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# STUDIA ISLAMIKA

INDONESIAN JOURNAL FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

Volume 19, Number 2, 2012



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ISLAM AND MODERN SCHOOL EDUCATION  
IN JOURNAL *PENGASUH*:  
REVIEW OF THE *KAUM MUDA - KAUM TUA* DICHOTOMY

Hiroko Kushimoto

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‘TIES THAT WOULD DIVIDE’:  
EXPLAINING THE NU’S EXIT FROM MASYUMI IN 1952

Ali Munhanif

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FROM KITAB MALAY TO LITERARY INDONESIAN:  
A CASE STUDY IN SEMANTIC CHANGE

Peter G. Riddell

# **STUDIA ISLAMIKA**



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Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies  
Vol. 19, no. 2, 2012

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*Ali Munhanif*

## ‘Ties that would Divide’: Explaining the NU’s Exit from Masyumi in 1952

**Abstract:** *This article explains the political and historical roots of the making of Muslim political identities in Indonesia. It seeks to answer the question: why Muslim communities in Indonesia are inclined to grouping in such social differences between traditionalist (NU) and modernist (Muhammadiyah) organizations. These two organizations emerged as a model of social division based on religio-cultural groupings of Indonesian Muslims that emerged during the process of national identity construction in the late colonial period. Concerned with the historical development of Islamic organizations in the post-independent Indonesia, this article specifically examines the role of Masyumi in creating both unity and conflict in Muslim society, which occurred in the 1950s. However, this article’s principal explanation for the emergence of Muslim cleavages is the subsequent moment of elite conflict in response to the most important political development in Indonesia: the first national elections in 1955.*

**Keywords:** Indonesia, Masyumi, social cleavages, the 1955 elections, Muslim politics, NU and Muhammadiyah.

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini menjelaskan mengapa komunitas-komunitas Muslim di Indonesia terorganisasi dalam garis perbedaan antara gerakan Islam tradisional dan modernis sebagaimana direpresentasikan oleh NU (tradisionalis) dan Muhammadiyah (modernis). Organisasi-organisasi ini muncul sebagai model pembelahan sosial yang mengelompokkan religio-kultural Muslim Indonesia yang terjadi selama proses pembentukan identitas nasional pada periode akhir kolonial. Fokus pada perkembangan historis organisasi-organisasi Islam di Indonesia pasca-kemerdekaan, artikel ini secara spesifik membahas peran Masyumi dalam mendorong persatuan dan konflik di dalam masyarakat Muslim, yang terjadi pada tahun 1950-an. Artikel ini menjelaskan bahwa munculnya perpecahan Muslim merupakan momen lanjutan dari konflik elite dalam merespons perkembangan politik yang paling penting di Indonesia: pemilu nasional pertama 1955.

**Kata kunci:** Indonesia, pengelompokan sosial, Pemilu 1955, politik Islam, NU dan Muhammadiyah.

**الخلاصة:** يشرح هذا المقال لماذا كانت المجتمعات الإسلامية باندونيسيا على خط فاصل بين الحركة الإسلامية المحافظة والتجديدية كما تتمثل في كل من جمعية نهضة العلماء (المحافظة) وجمعية المحمدية (التجديدية)، وقد ظهرت هذه الجمعيات كنموذج للتقسيم الاجتماعي الذي يصنف الثقافة الدينية عند مسلمي اندونيسيا التي تكونت خلال عملية تكوين الهوية القومية في أواخر العهد الاستعماري، ومع التركيز على التطور التاريخي للجمعيات الإسلامية باندونيسيا في مرحلة ما بعد الاستقلال يبحث هذا المقال بشكل محدد في دور ماشومي (مجلس شورى المسلمين باندونيسيا) سواء في توحيد صفوف المسلمين أم في نشوء صراع بينهم وذلك كما حدث في الخمسينات، يبين هذا المقال أن نشوء الخلاف بين المسلمين كان امتدادا للصراع بين النخبة في موقفهم إزاء أهم التطورات السياسية باندونيسيا في أولى الانتخابات العامة عام ١٩٥٥م.

**الكلمات الاسترشادية:** اندونيسيا، التقسيم الاجتماعي، الانتخابات العامة ١٩٥٥م، السياسة الإسلامية، نهضة العلماء والمحمدية.

One of the most important puzzles in Indonesian politics since independence concerns the social divisions that defined conflict between the traditionalist and the modernist Muslim communities. This puzzle has produced a number of explanations, some of which see it as a cultural expression of Muslim society in the archipelago (Geertz, 1966; Jay, 1966; Dhofier, 1988), with others understanding it as religious consequences of the rise of Islamic reformism since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Noer, 1980; Fealy, 1996), and with still others viewing it as a religio-political cleavages of Indonesian Islam shaped by rural-urban divides (Mujani, 2006). Following the democratization era after the collapse of New Order regime in 1998, the debate shifted slightly to emphasize on the greater aspects of the role of religious elite to use social networks for party mobilization in response to democratic elections (Heffner, 2004; Anies, 2006).

However, a key assumption made by much of the literature remained the same: the religious history—especially in relation to the spread of reformist movements in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century—has shaped a deep social division within *santri* community in the archipelago. These assumptions all underline the fundamental understanding of conflict between traditionalist and modernist Muslims up until today. It is consequently surprising that very little attention has been paid to the distinguishing period of the conflict in which different aspiration of traditionalism and modernism in modern Islamist movements has taken shape.

