THE RADICALIZATION OF ISLAM THROUGH SEMI-STATE INSTITUTIONS:
A Case Study of the Role of MUI after the New Order

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KEYWORD	ABSTRACT
Radicalization *New Order* *MUI*	*At the beginning of its formation, MUI showed itself as a religious institution whose fatwas were often supportive of government policies. After the political reformation in 1998, MUI tried to voice its demands and try to get a new role. In this situation, the most ready force was conservative Muslims who started to enter MUI in the late 1990s and then added by the entry of some radical Islamic groups just before the fall of Soeharto in 1998. The inevitable consequence was the changing nature of MUI from an apolitical organization to a political tool played by these Muslim groups. Controlling MUI is one of the strategies of radical-conservative Islamic groups to achieve their political agendas. They use two strategies: non-structural and structural. Non-structural strategies are carried out through demonstrations, intimidation, and attacking people or groups seen as enemies of Islam. Meanwhile, structural strategies are carried out by forming or cooperating with Islamist political parties, alliances with state forces that are considered powerful such as the military, and controlling or controlling semi-state Islamic institutions such as the MUI. Controlling the MUI has given radical Muslim groups two advantages: first, to Islamize Indonesia from within and second, Islamic legitimacy for its various non-structural activities. When radical-conservative Muslims succeed in controlling the MUI, their Islamic views can be easily propagated because their voice has become the voice of the MUI which, in some cases, is claimed to be the official voice of the Indonesian government and Muslims.*

Introduction

Discussions about MUI are likely to be contentious. It is inseparable from the role of MUI, which is closely related to the new order. During the New Order, the MUI was criticized as an ulema institution that played an important role in justifying the political policies of the New Order. MUI is now criticized as an Islamic institution whose voice and attitude reflect the process of Islamic radicalization that has become one of the Islamic phenomena in Indonesia after the fall of the new order.

In July 2005, the MUI released 11 fatwas considered controversial, which became a key phenomenon. Among these fatwas, the MUI prohibits liberal Islamic thought, pluralism, marriages of different religions, prayers led by non-Muslim, and women being imam for men in prayers (shalat). The fatwa also strengthens the ban on Ahmadiyya, as it is considered an illegal sect. This fatwa provoked some radical muslims to attack Ahamadiyah community and liberal muslims. A year later, on 21 May 2006, MUI organized a large demonstration to support RUU APP (the draft of anti-pornography and porn action act). While the supporters of the draft see it as a tool to Islamize Indonesia.

For this phenomenon, some moderate Muslims see the MUI as part of a conservative group that wants to Islamize Indonesia. Dawam Rahardjo, for example, argues that this fatwa reflects the radicalization of Indonesian Muslims to enforce Sharia law in Indonesia. NU figure K.H Mustofa Bisri said the MUI's controversial fatwa reflected a loss of confidence in the MUI. Gus Mus also said that those who attacked Ahmadiyah under the fatwa of the MUI are more likely to be illegal (islamlib.com). MUI's response echoed that of conservative Muslims, who see Islam as a religion that is always under attack by its enemies. The MUI said this was done to protect Islam from its enemies.

This article attempts to examine the role of the MUI in the radicalization of Islam in Indonesia following the collapse of the new order. The article shows that after the failed reorganization, the MUI changed from being a tool of the state during the reorganization to a tool of conservative Muslims. Radical conservative Muslims hope to benefit from the MUI to institutionalize their religious values and achieve their political agenda, the Islamization of Indonesia.

MUI and the Political Benefits of the New Order

MUI was established in Jakarta on July 26, 1975, during the first National Assembly (Munas) of Indonesian *ulamas* (*Mimbar Ulama,* 1998). Suharto cited two reasons at the time: First, the government wanted to see the Muslim community united. Second, it is impossible to solve state problems without the participation of ulema (Ichwan, 2005).

However, political interest in the new order could be extremely important. Suharto was aware of the important role ulamas played in Indonesia. He is interested in inviting ulamas to his political agenda. The regime's political interest in the MUI is evident from the signs Suharto made in his opening address: as a translator of concepts and activities for national and regional development; intermediaries between rimas; civil servants as protectors; its agenda is apolitical (Tim, 1985). These signs limit the establishment of the MUI's political goals of counteracting the political challenge of political Islam and legitimizing its politics on religious grounds.

According to M.B. Hooker from 1975 to the early 1990s, the main function of the MUI was to support and to some extent justify government policies and programs (Hooker, 1997). Mudzhar (1993:53-60) also holds the same view. From its founding until the late 80s, MUI could not avoid government intervention to legitimize government policies, he said.

Here are a few examples to cite. One of them is the case of implementing KB (family planning) using an intrauterine device (IUD). In 1971, some ulamas issued a fatwa prohibiting the use of IUDs because their use opens forbidden parts of a woman's body. The government considers the fatwa to be dangerous to the success of the national family planning programme. Consequently, the government has worked hard to encourage the ulema to abolish the fatwa. Over the next twelve years, with financial support from the Ministry of Religion and BKKBN, MUI convened a national conference in Jakarta at which the ban on IUD use was lifted or cancelled. This justifies the MUI issuing a warrant to justify the government's plan (Mudzhar (1993:61).

