fact the very word "Wahhabi" remains an anathema for many Muslims in the region up until today. There are small radical groups in Southeast Asia that come to assert themselves in the period long after the Padri movement, but their religious ideology and praxis -- as we will see below -- are different from the Padris of West Sumatra.

Another wave of Islamic reformism came to the shores of the Malay-Indonesian world in the early 20th century. Transmitted mostly by returning Malay-Indonesian students from Cairo and the spread of reformist literature, Islamic modernism, as we will be discussed further below, soon gained momentum in the Malay-Indonesian world. The most important

proponents of this new brand of reformism were Jamal al- Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Muhammad Rashid Rida and others, centered mostly in Cairo, Egypt (Laffan 2003; Noer 1973; Roff 1967; Abu Bakar 1994; Hamzah 1981; Eliraz 2002; Azra 1999/2006).

Singapore was an intellectual hub of this newly introduced Islamic reformism. Thank to its freer social atmosphere, there founded a number of institutions such as the Journal of *al-Imam* and the Madrasah al-Iqbal al-Islamiyyah -- to mention a few examples -- that not only inspired Muslims in other areas of Southeast Asia, but also influenced them (Roff 1967; Hamzah 1981; Burhanudin 2007).

This new reformism is also usually categorized as “Islamic modernism”. The use of the term “Islamic modernism” in reference to this new wave should be qualified, since it actually contains a mixture of various streams. One distinct color of the thought of this wave is ‘Salafism’ meaning the return to Islam that practiced by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions (the *salafs*). The Salafis (proponents of Salafism) maintain that this the most authentic, pure and pristine Islam. Therefore, they opposed unwarranted innovations (*bid`ah*), and superstitions (*khurafat*), and appealed for independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) instead.

In line to this appeal, some groups of Salafism practiced the literal understanding of Islamic doctrines and history. It is not unusual, certain groups of this kind of Salafism, like the Wahhabis in Arabia, adopted radical approaches for bringing Muslims to what they regard as ‘authentic Islam’. On the other hand, there are moderate Salafis who prefer to use peaceful way -- like education, *dakwah*, and social services -- in their efforts to purify Islamic beliefs and practices.

Therefore, there are Salafis who urge Muslims to adopt modern institutions in the field of education, economy, socio-cultural and other aspects of Muslims' life. With all of these emphases, it is no surprise that this wave of Islamic reformism is called as "Islamic modernism".

Mainstream Sunni Organizations

The most loyal and "perfect" representation of Muslim group who claim to adhere strictly to the Sunni doctrine in Southeast Asia, or more precisely Indonesia, is the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, lit. "the awakening of Muslim religious scholars"). Founded in 1926, the NU now is the largest Muslim organization in Indonesia with the claimed membership of some 40 million Muslims. Holding fast to the Sunni tradition, the NU religious ideology is based on the doctrines of "*Aswaja*" (*Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*). Again, the bulk majority of Indonesian Muslims are of course Sunnis, but it is the NU, which is claimed time and again by its members to be the most authentic representation of the Sunni orthodoxy. Therefore, the NU is called as the "traditionalist" organization for its strict following of the Sunni doctrines and tradition (van Bruinessen 1994; Barton & Fealy [eds.] 1996; Feillard 1999; Qomar 2002).

There are some other traditionalist Muslim organizations throughout Indonesia, but most of them are provincial-wide. They include al-Washliyyah in North Sumatra, Perti in West Sumatra, Mathlaul Anwar in West Java, Nahdlatul Watan in Nusa Tenggara Barat, al-Khairat and Dar ud-Dakwah wal Irsyad Indonesia (DDII) in Sulawesi. Even though each organization is independent and having no official affiliation each other, they have a strong network with the NU.

The NU has long been associated with the rural Islam. In fact its strong base is the rural area, mostly in East and Central Java. The NU '*ulama*', better known as *kiyai*, in turn have their strong base in the *pesantren*, Muslim traditional educational institutions, which, as stated above, were mostly founded in the 19th century. Resisting Dutch or Western educational system, the *pesantren* was only modernized since 1970s through the inclusion of modern subjects in its curricula. Modernization of the *pesantren* and *madrasah* affiliated with it continues with the adoption of curricula of 1994 issued by Ministry of National Education and complemented by Ministry of Religious Affairs. The modernization of the *pesantren* has brought this Muslim educational institution into mainstream of national education.

Considering the religious ideology ("*Aswaja*") of the NU -- that is "Islamic traditionalism -- as well as the adoption of national curricula by the *pesantrens* and *madrasahs*, it is wrong to assume that these two Islamic educational institutions are the breeding ground of radicalism. In fact, the religious ideology of Islamic traditionalism with its strong color of Sufism is inclusive and accommodative, not only in religious belief and practices, but also in the political life. Therefore, it is absurd to expect that the *pesantrens* and *madrasahs* would produce radical *santris*.