This article is meant to provide a more persuasive explanation as to why Muslim communities in Indonesia are inclined to grouping in such social differences between traditional and modernist Muslims? NU and Muhammadiyah, two biggest organizations that exist in Indonesia, represented a model of social division to distinguish religio-cultural groupings of Indonesian Muslims, between traditionalists (NU) and modernists (Muhammadiyah). They first emerged as one of several potential socio-political models during the process of national construction of identity in the late colonial period. Although both organizations in the beginning were only concerned with debate on the issues of religious observances or a change in social practices, leaders of the Islamic organizations were also engaged in political mobilization as a reaction to attack made by nationalist as well as communist movements. And though there is no single issue, whether in terms of

program or action, that characterizes all Islamist movements, they all nonetheless share one overarching feature as regards the nature and scale of their goals: participation in the process of state formation (Geertz, 1966: 114-117; Noer, 1996: 7-11). Since this characteristic of Islamic movements constitutes far more than simply a religious debate, the relationship between religious history and social conflicts as well as the rise of Islamic reformism and the birth of traditionalist Islam is more complicated than is typically portrayed. Pathways to the creation of social cleavages among Muslim communities in Indonesia must include a wide range of transformations, not just in terms of cultural groupings, but also evolved political and economic contestation.

I argue that the emergence of social cleavage between the traditionalist and modernist Islam originated from political contestation of Islamic organizations during the crucial period of Indonesian independence. As this article is concerned with historical development of Islamic organizations in the post-independent Indonesia, I specifically examine the role of Masyumi in shaping both unity and conflict within Muslim society, which occurred in the 1950s. However, my immediate focus – and moreover my principal explanation for the emergence of Muslim cleavages – is the subsequent moment of elite conflict in response to the most important political development in Indonesia: the first national elections in 1955. I submit that conflict between NU and other modernist organizations were mainly triggered by their differences in understanding of Islamic teachings, especially with regards to the innovation of religious practices (*takhyyyul*, *bid'ah* and *khurāfat*).

However, it is struggle over power between the two Muslim communities in the early period of national construction of the state that transformed cultural differences into a deep social cleavage. Islamic unity had always been a political aspiration among the Muslim elite between the 1930s and the 1940s. Leaders of Islamic organizations in that period have put some efforts to unite under one umbrella of Islam. The organization of the first Congress of Umat Islam in 1937 and the establishment of Majelis Islam A'la Indonesia (MAI) in 1938 represented such an important effort. The most important development of the effort culminated in the establishment of united-Islamic organization Masyumi, supervised by Japan in 1942. But it was at the point of the 1955 elections that both modernist and traditionalist Muslim leaders took a very different direction: never to unite again.

At this context, this study will situate Muslim organizations such as NU, Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam (Persis) at the contestation between social movements being involved in the process of electoral participation, and will discuss how the internal problem of Masyumi became an important step to understanding 'ties that would divide' between the two Muslim communities in Indonesia.

### **Building a United-Islamic Party Masyumi**

The struggle over power between NU and modernist Muslim organizations in dominating positions in the state bureaucracy and administration had tremendous consequences for the crystallization of cultural differences between the two groups. For one thing, while the Islamic movements appear to unite in response to the Nationalist and Communist attacks in the 1950s, leaders of Islamist movements are in fact difficult to reconcile in dealing with their political aspiration. The story of party formation after Indonesian independence reveals the behavior of Muslim elite in the struggle for power in the new Republic.

Historically speaking, the formation of political parties in Indonesia was largely governed by two important factors embedded in the crucial moment of the institutional construction of the new Republic: first, Sukarno's informal speech at the Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia (PPKI) meeting the day after independence, where he said that "... yet-to-be elected representatives in the Constituent Assembly will begin the work in fashioning the unsettled [issues] of our constitution" (c.f., Feith, 1962: 284); and second, Sjahrir's move in late 1945 to transform the KNIP into an advisory body with legislative authority, as well as his call for the formation of parties to be represented in government offices. Guided by these two factors, political parties flourished and a new phase of escalation between political groups to debate the form of statehood surfaced. Almost immediately, political elites began to declare their party organizations.

Leaders in Muslim organizations declared the foundation of Partai Politik Islam Indonesia Masyumi (Masyumi) in November of 1945.<sup>1</sup> Observers have noted that as a party designed for united-political organizing among Muslim groups, Masyumi was almost certainly Indonesia's largest party, at least until 1952 (Kahin, 1958; Ricklefs, 1991; Effendy, 1995: 214). A number of factors gave Masyumi a clear political advantage: the name Masyumi itself stemmed from the

consultative assembly of Indonesian Muslim leaders fostered during the Japanese occupation. And the party's most important elements, NU and Muhammadiyah, had been able to maintain their political and social networks as they had been the only organizations allowed to remain active. This meant that Masyumi had a much greater presence on the ground than many other political parties that had to build their organizations from scratch (Kahin, 1958: 309; Noer, 49-53).<sup>2</sup> Between 1946 and 1948, minor Muslim organizations including Persis, Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia (PSII), and North Sumatra-based Jamiat al-Washliyah joined Masyumi, thereby strengthening it (Bush, 2001: 113).

As a result of Masyumi being a newly formed, big-tent party that had yet to consolidate itself as a unitary organization, its leadership remained contested. The party's political elite was divided between an Executive Board (Pengurus Besar) and an Advisory Council (Majelis Syura). As to the importance of the NU's role in the early party leadership, there are differing opinions. According to van Bruinessen (1981: 62), NU was not well represented in the leadership of Masyumi, as it was only given one position on the Executive Board (KH Maskyur, representing Hizbullah) and three positions on the Advisory Council (Bush, 2001: 96). At the same time, because of their role in guiding the party's religious and moral policies, the NU's ulama and politicians dominated the Advisory Council (Bush, 2001). Then in 1950, the party created an additional advisory body within its Executive Board, the Party Leadership Council (Dewan Pimpinan Partai), which was made responsible for determining party guidelines and policies. NU came to dominate the Party Leadership Council, which in conjunction with its dominance of the Advisory Council allowed it to play a very important role in determining the direction and leadership of Masyumi (Anam, 1987: 133-4). Thus NU leaders and ulama felt that they had significant influence within Masyumi, which caused them to urge the NU members at all levels to support the party politically. Support from NU was responsible for Masyumi's rise as the fastest growing party organization in the pre-1955 election period (Bush, 2002).