Another example of the attitude of the MUI, which has been inferred as the weakness of the MUI to the government, is the government sponsored lottery (PORKAS) to obtain funds for the sport. Muslim societies used to protest the lottery because it is considered forbidden in Islam. MUI, however, was silent. Even the head of the fatwa committee, Ibrahim Hossen, has written a book describing how pork is allowed to be eaten. Although he came up with the idea as a personal one, it is seen as representative of MUI. Finally, after some Muslim students protested, MUI issued a warrant on 23 November 1991 stating that the SDSB had shortcomings and was forbidden in Islam (Himpunan Fatwa MUI, 2003).

The powerless of the MUI in front of the government was reflected in Basri's statements. During a meeting with Islamic figures in 1990s, KH Hasan Basri stated that the MUI had met Soeharto directly and demanded that the SDSB be stopped because the MUI believed that the SDSB had more disadvantages than advantages. Suharto replied: "*Then, I beg you, pak kiyai and MUI, reduce their advantage*" (Media Dakwah, 1998).

As can be seen from some of the above cases, during the New Order, the MUI was unable to separate its position from the government and gain religious legitimacy for its policies. Alignment of the MUI with government policy has been achieved in two ways. First, MUI is a lottery of silence or abstention. Second, it issues fatwas in support of government policies.

The Beginning Process of MUI Radicalization

The Beginning Process of MUI Radicalization Radicalization of the MUI began in the 1990s, when Suharto formed an alliance with Islamic groups to weaken the movement of critical and pro-democracy groups. The new order began to forge close ties with formerly antagonistic Islamic groups such as DDII (Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia). The story of the meeting between Anwar Harjono, then head of DDII, and Suharto at the state palace could be seen as reconciliation. The meeting took place in January 1995 when Anwar Harjono reported his plan to hold OKI (*Organization of Islamic Conference*) meeting IX. This plan has the full support of the government, and even Suharto officially announced the opening of the meeting. In response to some of the comments made about him, Anwar Harjono said: "*If the government is near, shouldn't we go?*" (Media Dakwah, 1995)

The shift of government's political orientation had a consequence to the MUI. The organizational board of the MUI (1995-2000) was placed by some impotant figures from DDII, including Anwar Harjono and Hussein Umar, the head and general secretary of the MUI. Even, Hussein Umar was appointed as expert staff in National Meeting of the MUI on 22-25 July 1995 (Media Dakwah, 1995). The important point was not whether Anwar Harjono and Husein Umar, were qualified or not, but for long time the New Order did not give a place for radical Muslims in political arena.

This then became the beginning process of radicalization in the MUI. This could be seen from some attitudes of the MUI which were not different from conservative Islamic groups. It could be seen from the case of Kudatuli (tragedy of 27 July) in which the government accused PKI (*Indonesian Communist Party*) behind it. And conservative Islamic group supported the government accusation. Media Dakwah, DDII media, reported that free stage (*mimbar bebas*) in PDI office was used brutally like PKI attitude (Media Dakwah, 1996). The following edition reported that PKI used PDI for its political interest. It could be seen from its headline 'Massa Megawati Ditunggangi PKI Baru: Jakarta pun Dibakar dan Diguncang" (Media Dakwah, 1996).

How the MUI responded the accusation of government to PDI that there was a communist power behind the tragedy of 27 July?

K.H Hasan Basri stated the same view that PKI was behind the tragedy (Media Dakwah, 1996). As an institution, the MUI issued official statement accusing that communist power was behind the tragedy and supported the military treatment (Media Dakwah, 1996). Besides, the MUI and other Islamic organizations also made statement entitled "*Sikap Umat Islam* (the Muslim Community Attitude). This statement issued : the movement of pro-democratic groups which tried to move people's power was in opposition with the life's view of religious and peaceful Indonesian people; together with the government and military, muslim community would oppose every radical movement; called muslim community and younger generation took care of the eternal danger of communist and anticipated the possibility of using worship houses to protect communist groups; did not give a chance for the development of communism as the case of Monitor tabloid (Mimbar Ulama, 1996).

Another case was economic crisis in 1997. On 23 January 1998, a commander of special army, Mayjen Prabowo Subianto, held a break fasting ceremony with muslim community in his office. Fadli Zon (2004:34) became a mediator to invite muslim figures. Anwar Harjonn (the head of DDII), KH. Kholil Ridwan (the head of BKSPPI), KH.Abdul Rasyid Abd. Syafii (The head of KISDI), Husein Umar (General Secretary of DDII), Ir. AM. Luthfie (*Forum Ukhuwah Islamiyah* or Forum for Islamic Solidarity), KH Hasan Basri (the head of MUI) were some muslim figures who came to the meeting (Media Dakwah, 1998).

This meeting stated that economic crisis in Indonesia was caused by Chinese conglomerates and the West who were non-muslim since they were not happy with the close relationship between Muslim groups and the New Order. In his speech, Sumargono stated that this crisis was caused by CSIS and Beny Murdani's action since they were jealous with Islam. Prabowo said that there must be strong united Islam and military (Media Dakwah, 1998). Prabowo also stated openly that he would take action to the Chinese who destroyed Indonesian economy and to enemies of Islam (Hefner, 2000). The meeting , then, was concluded by the speech of KH Hasan Basri. He praised the close relationship of Islam and military (ABRI). He also praised Prabowo Subianto as the future leader. He even suggested to Muslim people for keeping Prabowo (Media Dakwah, 1998).