It is necessary to keep in mind, however, that even though the NU and its *kiyais* and *pesantrens* have long been regarded as "traditionalist" -- as far as their religious beliefs and practices are concerned -- there is a lot of changes can be observed within this traditional wing of Indonesian Islam. After having experienced bitter political disappointments in the period between the late 1960s and 1970s under President Soeharto, the NU under the leadership of Abdurrahman Wahid pulled out itself from politics and returned to the '*Khittah 1926*', that is its basic *raison d'être* as a socio-religious

organization. Since then NU religious doctrines have undergone rethinking and reassessment. There are conscious efforts carried out by Wahid and some of his younger colleagues to liberate NU religious worldview without discarding its “traditionalism” in order to be more relevant with the contemporary Indonesian context and challenges. Wahid efforts now have resulted in the birth of new offshoot of NU young thinkers, who introduced the idea of “contextual”, “indigenous” and “liberal” Islam that sometime create controversies among Indonesian Muslims (Qomar 2002).

The second largest Muslim organization in Indonesia, the Muhammadiyah (founded in 1912) is of course a Sunni organization as well. But the Muhammadiyah understanding of Sunnism is to certain extent different from that of NU. Even though Muhammadiyah basically accepts the basic principles of the Sunni doctrine, it is very critical of certain Sunni traditional beliefs and practices that it considers as religiously ‘impure’ for having no strong religious ground (*bid'ah*). In line with my argument above concerning the reformism of al-Afghani, Abduh and others in the Middle East, Muhammadiyah can also be categorized as ‘Salafi’ organization, which appeals to the Muslims to return ‘pure’ and ‘pristine’ Islam as practiced by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. And at the same time Muhammadiyah is opposed to unwarranted innovations (*bid'ah*) and superstitions (*khurafat*).

Muhammadiyah as a Salafi organization, claiming the following of some 35 million Indonesian Muslims in today’s Indonesia, contrary to the NU, has in fact introduced the reforms of Islamic beliefs and practices through the followings: firstly, purification of Islam from unwarranted innovations; secondly, opening the gate of personal religious decision (*ijtihad*); thirdly, adoption of modern approaches to modernize

Muslims live, particularly through education, health and other social services (Noer 1973; Nakamura 1983; Alfian 1989).

To a large extent, Muhammadiyah religious ideology was influenced by Salafi thinkers in the Arabia and Egypt, prominent among them were Ibn Taymiyyah, Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Wahhab, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad `Abduh and Rashid Rida. All of these thinkers espoused Islamic reforms, through purification, of Islamic beliefs and practices. But it is important to point out that Muhammadiyah has never adopted the radical approach introduced by al-Wahhab, the founder of the Wahhabi movement; Muhammadiyah, rather, adopted peaceful way to reforms through modern education and preaching (*dakwah*).

With that kind of Islamic religious ideology and outlook, Muhammadiyah had been in the past involved in conflicts with the NU. But, again, most of the conflicts resulted from differences in trivial religious matters (*furu`*) regarding certain aspects of Islamic ritual, and from competition and struggles to gain political influence and power. But since the 1980s, there has been in fact convergence among members of the two organizations in much of religious matters and rituals that were sources of quarrels among them in the past. But rivalry between the members of two organizations still can be observed in the political field and positions in the government bureaucracy (Azra 2006).

Muhammadiyah has often been categorized as a 'modernist' Muslim organization that has its strongest base in the urban area. This is of course true as far as Muhammadiyah's adoption of modern schooling and social services are concerned. But, on the other hand, Muhammadiyah at the level of ideology at least is a rather 'conservative' organization. Compared with the NU, which now tends to be more liberal, the Muhammadiyah seems to be more reserved

and very cautious in their approach to renew and reform of Islamic beliefs and practices; Muhammadiyah now tends to stick only to the idea of purification of Islam without providing no substantive intellectual discourse regarding many issues that are under discussion among Muslim public.

Despite their differences, the NU and Muhammadiyah remain Sunni organizations. Thanks to their nationwide networks, both continue to exert a great influence among Indonesian Muslims apart from a great deal of rapid political and social changes that have taken place in Indonesia in the two decades at least, and more importantly after the fall of President Soeharto from his long-held power in 1998. Both remain at the forefront of moderate and nationalistic brand of Indonesian Islam despite the rise of smaller Muslim groups, some of which are very literal in their understanding of Islam as well as having a Middle Eastern orientation.