Thus Masyumi arose out of a concerted effort by Muslim groups to build a united political arm in order to continue their struggle to draft the Islamic state constitution after its failure in the BPUPKI in 1945. Importantly, Masyumi was more than a political organization pursuing policies and programs. It was also an organization with a vision for the

establishment of a nation-state organized according to Islamic principles and practices (Mahendra, 1994: 12). As K.H. Wahab Hasbullah of NU once said, "... the main goal of our party [Masjumi] was that, we want to defend Indonesian independence. But we also seek an independent state which is based on the *shari'ah* and democracy that is accorded with Islamic teachings" (Fealy, 1994: 91). The ideological jousting between Masyumi and other parties, particularly over the party's espousal of a religious Indonesian identity based upon the creation of an Islamic state, produced some semblance of a party program. But the effectiveness of this program was increased because the party successfully portrayed itself as the political arm of the Muslim community, and thus that Muslims had an obligation to support it because it sought to integrate Islam with politics (Bush, 2001).

During this revolutionary period, all parties actually shared numerous organizational characteristics (Feith, 1962: 123; Skinner, 1959). For example, the nationalist PNI tended to center itself around dominant personalities, while Masyumi was built around pre-structured, autonomous groups in Muslim religious organizations. But because Masyumi constituted a political front that incorporated multiple and diverse Muslim communities, its internal dynamics were exacerbated to a greater extent by the political conditions. Thus the fact that party leaders were forced to maneuver to maintain their positions in the cabinets meant that they had little time to focus upon articulating clear policy positions. As Lyne has pointed out (2000), most parties "drew themselves in the broadest ideological strokes; their programs lacked detail and emphasized anti-Dutch credentials above all" (Lyne, 2000: 145).

Within the state bodies, nationalist-secular and Islamist parties were able to find common ground in order to protect their presence and special status. Between 1947 and 1954, Masyumi almost always controlled the Foreign Ministry, the Finance and Economic Ministry, the Information Ministry and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (which the NU's ulama dominated) (Noer, 1981: 89-94; Feith, 1962: 148). Meanwhile, the lack of public accountability encouraged the parties to use state resources and official appointments as means to expand influence inside the bureaucracy and also to support patronage networks outside. The more tedious and costly task of building up formal party infrastructures and constructing linkages to voters nationwide assumed a lower priority (Tuong Vu, 2007: 43-45).

In spite of the relatively abstract party platforms embraced by the political parties, ideological differences remained. According to Geertz (1958: 116-119), the patterns of party competition in the 1950s revealed that all party leaderships and their social bases of support were based upon political frames derived from ethnic, cultural, and religious divisions. Masyumi emphasized religiosity in positioning itself within the political landscape (Liddle, 1970: 77), whereas secular parties like the PNI and PKI focused on framing their strategies in ethnic and cultural terms. The PKI was particularly notable for using a strategy that cut across class lines, so as to bolster its challenge against the emerging industrialist class, especially urban politicians, the military and the ulama (Feith, 1962: 127). A small number of passionate cadres and activists in almost every party played a role as “a sort of bridge between the top leaders of the party, its ideology and platform, and a large part of its mass following” (Kahin, 1952: 305). At the mass level, members, sympathizers, and supporters cared about ideology because it “served to rationalize one party’s antagonism toward another” (Feith, 1962: 127). For instance, the Masyumi adopted a hostile stance against communism that eventually enabled the party to establish an increased degree of ideological unity, especially between the modernist and traditionalist elements.<sup>3</sup>

But Masyumi’s Islamic ideology was not in itself sufficient to overcome the heterogeneity of NU and modernist factions within the party. Indeed, the combination of the new state’s institutional environment and organizational factors such as the fact that it consisted of many Islamist elements continued to exert pressure on Masjumi’s capacity to remain intact. Beginning in 1949, differences in opinion, especially between its Executive and Advisory boards, over how to respond to the challenges of a political situation in perpetual flux after the international recognition of sovereignty put stress on the party’s weak organizational ties. In mid 1949, due to differences over the electoral rules set up by the Parliament, Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia (PSII) pulled out of Masyumi, followed by a Sumatra-based traditionalist faction, Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (Perti) in early 1950. Such breakaways tended to accentuate differences between the remaining party factions rather than diminish them (Bush, 2001; Marijan, 1997; van Bruinessen, 1996).

The early 1950s were a crucial time for Masyumi. Organizational tensions between modernist and traditionalist factions increased (Bush,

2001: 147-150). In an effort to repair the party split from 1949, the Masyumi leadership reorganized and gave party control to its Executive Council, demoting its Advisory council to a merely consultative role with no binding-organizational authority on policy making (Anam, 1986; Bush, 2001). This change centralized the party and gave more power to professional politicians (mostly modernists) over ulama authorities (largely made up of NU elements). But this transformation had the effect of stoking already simmering friction between modernist and traditionalist factions.

### **NU's Decision to Exit from Masyumi**

As a form of confederation, Masyumi had suffered from loose organizational ties since its inception. There was relatively little centralized power for decision-making, and the constitutive organizations in the party often operated in an autonomous manner, this meant that the interests and preferences of the central board were seldom fulfilled.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, most organizations within Masyumi carried out their activities – such as community welfare programs, *da'wah*, education, and other religious rituals at the grassroots level – separately. The followers of each organization identified with Masyumi as a party that shared a similar ideological goal of an 'Islamic state', but their sense of being affiliated with the party rarely moved beyond an abstract, symbolic level.