The same attitude between the MUI and conservative Muslims could be seen from when on 8-10 February 1998, the MUI held national meeting (Rakernas). The dominant issue was that economic crisis was not pure because of economic factor but the action of certain groups which were not happy with the rise the role of Islam in indonesian politics. Such groups were left by the government by placing Islamic people in state bureaucracy (Mimbar Ulama, 1998). It was not difficult to guess that 'certain groups' were Chinese community and non-muslims.

It can be concluded that corporate organizations such as the MUI functionally were part of state apparatus. The political change of the regime will influence this corporate institution. In other words, the alliance of the regime with Islamic groups will bring into the process of radicalization in the MUI.

The MUI After Soeharto (1998-1999) : *The Power of Conservative Faction in the MUI*

In 1998, before the fall of Soeharto, Din Syamsuddi who at that time became the executive secretary of the MUI brought some members of radical muslim groups, such as *Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah wa-Al-Jama'ah* (FKAWJ), *Hizbut Tahrir* (HT), and *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI), into the MUI through the door of Forum Ukhuwah Islamiyah (FUI). Din acknowledged that its aim was to bridge the gap between radical and moderate muslims.

However, was it true that Din's aim is to bridge radical and moderate muslims? To know his real aim, there were at least two important questions; first, who (which group) was behind the FUI and what is his motive? Second, what is the impact of radical muslims to the MUI? The FUI was a group or forum consisted of dakwah organizations and Islamic organizations coordinated under DDII. The FUI was found by M. Nastir in 1989.

The establishment of the MUI was caused by the missionary which was regarded as dangerous for the faith of muslim people. It suggested that Islamic community needed to take care of religious problems in society and national-state. The FUI was established as silaturahmi (Islamic solidarity) forum to tighten the unity of Islamic society and an instrument to study and solve the above problems (Media Dakwah, 1998). The FUI also held discussions to study national politics related to the politics of Muslim people. the result of discussion was delivered to influential people to influence the national policy through the FUI's lobby.

The judgment that almost all members of theMUI came from Islamic organization and dakwah organization which was historically related to Masyumi could be seen from its founders. They were K.H. Masjkur (NU), K.H. Rusli Abdul Wahid (Perti), M. Nastir (DDII) Prof. Dr. H.M. Rasjidi (DDII), H.M. Ch. Ibrahim (SI), K.H. Hasan Basri (DDII and MUI), K.H.M. Yunan Nasution (DDII), K.H.A Latief Muchtar (Persis) Dr. Anwar Harjono (DDII), Bustaman SH (SI), Drs. H. Nurul Huda (Perti), Faisal Baasyir SH (Al-Irsyad), Ir. H.A.M. Luthfi (DDII), K.H. Murtadlo Ahmad (Pesantren al-Barkah, Bekasi), Radjab Ranggasoli SH (ex-members of DPR/MPR), Drs. Syaiful Maskur (NU), H. Hussein Umar (DDII), A. Rahman Syamsuddin (SI), K.H. Sholeh Iskandar (B KSPP) K.H. Buchari Tamami (DDII), K.H. Noer Ali (Pesantren At-Taqwa Bekasi), Prof. Dr. Ismail Sunny SH, MCL (Muhamamdiyah), Moh. Soleman (DDII), K.H. Dudun Abdulqohar (*Pesantren ad-Dakwah Sukabumi*), and H. Nuddin Lubis (ex-vice of DPR/MPR) (Media Dakwah, 1998). From these 25 founders, there were 9 people from DDII. Only there were 2 people from NU which did not come from PBNU. The rest were from Islamic organization which were close to DDII directly and indirectly.

The close relationship of the FUI with the DDII could be seen from its presidium. After being legalized on 18 February 1995, the presidium of the FUI consisted of nine leaders of Islamic organizations such as Ittihadul Muballighin (an organization of propagator led by Syukron Makmun), Muhammadiyah, DDII, PUI, Al-Irsyad islamiyah, BKSPPI (a body of cooperation among pesantrens in Indonesia), Persis, and SI (syarikat islam).

Therefore, the FUI was collective front of political struggle for Islamic organizations under the DDII or close to DDII. Even, DDII became the dominant element in it. Together with the regime, they played Islamic card to challenge reformation voiced students and pro-democratic groups. We then need to discuss the influence of conservative groups in the FUI. Their influence could be seen from Ali Yafie's (2000:xx) explanation about the FUI. He stated that the FUI alternative forum of the MUI. Next, Yafie stated that Forum Ukhuwah Isamiyah played an important role in guiding, and directing muslim people, especially in May 1998 (Mimbar Ulama, 1998). Yafei's (2000) explanation was similar with Amidhan's (2000) statement, one of the heads of the MUI, stating that the FUI was a discussion forum of 'the center leaders of Islamic organizations ' facilitated intensively by the MUI.