It is clear that it is difficult to find organizations such as NU or Muhammadiyah in Malaysia, or anywhere else in Southeast Asia. As I argued above, Islamic life is tightly controlled by the state, giving only a very limited room for Muslims to express themselves. Therefore, Muslim organizations in Malaysia are very limited not only in terms of their number, but also in terms of their influence, activities, and institutions affiliated with them. All mainstream Muslim organizations are also known as “*dakwah*” organizations, because of their strong emphasis on Islamic preaching (*dakwah*) rather than anything else.

It seems that the most important mainstream Muslim organization in Malaysia is the Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM, or Malaysian Youth Movement), founded in 1969 not long after the May 13, 1969 racial riots between Chinese and Malays. The ABIM is very active in *dakwah*, especially among university students and youth in general; it encourages lobbying

efforts, active participation in politics, and otherwise 'working within the system'. (Peletz, 1997:235; Shamsul, 1997:212-9). Another important organization is the PERKIM (Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia, or the Malaysian Islamic Welfare and Missionary Association). This organization is, however, sponsored by the government, and is active mostly in assisting new converts to Islam. In terms of religious ideology, I would suggest that both organizations are largely traditional, even though they are 'modern' in terms of programs and activities.

Other than the above-mentioned two organizations, one probably should mention two other organizations; they are the United Malay National Organization (UMNO) and PAS (Partai Islam sa-Malaysia, All Malaysian Islamic Party). It is clear that UMNO and PAS are political parties, not *dakwah* organizations. But, there is little doubt that the two organizations play an important role in the state-sponsored Islamization in Malaysia. In fact, UMNO and PAS have been involved in bitter struggles in the efforts to dominate the meaning and interpretation of Islam among the Malays. It seems that the UMNO tends to be more 'progressive' in its interpretation of Islam, while the PAS to be more 'literal', even though in religious practices of both organizations tend to be 'traditional'.

Conclusion

From a theological point of view, the present-day hardliner Muslim groups, like Lasykar Jihad (LJ), Front Pembela Islam (FPI), Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), and its splintering group Jamaah Anshar at-Tauhid (JAT) and Hizb al-Tahrir, all in Indonesia; and the Jama'ah Islamiyyah (JI) in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia are also Sunni. None of these groups is Shi'i. It is important to make it clear that they are far from monolithic; there is a lot of differences among

these small groups, not only in terms of their religious attitudes, but also in their political views and action.

Being outside of mainstream Muslim organizations, these splinters groups attempt to launch certain forms of Islamic reform in line with their respective interpretation of Islam. But of course, like in the past history of the interpretation and understanding of Islamic doctrines, there individuals or Muslim groups tend to be more literal in their religious outlook, and more radical in their approach to religious and political matters. In this regard, most of the groups are radical Salafi, if not 'neo-Khariji'. They are Salafi for one obvious reason, that is, they appeal for and espouse a 'pure' and 'pristine' Islam practiced in the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his companion (*sahabah*).

To achieve that end, however, they tend to use radical approach, not peaceful means like education and preaching (*dakwah*). In this last respect they are not unlike the Wahhabis, but even—to a limited degree—the Khariji. But of course their radicalism is much less compared to the classic Khariji who formulated three radical steps; first, *takfir*, proclaiming other Muslims as non-believing; second, *hijrah*, migrating from 'corrupted area' that are occupied by other Muslims and non-Muslims to an Islamic area; third, *jihad*, waging wars against Muslims who refuse to accept their doctrines. As one might observe, the three steps have not been publicly adopted by these groups.

One, however, should not jump into conclusion that these groups are influential in Southeast Asia. Because of their connection with transnational Islamic ideas and movements, they are hardly contextual with the realities of Southeast Asian Islam. The history and sociology of Muslim society has shown us that this kind of fringe groups have never been able to exercise significant influence among Muslim society as a

whole; most of such groups will disappear through time simply because their literal interpretation and radicalism cannot be accepted by other Muslims in this part of the Islamic world.

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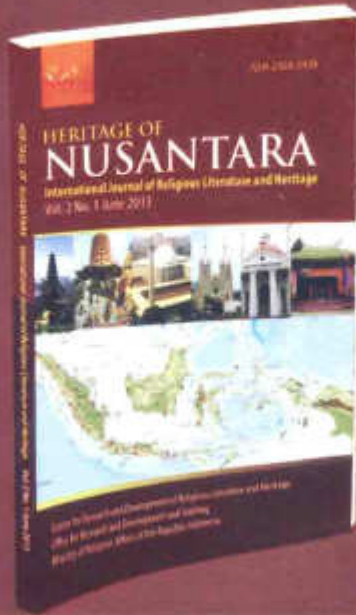
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