The organizational form of Masyumi was particularly shaped by events in national politics that had not yet had a direct local impact.<sup>5</sup> Part of the difficulty was that the two biggest organizations within the party, NU and Muhammadiyah, took divergent stances on central political questions. So although both agreed that the state should be organized according to Islamic principles, the so-called 'Western-educated politicians' from the modernist camp and the 'conservative-*pesantren*' of the traditionalist camp (Kahin, 1952: 157) disagreed about what that meant. Thus while the modernists emphasized social progress, modernity and political development, the traditionalist-NU stressed the need to preserve the *pesantren* institutions and the related socio-economic structure (van Bruinessen, 1986; Bush, 2001).

Between 1946 and 1948, the rivalry between the modernist and traditionalist factions affected the power distribution in Masyumi. The 1949 party congress had been seen as a turning point in NU-modernist

relations in Masyumi. Natsir, the leader of the puritan-Islamist organization Persis, was elected Chairman of the party at that congress, while Sukiman, a moderate Javanese-Muslim leader, was given the less powerful title of President. Natsir's group also took a majority of the seats on the Executive Board. In addition, at the 1949 congress the decision was made to restructure the leadership councils, in particular to reduce the role of the Advisory Council to only dealing with religious matters. This was ostensibly done to improve the efficiency of decision-making within Masyumi, though the NU *kyais* felt that there was an implicit message that they were not capable of participating in political affairs and that their influence should be restricted to religious matters, a point that they strongly disagreed with. Because they were put into a more marginal position relative to their modernist brothers, the NU ulama proposed turning the party back into a weak federation. Observers noted that this would have undermined the united Islamic platform, and the proposal was eventually rejected by Natsir (Bush, 2002: 97-98; also, Noer, 1981). Factional discontent between the two groups subsequently increased, reaching its climax in 1952, when the party leadership replaced the departing NU Minister of Religion with a Muhammadiyah politician. The NU then withdrew from Masyumi and formed its own political organization, Partai NU.

The timing of the NU's exit from Masyumi seemed to be overwhelmingly triggered by a fear that the domination of the party by modernist politicians would threaten the NU's religious interests. Natsir's takeover of the party leadership, coupled with his Islamic-puritan credentials, was seen as an important obstacle to the NU leaders in articulating their political objectives (Noer, 1980: 102). The NU's bold decision was also influenced by a series of other events. First, the changing political conditions in the country, as the Wilopo-PNI cabinet announced that the long awaited elections would take place in September 1955 for the parliament, and December 1955 for the Constituent Assembly, which would draft a permanent constitution. It was important for the NU politicians to be able to have an independent say in the formulation of electoral rules (Anam, 1986: 134).

Secondly, the institutional jurisdiction played by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the post-1949 Republic was becoming increasingly clear. In 1951, Wahid Hasyim, an NU *kyai*-politician who served as the Minister of Religion (1948-1952), formulated a blueprint for the official

jurisdiction of the Ministry. This formulation mostly reflected the NU's concern with protecting the traditional Muslim community, through such means as supervising religious schools (*madrasah*), providing Islamic curricula for public and state sponsored education institutions, administering religious endowments and charities, establishing Islamic courts throughout the country, building institutions of higher learning for Islamic studies, and administering religious pilgrimages (Boland, 1971: 151-152; see also, Noer, 1978: 12-13). As the main objective of the NU ulama was to secure the religious interests of Indonesian Muslims, the domination of the modernists in the Masyumi leadership after the 1949 congress was perceived as a threat to their organizational interests.

PNU and Masyumi took a while to reveal the differences in their ideological and political preferences. As the elections approached, both Islamist party organizations sought strategic advantage relative to each other. In distancing itself from Masyumi, PNU had a part in shaping the ideological image of its religious contenders. From 1954 onward, there was a clear divergence of vision between these two Islamist movements as to what constituted an Islamic state alternative. The birth of PNU as the guardian of traditionalist aspirations redefined Masyumi as a specifically modernist—to some degree puritan—Islamist party (Kahin, 1958). The departure of PNU also enabled the Masyumi leadership to focus on seeking support from Muslim modernist and 'puritan' organizations in Outer Islands. And consequently, this made it easier to place the issue of an Islamic state, as well as to more greatly emphasize autonomy for the Outer Islands, at the very forefront of its political agenda.<sup>6</sup> The internecine competition between these two Islamic parties also made it easier for other parties to misrepresent them on the complex issue of the state and Islamic *shari'ah*. The effect was to render Masyumi more radical in appearance even as the traditional ulama in the NU came across as a religiously moderate party. Eager to recover the Religious Affairs Ministry portfolio, Partai NU replaced Masyumi when the latter declined an offer to build a coalition government with the PNI in 1955. The decision of NU's elite to exit from Masyumi appealed to declare as never again to unite with the modernist Muslims politically, as it was until recent democratic elections after 1998.

## The 1955 Election and the Making of Two Muslim Identities

Generally speaking, the 1955 elections reflected the institutionalization of the cleavages that had been exacerbated and increased due to policy legacies made by the Dutch colonial government. Three dimensions of cleavage emerged in the patterns of political competition in these elections: ethno-regionalism, religion, and social class. Ethnic-regionalism in the Indonesian context was defined in terms of cultural, linguistic and territorial distinctions between the Javanese and the Outer Islands (McVey, 1972; Mortimer, 1977).<sup>7</sup> In terms of the religious cleavage, Indonesia is a largely Muslim society (about 85 percent), though containing well-educated Protestant and Catholic minorities (about 3 percent each in the 1950s) whose political influence has been greater than their numbers would suggest. However, the more important religion-based cleavage has been within the Muslim community itself. The distinction between devout groups of Muslims (*santri*) and a Java-centered religious tradition mixed with Islamic, Hindu, and animistic beliefs (*abangan*) was more important than inter-religious cleavages. Conflict between Muslims and Christians did not become a political issue until the late 1970s, when Christian missionary organizations began to operate with greater numbers and financial resources in Indonesia (Ropi, 1998; Mujiburrahman, 2004).