Another important question that should be answered was why some conservative muslims suddenly were very influential to the MUI. The answer was the readiness of this group in order to take new role in political situation at that time compared to other groups. Its intense involvement in political problems in the end of Soeharto's regime made it extremely ready in the political play at that time. As predicted by Liddle, radical Muslims especially DDII would have political resources after the fall of Soeharto. This prediction was based on the fact that they made an alliance and

access to Politicians and were supported by organization and media (Lidlle, 1997:126).

The same case also could be used to explain why Din Syamsuddin suddenly played an important role in bringing some radical Muslim groups into the MUI. Compared to other figures in the MUI, Din was the most understandable person about the political scheme at that time. Din had a strong political background. His experience as a coordinator of Research and Development in Golkar (the new order party) and his involvement in CPDS (Center for Policy and Development Studies) and IPS (Institute for Policy Studies) made him the most ready person as mastermind in political steps should be taken by the MUI.

The above explanation shows us that there was the beginning process of conservative muslim group as an important power in the MUI. The success of this group in conquering the MUI will influence the character of the MUI next, in which the MUI will shift from the early purpose (apolitical organization) to political purpose controlled by radical-conservative Muslim groups.

Politicizing the MUI: *the MUI, Militant Islam, and Military*

This part will discuss the MUI politicized by conservative Muslims and military by focusing four parts: the political attitude of the MUI to the Habibie presidency, the establishment of Furkon, the event of KUII, and religious suggestion (*tawsiah*) of the MUI before the 1999 general election.

1. The MUI and Habibie's Presidency

It is interesting to see the attitude of the MUI to Habibie presidency in the context of political conflict after the fall of Soeharto. There were at least three big powers competing each others; the rest of previous regime's power, conservative muslim groups, and pro-reformation groups. Looking at the attitude of the MUI to the Habibie presidency will inform us about the political position of the MUI in political contestation at that time.

The inauguration of Habibie as president caused pros and cons. The cons-group opposed Habibie since he was regarded as part of the previous regime. Pros groups however supported Habibie since he was legal and constitutional. Conservative muslim groups were those who supported Habibie. Anwar Harjono (1998), the general Head of DDII, stated that the Habibie presidency was legal and constitutional.

In afternoon, after Habibie had been appointed as president, some Islamic organizations which were close to the DDII, such as KISDI, PII, BKSPPI, demonstrated in front of DPR/MPR office to support Habibie. It was different from some students who voiced total reformation, they voiced constitutional reformation (Media Dakwah, 1998). The polarization of power could be seen from the student groups themselves. However, this polarization showed the same pattern. The groups of student which had connection with Masyumi historically and ideologically supported (or did not avoid openly) to the Habibie presidency. It could be seen from KAMMI which did not avoid Habibie as president (Bruinessen, 2002:10).

The power behind this demonstration was an old alliance between conservative Muslims (DDII or organizations in the FUI/BKUI) and green military. It was acknowledged by Fadli Zon that at night when Habibie was appointed to be President, he and Din Syamsuddin and other people met Prabowo to ask him in order to meet Habibie by bringing their greeting and proposal to Habibie. Fadli Zon and Kilan Zen were asked by Prabowo to type the proposal and then it was brought by Parbowo to Habibie. Din Syamsuddin led the prayer hoping that Habibie would accept their proposal. Prabowo also was given statement from these conservative groups that they would support Habibie by demonstrating in front of DPR/MPR

office. Fadli Zon's (2004:145) acknowledgement was supported by Dewi Fortuna Anwar, one of the Habibie's advisors, that after Habibie had been appointed as president, Prabowo met Habibie and supported him. Prabowo proposed strongly to Habibie to keep his position as commander of Kostrad and appoint Subagjo as the commander of the army. At that time, Prabowo also showed a pamphlet which would be brought by the supporters of Habibie organized by him to balance student's demonstration in front of DPR/MPR office (Schawarz, 1999:368-369).

In this situation, the position of the MUI could be seen from its statements. After meeting with the FUI on 27 May the MUI issued its statement entitled "Amanah kepada Presiden Republik Indonesia, Bapak Prof. Dr. Ing. B. J. Habibie" (A Hope for Indonesian President, Habibie). Through this statement, the MUI greeted Habibie as the third Indonesian president. It was also stated that the presidency had responsibility to the national development and reformation based on the law. The MUI hoped that this responsibility could be realized well by Habibie and his cabinet by working hard. It was also stated that all people should be calm and stop the polemic about the legality of his presidency and cabinet. The MUI also supported fully the commander of the army, General Wiranto, who had supported the Habibie presidency (Mimbar Ulama, 1998).

The above MUI attitude showed a strong indication that it was in the network of an alliance between conservative Muslims and military. This attitude was in line with the attitude of DDII which on 30 June 1998 DDII met Habibie led by Anwar Harjono. In this meeting, it was stated that the Habibie presidency was legal and constitutional. Every group which considered the Habibie presidency was illegal was unconstitutional. Therefore, Habibie was hoped to take action in order to save national state and govern based on the reformation challenge (Media Dakwah, 1998).

Politicizing the MUI done by the military and conservative Muslims could be seen clearly in the establishment of Furkon (Islamic Community Forum for Law Enforcement and Constitute) and Pam-Swakarsa (Civil Army to keep Special Session of People's Consultative Assembly 1998).