With regards to social class, in the 1950s political conflict was largely based on the hierarchical structure of a Javanese society that had been shaped by the long history of colonial policies (Skinner, 2001; Liddle, 1992: 443-447; see also, Wertheim, 1956: 15-27). After the Dutch gained effective control of Java from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the government gradually transformed the kingdoms into modern administrative polities, while retaining much of the earlier conception of an aristocratic (bureaucratic and Western-influenced) elite with paternalistic responsibility for the largely uneducated masses. This framework of a two-class society in Indonesia distinguished the educated, state-employed and the aristocrats from the 'lower' people, who were peasants or who worked as small traders. This class division was challenged, but not vanquished, by the time of the Revolution against the Dutch (Ambardi, 2008: 71).<sup>8</sup>

However, with an eye to the central issues surrounding the constitutional blueprint in the aftermath of revolution, I argue that

it is the conflict over state constitution alternatives that structured the pattern of competition in the 1955 elections. A brief period of Japanese rule (1942-1945) had rendered this conflict dormant with a temporary political alignment. But events in the late 1940s, from the constitutional convention of the PPKI to the settlement and mass incorporation after independence, reshaped and hardened the cleavages into new forms of elite conflict and social divisions. This conflict specifically revolved around the struggle to draft a permanent constitutional blueprint for Indonesia. While ethno-regional and cross-class cleavages are obviously crucial, the competing alternatives for the foundation of the Indonesian state, particularly between an Islamic and a secular-national orientation, underpinned the most defining feature of competition between political parties. It can be argued, therefore, as some issues in the PPKI conventions were resolved and some others were left unsettled, that the democratic elections of 1955 became an arena in which conflicts over the constitution between Islamists, secular-nationalists, and communists were played out.

I focus my narrative on the way the Muslim constituents were mobilized by Muslim elites on the eve of national elections. The purpose is to show how Islamist politicians defined and accentuated social cleavages to generate electoral appeal, and how this strategy then facilitated the increasing level of social solidarity among the Muslim masses. The Islamists' decision to participate in these crucial elections helped consolidate and thus crystallize Muslim political identities on either side of the modernist-traditionalist fault line of electoral Islamism.

### *Electoral Mobilization*

The forms of mobilization pursued by NU and Masyumi were conceived out of attempts by political elites to maintain their control over Muslim groups. Within the context of the 1955 elections, the two parties engaged in – to use Tilly's term – a reactive type of mobilization, i.e. religious mobilization as an elite attempt to protect established claims (Tilly, 1979; see also, Meadwell, 1983). Mobilization developed in response to political changes surrounding state ideology that encouraged the elites in both parties to exploit religious symbols. For the modernist Masyumi, mobilization was used as a means to maximize votes, particularly around the issue of threat from communists, secular-

nationalists and the West. For the NU, mobilization represented a toolkit for establishing a cultural discourse around the issue of protecting traditional religious practices.<sup>9</sup> Because of its brief preparatory lead-time compared to Masyumi, the NU leadership relied principally on mobilizing its organizational networks through traditional learning institutions (*pesantren*) and local mosques across the country, though especially in Java (Naim, 1961: 61-62). And while Masyumi put strong emphasis on a federal-like institutional arrangement between Java and the Outer Islands, the NU did not pay much attention to this particular issue. However, the two forms of mobilization pursued did share certain patterns: they were led by religious elites, organized on a hierarchical basis, and included well-developed social networks among grassroots cadres.

Liddle (1970), Samson (1971) and Feith (1957) have provided compelling evidence of how political parties with little experience of electoral mobilization have reached their constituents and have penetrated local politics. Not long after a date for the elections had been scheduled, political parties started to mobilize their constituents by using the organizational resources that they already controlled. The Masyumi and the Partai NU tapped heavily into religio-social associations like the Muhammadiyah and NU local offices. These groups provided both parties with considerable reach into areas where their religious schools and informal associations exercised considerable influence within their respective communities. Nonetheless, there remained a broad segment of voters with whom the parties had no link, especially in the countryside.

The parties then began to direct their efforts towards increasing party membership and organizations where these did not exist. The Republic's unstable institutional structure provided considerable leeway for the political parties to pursue a variety of strategies in building their grassroots linkages, including: developing closer ties with authority figures and groups that had not previously been recruited, and creating a network of collectivist organizations whose religio-social activities abetted the formation of political identity (Liddle, 1970: 71-76). This strategy meant that Islamist parties were building linkages out from already-established spheres of influence, often exploiting social ties and community conflicts to maximize their mobilization capacities. Both Masyumi and NU plugged into the local system of authority

(Jay, 1966: 41) by securing the support of local power brokers, usually traditional figures or local ulama. In the Outer Islands, Masyumi secured the support of local leaders to build the party branch offices (Liddle, 1970: 76). Because almost all parties controlled government offices, it was easy to offer these local figures financial inducements or status rewards in exchange for their political and ideological support (Feith, 1957: 27).

After the local offices were established, both parties introduced another aspect of local conflicts and cultural fragmentations. That is, where a community demonstrated economic or religious fault lines, parties opportunistically exploited latent conflicts and associated themselves with one side or the other. While it was true that already-present social tensions became easily politicized in some communities, in other communities, political parties were active agents in delineating divisions that had not consciously existed previously (Liddle, 1970: 78; Samson, 1971: 152). For example, Feith (1957: 35-36) reported on the political campaign of Masyumi (modernists) and Perti (traditionalists) in West Sumatra, explaining that it was "... the establishment of political parties that primarily changed the relationship of the existing social forces to one another." This meant that political parties entered an environment in which clear differences already existed between two groups separated by their Islamic principles, devotional practices, and cultural outlooks, and emphasized these differences to make them seem more prominent and important to the local people.