2. Furkon and Pam-Swakarsa in Special Session of People's Consultative Assembly

The polarization of political force between pros and cons group to the Habibie presidency continued. Conservative Muslims wanted to keep and protect special session of people's consultative assembly, while secular nationalist group wanted that special session would fail (Sudibyo, 1998). The pros and cons could also be seen from the war of pamphlet between the groups. The pamphlet of cons group stated "*Habibie must resign! Reduce the living cost!*" or "*Action of reformation has not finished yet*". This pamphlet was opposed by other pamphlets such as "*If you oppose Habibie, you oppose Islam. If you oppose Islam, you are communists then*" (Schawarz, 1999:369). This last pamphlet was signed by some conservative Muslim groups, namely KISDI, DDII and BKSPPI.

According to Marcus Mietzner, the accusation showed two aspects. First, there was a faction in the military which used Islam as political force mobilized to challenge its enemies. Second, Habibie supporters accused their opposite groups as communist. These pamphlets or religious speech mentioned the danger of communism by mobilizing Islamic communities and military to oppose Habibie's opponents (*Tempo*, 1998). There were some groups in Pam-Swakarsa. They were Pemuda pancasila (the Youth of Pancasila), Pemuda Pancamarga, FKPPI, etc. but, Islamic people were the largest. They came from Furkon. It opposed actively the students' demonstration (*Tempo*, 1998).

The commander of Furkon was Faisal Biki, a younger brother of Amir Biki who died in the tragedy of Tanjung Priok. He recruited and organized Furkon (*Tempo,*1998). Faisal Biki believed that by protecting special session of people's consultative assembly he protected Islam. He stated firmly, "*For Islam, I am ready to die*" (*Tempo,* 1998). This Biki's view was the general view of conservative Muslims who supported Habibie by protecting special session. Egy Sudjana, for instance, stated that the Habibie presidency should be supported since it gave benefits for Muslim communities so that special session should be kept all out (*Tempo,* 1998).

The Members of Pam-Swakarsa (Civil Army) to support SI (Special Session of People's Consultative Assembly (*Tempo,* 1998):

No	Organizations	Members	Information
1	Banser GP Ansor (NU)	3.000 People	This organization did not involve in Pam-Swakarsa since it was ordered to keep kiyai's houses and some pesantrens
2	GPI (the movement of Islamic Youth) and Banten's People	30.000 People	A week before special session, it was already in front of DPR/MPR office.
3	FURKON (MUI)	100.000 People	A week before special session, it was already in front of DPR/MPR office.
4	Brigade Hizbullah (the Body of Coordinated Islamic Community)	120.000 People	It was supported by 32 Islamic organizations
5	KISDI (DDII)	5000 People	It was supported by some pesantrens under BKSPPI
6	Liege of Muslims in Bandung	1000 People	It was collected from some regions (Kabupaten) inWest java, such as Ciamis, Garut, Taskimalay, etc
7	The Youth of al-Furqon Mosque in Bekasi	450 people	A week before special session, it was already in front of DPR/MPR office.
8	Islamic Students from bandung	700 People	It came from diverse universities in Bandung

Furkon was a new organization founded on 10 September 1998 by Forum for Islamic Solidarity (FUI). An important leader behind the establishment of this organization was Nazri Adlani in which he was appointed as general head and assisted by Najmuddin Ramli as general secretary. Its aim was to keep and succeed SI-MPR (special session of people's consultative assembly)

Although it was founded by FUI, but Furkon was considered by some people as a wing of MUI's paramiliter at that time. This judgment was based on some aspects. First, MUI as an institution did not avoid it. Second, FUI which founded Furkon had a close connection with the MUI so that many people mentioned it FUI-MUI. Third, Hasan basri who became general

head of the MUI was a founder of the FUI. Fourth, Furkon chose MUI office as the center of coordination, evening some of its actions, Furkon openly identified itself as part of the MUI so that many people called it Furkon-MUI. Fifth, general head of Furkon was Nazri Adlani, who also became general secretary of the MUI.

Next question was who or what force was behind the Furkon? We began this discussion from Nazri Adlani who became an important figure in the Furkon. He became general secretary of the MUI from 1995 to 2000. He was ex-coordinator of Bintal (mental guide) in the army. From his background, it could be assumed that the military was behind the Furkon. It then was true that, as faisal Biki acknowledged, financial aid for the demonstration was supported by General Wiranto and Abdul Ghafur, the vice of People's consultative assembly. He got more than 50 million to recruit members and organize them. The same acknowledgement also was found from other members of Pam-Swakarsa (*Tempo,* 1998).

Wiranto's way in protecting SI was same as old pattern, namely putting civil society, Islam, in political play (*Tempo,* 1998). When there was an accident in front of Catholic University (UNIKA) of Atmajaya that some students were shot by the military, the head of general staff (Kasum) of the army, Fachrur Razi, held a closed meeting with the leaders of the MUI. In this meeting, the military asked the leaders of the MUI to mention Catholics university of Atmajaya when they spoke in front of Muslim community. It is not difficult to guess the purpose behind this mention. The military wanted to build a public opinion that the tragedy was not related to the conflict between conservative and reformist groups, but Muslim and non-Muslim groups.