An important mobilization strategy for the Islamist parties was the revitalization of the classic doctrines of Islamic society. In many cases, this mobilization platform continued to occupy the minds of Muslim leaders even after the elections. In attacking their nationalist and communist rivals, both Masyumi and the NU shared a common ideology in seeing the PKI as Godless and atheist (Geertz, 1959: 39) and the PNI as an "agent of secularism". The heated debate over the Indonesian constitution had conditioned Islamist parties to overdraw these differences. Such organizations mobilized the populace by drawing attention to Islamic symbols, such as the implementation of *shari'ah*, drawing lines to emphasize threats from secularism and other religions, and spreading anti-Western sentiments. Urban and educated communities were linked together and glorified as the main thrust of Islamization for the nation (Geertz, 1960). Feith (1957: 19) points

out, for example, that Masyumi concentrated on presenting itself as the guardian of the Islamic faith against the Indonesian secular state. Interpretation of Islamic symbols was also undertaken, by adapting the story of the Prophet Muhammad for political purposes. Commenting on this interpretation, Geertz (1960: 98) noted, "... these interpretations ignored so many versions of the life of Muhammad and substituted a partisan for a large diversity in the world Islamic communities." Different emphases regarding these religious symbols between Masyumi and NU ultimately played a key role in creating two national-Islamic political identities.

### *Electoral Outcomes*

The vote totals in the 1955 elections revealed that both the Parliamentary election and the subsequent election for the Constituent Assembly had defied Islamist expectations. In the Parliament, secular-nationalists (PNI and others) and Christian parties won 55 percent of the vote, while Islamist parties (Masyumi, NU, Perti and PSII combined) gained 45 percent of the vote. Four 'Big' parties with different agendas for the state constitution emerged in this historic election: The PNI (23 percent), Masyumi (20 percent), the NU (18 percent), and PKI (16 percent).

<b>Political Party</b>	<b>Valid votes</b>	<b>Valid votes (%)</b>	<b>Parliamentary Seats</b>	<b>Parliamentary Seats (%)</b>
PNI	8 434 653	22.3	57	22.2
Masyumi	7 903 886	20.9	57	22.2
NU	6 955 141	18.4	45	17.5
PKI	6 176 914	16.4	39	15.2
PSII	1 091 160	2.9	8	3.1
Parkindo	1 003 325	2.6	8	3.1
Partai Katholik	770 740	2.0	6	2.3
PSI	753 191	2.0	5	1.9

Murba	199 588	0.5	2	0.8
Others	4 496 701	12.0	30	11.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>37 785 299</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table: Outcomes of the 1955 Elections for the Parliament and the Constituent Assembly.**

Source: Herbert Feith, *The Indonesian Election of 1955*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957).

For Muslim leaders, the electoral outcome represented a devastating defeat. It reversed their expectation that the majority principle would produce a state with an Islamic constitution in Indonesia. Another shocking development, especially for modernist Masyumi leadership, was the rise of PKI to emerge as one of the biggest parties (Samson, 1971: 29). The Masyumi's failure was largely rooted in its inability to attract grassroots support from nominal Muslims (especially *abangan*). The election also confirmed the secular-religious cleavage in the electoral arena. That it divided the electorate down the middle signalled continuing ideological battles ahead. This result was repeated with small variations in the elections for the Constituent Assembly.

The 1955 electoral outcomes revealed a clear division in the party choice of modernist and traditionalist Muslims. Partai NU's dominance in Central and East Java as well as South Kalimantan illustrated the strong role of traditional ulama and its *pesantren* networks. The Partai NU was also satisfied at increasing its number of seats from 8 in the DPRS to 45 in the Parliament. In contrast, Masyumi gained a majority in the Outer Islands and West Java, where the Muhammadiyah and other reformist-oriented organizations were most active. Some leaders in Masyumi took these election results as a serious failure, which they interpreted to mean "... greater and more serious efforts for Islamization in society had to be done before Islamic ideology would be politically accepted" (Anshari, 1957, cf. Samson, 1971: 59). The election also underlined the failure of both Masyumi and the NU to reach out to all *santri* communities using the same appeals that they had employed within their own narrower constituencies. And despite sharing ideological goals – which would be further demonstrated after the elections – the two major Islamic parties had little incentive to reunify or to coordinate their behavior. Instead, their relative success

in the election bolstered the intra-religious cleavage among Muslims, leading to a further solidification of two Islamic political identities after the 1955 elections.

This distinction was also manifest in the Constituent Assembly, as well as in the subsequent cabinets formed between 1956 and 1960. The Constituent Assembly, which had been created to determine a new constitution for Indonesia, became a new arena of political escalation between Indonesia's now-exposed major religio-political cleavages: secular-national state versus Islamic state. In the Assembly, both Masyumi and the NU were instrumental in consolidating this cleavage through the debates surrounding the conflicts between Islam and Pancasila. The fact that these two Islamist parties only controlled 43 percent of seats in the Assembly made it difficult to decisively push Islam as the ideological foundation of the state. Indeed, even the reinstatement of the Jakarta Charter as the preamble to the Constitution constituted a failure (Anshari, 1979; Ma'arif, 1981).

It is important to recall that the NU leadership between in the 1940s and 1950s has failed to develop a clear articulation of an Islamic state. As a result of this, the role played by NU politicians and ulama during the constitutional debate in the Assembly was not as central as that played by Masyumi, this in spite of the fact that the creation of an Islamic state had been an important platform in the NU's mobilization during the 1950s (Effendy, 1996; Noer, 1981; Ma'arif, 1985: 129). Key to note here is that the Islamists' unwavering cooperation in pursuing this goal demonstrates their common ideological motivation. Yet this cooperation was undermined by the fact that the NU adopted a moderate and more pragmatic position in dealing with the existence of secular authorities. Thus while Masyumi continued to firmly focus on achieving an Islamic state, after the subsequent deadlock of debates between 1955 and 1957, NU politicians and ulama in the Assembly were open to compromise on the state's character and on how the elements of *shari'ah* could be incorporated into a secular state (Ma'arif, 1985: 129; Effendy, 1995: 221).