Furkon's attitude which struggled hard to keep SI (special session)   by using religious issues was supported and proposed by conservative muslim groups. A day before SI (special session), FSUHTM (Forum Silaturrahmi Ulama, Habaib, dan Tokoh Masyarakat) or Forum for Ulama, Habaib, and Social figures in Jakarta, Bogor, tangerang and Bekasi held (Apel Akbar) a big ceremony/meeting of Islamic community in Senayan's stadium Jakarta. Some conservative Muslim figures presented such as Ahmad Sumargono and Hussein Umar. In this meeting, the decision was to support SI. They also warned those who wanted to make SI fail would face conservative Muslim groups (*Tempo,* 1998).

From the above explanation, it could be seen from Furkon was political project which was directly connected with the MUI and the military before and during SI (special session). Through Furkon, the MUI became 'house' for militant islam and the army. Politicizing the MUI which was done by militant Islam and the army could be seen from the Islamic community congress held by the MUI on 3-7 November 1998 in Jakarta.

3.   KUII (Indonesian Islamic Community Congress)

As Furkon, this congress was started from the recommendation of the FUI and BKUI which held from 10 to 14 September 1998. Many people considered that KUII was the peak of all efforts to secure SI. Mimbar Ulama, official magazine of the MUI, described explicitly that Islamic Society Congress was done to support SI-MPR (*Mimbar Ulama,* 1998). However, KUII was not only as consolidation forum to secure SI, but also early consolidation for next political works, such as to win Islamic political parties in the 1999 general election and apply Islamic law (*syariat*) in Indonesia.

The background of this congress was clearly stated that it was based on national situation at that time (Tim Penyusun KUII, 2000). From the schedule of the congress, it could be predicted that KUII had political interest to bring Islamic voices in order to support SI. It could be seen from the conclusion of the congress from social-politics commission in which

one of its points was not only to support SI, but also to secure SI. This commission obliged Islamic society to choose those who have ambition to apply Islamic teachings and Islamic values in Indonesia. Muslim people also were obliged to work hard in order to win Islam in next general election (Tim Penyusun KUII, 2000). The recommendation from social-politics commission then was decided as one of KUII's recommendations: to support SI and win Islamic parties in the 1999 general election (Tim Penyusun KUII, 2000:18).

This congress aimed at consolidating Islamic force to secure SI, in this case to secure the Habibie presidency, as its short purpose, and while its long purpose was to consolidate Islamic force. The winning of political islam only can be reached by the unity of Islam. This was a spirit could be seen from KUII. A statement from a participant of the congress may represent this spirit, "*I believe Islam could be united, next Islamic parties will be the winner which dominate the representatives, not that party, but Islamic party, Allah party,*" (Tim Penyusun KUII, 2000:59).

Besides the unity of political Islam, another issue dominating in the forum was the application of Islamic law. In this congress, this issue was not only proposed sporadically, but part of important points decided the congress. The clearest one was the conclusion from religious commission which stated clearly that the application of Islamic law was written in Indonesia constitution, UUD 1945 (Tim Penyusun KUII, 2000:1).

Another debate which was interesting was a status of woman as president. The debate occurred whether Indonesia which Islam as the majority religion accepted woman to be president or not. Religious commission and social-political commission discussed this issue. Social-political commission stated that since the majority religion in Indonesia was Islam, this commission recommended that president and vice president should be a Muslim man (Tim Penyusun KUII, 2000:14). Religious commission however did not have a single decision. Finally, the commission delivered it to Steering Committee to bring the issue in fatwa commission (Tim Penyusun KUII, 2000:1). The MUI did not issue any fatwa related to the controversy of woman president.

It could be seen that there was political agenda behind the MUI. The involvement of DDII and KUII was acknowledged by Anwar Harjono, "*DDII...had participated in the congress in composing the congress materials, managing the congress, and formulating the decision*" (*Media Dakwah*, 1998). From the congress, it could be seen that there were two interests playing in the MUI. The army / military (and the rest of previous regime) had a big interest in the KUII to secure SI, while conservative Muslims wanted both to secure SI and to consolidate Islamic force in order to win political Islam in future. Politicizing the MUI done by conservative Muslims and the army could also be seen before the 1999 general election.

4. **The MUI and the 1999 General Election: Securing the General Election and Winning Islamic Political parties.**

As discussed, the army wanted to secure its political interest. Therefore, the army regulated that political reformation was controlled. The army/military supported reformation agenda as long as it was done by the government. This means that the army would secure formal reformation steps, one of them was the 1999 general election. With the same reason, conservative Muslims wanted to secure the 1999 general election. Habibie remained their main reason. Habibie remained important figure for the steps of political Islam in future. It was not strange that they remained proposing Habibie as candidate of Indonesian president challenging Megawati.

However, for conservative Muslims , they did not only wanted to secure the general election, but also to win. For them, the 1999 general election was important momentum. If

they failed, they would remain in the edge of national politics. therefore, they worked hard to get voices from Muslims to win Islamic parties. This was started from KUII. Before the 1999 general election, the MUI was used again to get voices from Muslim community to choose Islamic parties.

Furkon held a big meeting/ceremony for Muslim community to support the success of the general election on 3 April 1999. This meeting was done in order to to warn any people who wanted to make the general election fail. In its statement, Furkon believed that the best solution to solve the national problems was the general election so that all national elements should support it and any people who wanted to make it fail, Furkon and Muslim people would face them. Furkon also asked that students should stop their demonstration because demonstration would worry Indonesian people. Furkon also warned the danger of communism (*Mimbar Ulama,* 1999).

This attitude was strengthened by the religious suggestion from the MUI issued on 19 April 1999. this first religious suggestion entitled "*Himbauan Majleis Ulama Indonesia untuk Suksesnya Pemilihan Umum 1999*" (the suggestion from the MUI to succeed the 1999 general election). There were three points in this religious suggestion. First, Islamic society was asked to participate in the general election. Second, Islamic community should choose political parties which were able to lead the nation-state into a peaceful, united, and harmonious society. Third, Islamic society should not make destruction which endanger Islamic community and nation-state (*Mimbar Ulama,* 1999:30).

This religious suggestion was followed the second suggestion issued by the MUI on 20 May 1999 entitled "*Tausiyah Dewan Pimpinan majelis Ulama Indonesia Menyongsong Pemilu 1999*". This second religious suggestion showed interesting tension. Besides it stressed again some points in the first religious suggestion, this second religious suggestion asked Islamic community to tighten Islamic solidarity and avoid social conflict. Political leaders were also asked to avoid political egoism. The following point stated about the danger of communism (*Mimbar Ulama,* 1999:26).

The unity among Islamic parties was voiced since the KUII. At that time, there were some voices stating that there should be a single Islamic party. This idea was voiced stronger before the 1999 general election, such as the idea that campaign for Islamic parties could be done in the mosque without mentioning their names (*Media Dakwah,* 1999:47). In the first and second religious suggestion, the political agenda of conservative Muslims was still obscure, but in the third religious suggestion, the direction of the suggestion was clear. In the third religious suggestion, Islamic community was directed to choose Islamic political parties. This was issued a week before the general election. This religious suggestion was in the name of Islamic organizations but it did not mention clearly names of these organizations. It was very possible that these organizations were those which involved in the FUI and BKUI.

In the introduction of this suggestion, it was cited the verse from al-Qur'an about the prohibition of Muslims to choose non-Muslim candidates to be their leaders. From this reason, the MUI and representatives of Islamic organizations called:

First, Indonesian citizens, particularly Muslims, should choose responsibly based on their clean heart by electing political parties which were able to struggle Islamic community's interest, the interest of nation-state. *Second*, Islamic people should choose Muslim candidates based on Islamic values. *Third*, Islamic people should be careful with the rise of communism and secular and authoritarian government through political parties which hated Islam and the glory of Indonesian state. *Fourth*, Islamic people should pray to Allah so that the general election would be peaceful, democratic, free and transparent. Indonesia then would free from

the economic crisis (*Mimbar Ulama*, 1999:27).

This religious suggestion showed that there were two groups of political parties, secular and Islamic parties. Islamic political parties are political parties which channel the aspiration and interest of Islamic community by putting Muslim candidates. Non-islamic parties are political parties which are believed do not channel the aspiration and interest of Islamic community and they put non-Muslim candidates. By dividing these two different political orientation, the MUI then called Islamic community to choose Islamic political parties, that is political parties which channel the aspiration and interest of Islamic community. If Islamic people followed this suggestion, Indonesia would be free from the crisis.

This religious suggestion clearly was from the voice of conservative Muslims. The dichotomy between Islamic parties and non-islamic parties was proposed and used by conservative Muslims. The cover of Media Dakwah published in March 1999, clearly wrote "Pemilu 1999: Partai Islam versus Partai Sekuler (the 1999 general election: Islamic parties vs secular parties). Besides, the content of the above suggestion was in line with the statement of the DDII issued at the religious meeting :

I called Muslim community to be united. At least, during the campaign, they did not harm each other's. Even, it would be better that after the result of the general election was announced, Islamic parties would make a coalition. With coalition, the integration of political islam could be united. Therefore, I called Islamic community: vote Islamic parties! (*Media Dakwah*, 1999).

The same announcement was issued by FSUHTM and the board of YPI (Islamic education Foundation) al-Azhar published in Media Dakwah. It was published on 28 May 1999 consisting of three aspects: first, to succeed the 1999 general election; second, vote Islamic parties channeling Muslim aspiration; and third, do not vote non-Muslim candidates as the representatives (*Media Dakwah*, 1999).

The religious suggestion of the MUI reflected political aspiration from radical islam. A night before the vote, on 6 June 1999, the MUI held religious worship in istiqlal mosque. This aimed at succeeding the general election. The interesting aspect of this program was that there was a pamphlet inviting muslim people to vote carefully in the general election. In the pamphlet, it was stated that Islamic community should not vote non-Muslim candidates. There was also a fatwa from FPI (Front of Defenders of Islam) which was directly signed by its head, Habib Muhammad Riziek Syihab. This fatwa forbade Islamic community to vote political parties which decided their 15% candidates from non-Muslims.