Arguably, it was Masyumi politicians and intellectuals who took the lead in proposing that Islam be adopted as the state ideology. Part of Masyumi's core position was a belief that "Islam was superior to other ideologies and belief systems" (Natsir, 1956; cf. Maarif, 1985: 159). Kasman Singodimedjo, one of the young intellectuals

in the Masyumi leadership, argued that “since Islam has a holistic character as revealed from God, Indonesian Muslims cannot decline the position of Islam as the state constitution” (Maarif, 1985: 167). He said that Islam is rooted in the life of Indonesian Muslims, and that Muslims had played an important role in the struggle for independence. Because of their support for Islam as the state ideology, Islamist parties began to attack Pancasila for being “neutral, ambiguous and secular” (Maarif, 1985: 145). For example, Natsir maintained that because Pancasila as an ideology is neutral, “it could be taken over by other ideologies, including communism” (Anshari, 1981: 76). Furthermore, Pancasila’s ambiguity meant that “it could be interpreted differently by different factions and groups” (Anshari, 1981: 76). As Natsir stated:

“No one would deny that Pancasila has so much mighty ideas. However, the explanations that we have heard from supporters of Pancasila show that they could not define what the core idea of Pancasila is, what the structure is, where it comes from, what the essence of it [is] and what the inter connection [is] between one principle [*sila*] [and] another (Anshary, 1981: 75)”.<sup>10</sup>

An important aspect of the arguments made by Islamist leaders in the Constituent Assembly was the danger of a threat from communism. According to Isa Anshari, another Masyumi politician, “the neutral character of Pancasila... could be used by atheists, agnostics, animists, secularists or other non-Muslims to justify their religions or understanding of their ideology. And our [Muslims’] task is to protect Pancasila with a clear meaning” (Anshary, 1981: 76).<sup>11</sup>

Overall, the main difference between the NU and Masyumi in the constitutional debate in the Assembly was that the NU took a more open minded position with regard to the state ideology, emphasizing the organizational issue that “the state [should] guarantee and provide a legal protection for the Muslims to observe and practice their religion” (Haidar, 1991: 71). Even as both Masyumi and the NU declined a proposal for incorporating Islamic elements into the state, neither group budged in their resistance to the other, showing no willingness to form a common Islamic front. This lack of willingness to work together can be explained by the fact that each had a different political constituency. For instance, because much of its support came from the Outer Islands, Masyumi was sympathetic to the clamor for greater

provincial autonomy made by Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Maluku, where as NU took position in more centralized-Java based platform of statehood.<sup>12</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Political experiences are consequential to the definition of social and political cleavages. One of the underlying themes of this article has been to explain the ultimate failure of efforts made by Muslim leaders to have a united-political organization. By explicating the historical development of Islamic political organization in the early independence, this article has challenged two conventional wisdoms about why Indonesian Muslims identify themselves along the line of traditionalist and modernist Islamic differences. The first argument states that traditionalist-modernist divides arose as a 'natural', primordial expression of Islam that developed in Indonesia. The second argument claims that conflict between NU and modernist organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Persis arose from structural factors, including the social division shaped by urban-rural differences in Muslim society.

I have argued that although the cultural analytical framework is persuasive in explaining the recent phenomenon on the ongoing conflict between the traditionalist and the modernist segments of Muslim society, patterns of the relationship between culture and social conflicts as well as the way how these conflicts was transformed into particular types of political cleavages remains unclear. It is for these all reasons that it is necessary to interpret the institutionalization of conflict between the two Muslim communities in political sphere. As I explicate at the onset of this article, it is struggle over power between the traditionalist and modernist Muslims in the early period of national construction of the state that transformed cultural differences into social cleavages.

## Endnotes

1. During party declaration, almost all leaders from major Islamist organizations were present. Mahendra noted that the formation of Masyumi was largely initiated by Muslim leaders who have dreamed for a united-Islamic political front to represent aspiring for an Islamic state since the collapse of MIAI in 1940. These leaders included Haji Agus Salim (Syarikat Islam-Penyadar), Abdul Kahar Muzakar, Ki Bagus Hadikusumo (Muhammadiyah), Abdul Wahid Hasyim and Wahab Hasbullah (NU), Mohammad Natsir (Persis) Mochammad Roem and Prawoto Mangkusasmito (Muslim Youth Association). See Yusril Ihza Mahendra, *Modernisme and Fundamentalisme Politik Islam*, Jakarta: Paramadina, 1989, pp. 62-64.
2. In terms of membership, Masjumi was unique because it had both institutional and individual members; a characteristic that made Masjumi, in the early years, the only political organization directly rooted in civic association networks (Samson, 1971:14-29). Members of the various component organizations were automatically assumed to be members of Masjumi (Fealy, 1997). In 1950, the party claimed 10 million members. But no one actually knew how many members Masyumi had during the 1950s. The first list of members was not produced until 1960, the year the party was banned by Sukarno. It was revealed that after the 1955 elections, Masjumi had about 6.3 million active members. See Deliar Noer, *Partai Islam di Pentas Nasional*, Jakarta: Graffiti Press, 1980, pp. 38-41.
3. It must be noted, however, the institutional flux of state formation conditioned these ideological conflicts to override strategic behavior. Waving the Islamic platform did not hinder religious parties like Masjumi from building cooperation with smaller parties, even though they had diametrically opposite political ideologies. The reason for this is that, Masjumi could empower its relative position *vis-à-vis* the PNI or the PKI. Since the early period after independence, especially after the KNIP was established, Masjumi enjoyed a close relationship with Sjahrir's Partai Sosialis Indonesia (PSI, Indonesian Socialist Party). Commitment to the Islamic cause also did not prevent the absorption of other political ideas by various factions within the Masyumi. The left wing in the party planned for a capitalist economy moderated by collectivist projects, and put forward a worker-welfare and peasant-ownership program.
4. In this sense, as the Masyumi comprised so many Islamic groups, this was both its strength and weakness. The central leadership of Masyumi could make claim to having a skeleton organization in numerous villages. Building upon the infrastructure of its Dutch-era predecessor, the Masyumi already had established ties to religious functionaries in village offices. On becoming a party, it had successfully elicited pledges of allegiance from most religious leaders—Muslim teachers, mosque officials, and returned Mecca pilgrims—based in villages in Java, Sumatra, and Madura. Even so, the party was an amalgamation of political groups without a deep organizational reach of its own. It is for this reason that its politicians rose from among existing members of the groups. See Kahin, *Nationalism*, 1952, pp. 157-159.
5. Almost all parties experienced the same patterns of organizational formation as the Masyumi. Except for the PKI which had genuinely developed a strategy that combined class conflict with cultural frameworks, both nationalist and Islamist political parties were weak in terms of connecting the central party leadership with their local constituencies. For a detailed account of these phenomena, see Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 1952.
6. See Kahin, *Nationalism*, 1952, p. 157. After the break-up, Masyumi became the only major party that sought to relate national politics to local electoral appeals. Its message was elitist dealing with ideological, supra-local issues. This was different from the NU who sought to embrace an Islamic platform, insofar as it meant instituting *shari'ah* and giving clerics a privileged role in the highest levels of secular authorities.