Therefore, it was naïve when the religious suggestions were only approached for religious view or fiqhiyyah (Abdalla, 1999:204). The context of national politics at that time and political agenda from conservative Islam was very dominant as consideration of issuing the religious suggestion. It was political recommendation rather than religious recommendation. From the range of time between the first religious recommendation and the third one was less than one and half month. Besides the presence of heated political situation at that time, it could be also identified as a window to see the tension among conservative Muslims before the 1999 general election. This tension could be understood because some surveys done before the 1999 general election showed that Islamic parties were not so famous for Indonesian people. A survey held by Tempo informed that five potential political parties which possibly would win the vote were PDI-P (Struggle Indonesian Democratic Party), Golkar (ex-government party), PKB (National Awakening Party), PAN (National Mandate Party), and PPP (United Development Party). However, PDI-P was predicted as the winner of the general

election. Prestigious region, Jakarta, which became the basis for PPP voters, perhaps, would be taken by PDI-P (Mudzhar, **2001:323**. The result of the survey showed that Megawati had a big chance to be Indonesian president (*Tempo,* 1999).

The prohibition to vote a woman as president was related to the political competition at that time. The target was clear, namely PDI-P (*Tempo,* 1999:19). Although Ali Yafie said that it was not a part of accusing PDI-P, but it was implicitly directed to PDI-P (Ichwan, 2005). For example, the issue of non-Muslim candidates came from conservative Muslims to attack PDI-P which was very popular in the society. It was not strange then that PDI-P responded angrily toward the religious recommendation of the MUI.

Another attack toward PDI_P was the issue of the danger of communism. As seen in the KUII, PDI-P was associated with PKI (Indonesian Communist party). The political competition between Islamic parties and PDI-P was associated with the political competition between Masyumi and PKI-PNI during the old order (*Media Dakwh,* 1999:42-46). Media Dakwah (1999) wrote: *this nation also would see the rise of new Nasakom (Nationalism, Religion, and Communism) which in 1960s was played by PNI, NU, and PKI. Today, the elements of Nasakom is established by the coalition of PDI-P and PKB. This was because the communism had entered PDI-P...*"

The issue of Non-Muslim candidates and communism was used to attack PDI-P. The cover of Media Dakwah wrote : "*Umat Islam Resah Banyak Caleg PDI-P non-Muslim*" (Muslim people worried that PDI-P candidates were non-Muslims) in which its background depicted the logo of PDI-P, Christ symbols, and PKI symbol. This had meaning that PDI-P had a close connection with Christianity and communism.

This religious recommendation also showed that the MUI was disappointed with the result of the 1999 general election in which PDI-P became the winner. Mimbar Ulama reported the winning of PDI-P; "*Pemilu 1999: Muslimin itu Kini Memerah*" (The 1999 generla election: Muslim people now become red). This also reported that the success of PDI-P was a symbol or signs the failure of Ulama recommendation. Media Dakwah wrote:

> "In fact, before the general election, MUI as religious institution tried to encourage Muslim people to vote Islamic parties firmly. Many Islamic propagators also socialized the MUI recommendation, but these efforts could not win Islamic parties." (*Media Dakwah,* 1999:43)

Some activities done by the MUI before and after the fall of the New Order showed three aspects: First, this institution was really under the authority of conservative Muslims to reach their political targets, institutionalizing Islamic values. Second, it was also used by the army to keep political changes under state regime system. This should be done to protect their political position and privilege. Third, the MUI shifted from the institution of Ulama to active Islamic institution in national political constellation after the fall of Soeharto. In a brief, the MUI after the fall of Soeharto was not only the institution of Ulama focusing on religious problems but also the political institution in which its players were conservative Muslim groups and the army (previous regime forces).

Conclusion

The history of the MUI under the New Order showed its character as semi-state institution. This organization was founded by the government to neutralize political potency coming from Ulama and to get support from Islamic society toward the government's political

agenda. There were at least four aspects done by the New Order toward the MUI to guarantee the success of the New Order purposes. First, the new order put the MUI directly under the state supervision and control. Second, the MUI was not allowed to be active in political arena and its function was just to communicate the program of national development to the Indonesian people and to be a mediator between government, ulama, and people. The justification of the MUI was done through two ways. The first was abstain or did not issue a fatwa for a dilemmatic case. The second was by issuing a supportive fatwa toward the government policy.

The domination of conservative Muslims in the MUI could shift the control of the MUI under conservative Muslims. It also could change the nature of the MUI from apolitical organization to political instrument used by these conservative Muslims.

Conservative also supported the Habibie presidency since they regarded that Habibie became the guarantee for the authority of islam in future. They struggled through two ways, namely non-structural and structural. Non-structural strategy was used by demonstration, intimidation and so on. Structural strategy was done by forming or collaborating with Islamic political parties, making an alliance with powerful state institutions such as the army, and controlling semi-state Islamic institutions, such as the MUI.

When conservative Muslims were able to control the MUI, they were able to claim that their voices were the MUI's voices. This could endanger the religious tolerance and religious freedom because at the same time the MUI also spread their authority in the government and grass root people. This means that conservative Muslims penetrated in a depth into state authority and society.

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