7. In the 1960 census, almost half of Indonesia's 80 million people were ethnically Javanese. Most of them lived in the provinces of East and Central Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The remainder includes the Sundanese of West Java, about 15 percent of the total population, smaller groups of Acehnese, Bataks, Minangkabau, and Malays in Sumatra, Madurese in Madura, Balinese in Bali, Bugis in Sulawesi, and hundreds of still smaller groups spread across the archipelago from the northwestern tip of Sumatra to the southeastern border with Papua New Guinea.
8. Unlike Latin America or the Philippines, Java (and the rest of Indonesia) has no history of large private landed estates with their socially crippling conflicts between powerful landlords and powerless tenants and farm laborers. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, privately held plantations by European business-industrialists did develop, but their corporate managers did not own land or control their workers' lives in the style of the *haciendas*. After independence, most of the plantations were taken over by the state. Outside the plantations, fragmentation rather than concentration of agricultural land has long been the norm.
9. For an excellent review on the role of religious elites in the 1950s and the 1960s, see Clifford Geertz, "Kijaji as a Cultural Broker", in *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.
10. Natsir's main point with this assertion is indeed his criticism to the first principle of Pancasila, belief in One God. This particular principle has become central issue for Islamist-nationalist conflict. Natsir, for example, emphasized that "Pancasila is an empty formulation, it still needs contents". The content of Pancasila, he argued, "depends on the idea of the person who interprets it. Natsir then provided an example that, "if the person who interprets it is the one who considers stone as god, the belief in the one god principle would mean belief in stone as god." See Endang Saifuddin Anshari, *Piagam Jakarta 22 Juni dan Sejarah Konsensus antara Nasionalis Islami dan Secular Nasionalis tentang Dasar Negara RI*, Bandung: Pustaka, 1981, p. 74.
11. Natsir was most elaborative person in position Masyumi's anti-communist stance. He stated that: "We hope that Pancasila will not be filled by those ideologies and ideas that contradict the teachings of the Quran, such as Communism or Marxism; the words of God have been part of our life as Indonesians for centuries. We hope that Pancasila will not be used to prevent the implementation of principles and teachings outlined in the Quran, see Anshary, *Piagam Jakarta*, 1981, p. 66.
12. In the 1950s, Masyumi was regarded as a party with a strong capitalist-industrial and development orientation. Such a policy position threatened both PNI and NU which exemplified the Javanese-centralized notion, and PKI threatened Masyumi's export-based economy. Meanwhile, NU was tied in strategic considerations for its constituents in Java. It had to contend with the machinations of the PNI and the PKI at the grassroots. Masyumi wanted to protect the Outer Islands against intrusive policies from the political center, whereas NU wanted to ensure its relations with PNI and the increasingly assertive PKI would allow it continued access to the state and material support for its traditional learning institutions and local communities. The features of the electoral base therefore caused the modernist and traditionalist Muslim parties to seek different policy preferences. See Herbert Feith, *The Decline*, 1962, pp. 126-134.

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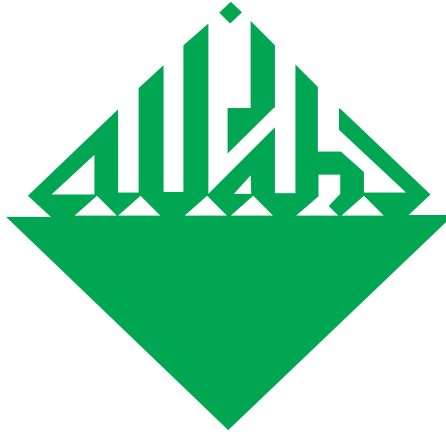


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# سثوديا اسراميا

مجة إنلونيسية للدراسات الإسلامية

السنة التاسعة عشر، العدد ٢، ٢٠١٢



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اختلاف الطبيعة العلمية الإسلامية بين مناطق  
الساحل الشمالي والمناطق الداخلية  
لجأوه الوسطى في القرن ١٥-١٧ الميلادي  
ايسماواتي

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مخطوطة *Butuhaning Manুষya Mungguhing Sarak*:  
معارية الإسلام في المناطق الداخلية لجأوه  
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