

Globethics Repository

The logo for Globethics, featuring the word "Globethics" in white, sans-serif font centered within a solid blue rectangular background.

Internet and Islam in Indonesia

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository. More information on Globethics see <https://www.globethics.net>. Data and content policy of Globethics Repository see <https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy>.

Item Type	Thesis
Authors	Kamaruddin, Azlina Binti
Publisher	International Islamic University Malaysia
Rights	With permission of the license/copyright holder
Download date	2026-07-07 08:30:05
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/222763



الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ماليزيا
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

INTERNET AND ISLAM IN INDONESIA:
A CASE STUDY OF *APAKABAR* MAILING LIST

BY

AZLINA BINTI KAMARUDDIN

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
MALAYSIA

2008

INTERNET AND ISLAM IN INDONESIA:
A CASE STUDY OF *APAKABAR* MAILING LIST

BY

AZLINA BINTI KAMARUDDIN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Human
Sciences in Communication

Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human
Sciences
International Islamic University Malaysia

JULY 2008

ABSTRACT

With the coming of the Internet, Indonesians had the opportunity to enlarge the public sphere as the cyberspace was not within the realm of the New Order control in Indonesia. The public sphere as a network for communicating information and supports free speech, transparency and diverse voices (Habermas, 2004). Under the New Order of Indonesia, the public sphere was a restricted space. In that sphere, the freedom of expression was regulated, controlled and restricted by the New Order government through various rules and regulations. Conversations on some “sensitive” topics, such as an Islamic state, were not permitted. One such activity of enlargement was done through the *Apakabar* mailing list. *Apakabar* (1990-2002) was the largest mailing list in the history of the Internet. This research attempts to discover the nature of conversations on Islamic state in the mailing list. This issue was a taboo in the old public sphere. In relation to the above, the standard of the netiquette while conducting the conversation was also explored. Furthermore, the question of whether the ‘new’ public sphere had conceivably performed the civility functions or not had also identified. As a site of competition and contestation, all opinions were categorized into two categories of conversations; conversations of contestation (acceptance, rejection and imagination) and conversations of neutrality (information, facts and figures). The qualitative methodology with an emphasis on content analysis was used to analyse the data, apart from the Hamline’s *Apakabar* Database. The findings showed that the *Apakabar* was just a space for information, expression of opinion and dialogue. In addition, the Internet can be regarded as a political public sphere. It is widely acknowledged that the conduct of democratic (or undemocratic) politics nationally and internationally, depends more and more on media (McQuail, 1994). The research suggested to other researchers who are interested in doing the same area of this research to conduct a hyperlinks study; to explore other websites or other resources to enable to see the whole macro picture about ‘Internet Islam’ in Indonesia.

“ ”
“ ” (2004:) .
“ ”
“ ” (2002-1990)
“ ” :
:)
“ ” (1994

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (Communication).

.....
Che Mahzan Ahmad
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (Communication).

.....
Fazal Rahim Khan
Examiner

This dissertation was submitted to the Department of Communication and is accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in Communication.

.....
Azmodin Ibrahim
Head
Department of Communication

This dissertation was submitted to the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences and is accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in Communication.

.....
Hazizan Md. Noon
Dean
Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed
Knowledge and Human Sciences.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Azlina binti Kamaruddin

Signature

Date:

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION
OF FAIR USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

Copyright © 2008 by Azlina binti Kamaruddin. All rights reserved.

**INTERNET AND ISLAM IN INDONESIA:
A CASE STUDY OF *APAKABAR* MAILING LIST**

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below.

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may only be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purposes.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieval system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

Affirmed by Azlina binti Kamaruddin

.....

Signature

.....

Date

Dedicated to:

My beloved and supportive husband, Md Nasir Md Isa who did his best to provide me with both conducive familial and enriching intellectual atmospheres to produce a better outcome out of this thesis;

*My dear loving parents
Abah and mak ..
Kamaruddin Abd Samad
Nazirah Ahmad*

*My dear loving parents-in-law
Allahyarham Md Isa Othman
Hasnah Man*

*My dear siblings
Norhasni Kamaruddin & Family
Muhammad Hamirul Md Isa*

*My beloved and genius son
Muhammad Izzul Hakim Md Nasir*

My supportive friends...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praises are due to Allah SWT, the Almighty who has continuously blessed and guided me in completing this thesis. Peace and prayer be upon our beloved prophet Muhammad SAW, who has guided us to the right path.

In doing this study, I received gracious assist from many people direct and indirectly. I am very grateful to all of them. I wish to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to my supervisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Che Mahzan Ahmad, for his sincere assistance, valuable suggestions, encouragement and scholarly advice he provided me throughout this study.

I gratefully acknowledge Head Department of Communication, Assoc. Prof Dr Azmudin Ibrahim, my examiner, Prof. Dr. Fazal Rahim Khan and many lecturers in Department Communication and CELPAD (especially Ms Ursula, Ms Zarina Jan and Ms Amili), for the support and inspiration they imparted in me.

Most of all, I owe a great dept of gratitude to my beloved husband, Md Nasir Md Isa, and all my family members for providing me every support I need in sustaining me through the endeavor of writing this research. This gratitude also goes to my colleagues in IIUM and UUM. Thank you very much. May Allah SWT continue in guiding them in the right path and returning them in this world as well as in the hereafter.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Abstract Arabic	iii
Approval Page.....	iv
Declaration	v
Copy Right.....	vi
Dedication	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xii
List of Abbreviations	xiii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Grounds for Concern	1
1.1 Problem Statement.....	2
1.2 Objectives	2
1.3 Operational Definition.....	2
1.3.1 Internet	2
1.3.2 Islamic state.....	3
1.3.3 Public sphere	3
1.3.4 Mailing List.....	3
1.3.5 Netiquette	4
1.3.6 Civility	4
1.3.7 Conversations.....	4
1.4 Organization of the Study.....	5
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
2.0 New Order and <i>Pancasila</i>	6
2.1 Pancasila and Press	10
2.2 The Internet as a New Medium of Civic Engagement	14
2.2.1History of the Internet	14
2.2.2 Mailing List.....	17
2.3 <i>Apakabar</i> Mailing List.....	19
2.4 Netiquette and Civility Functions.....	21
2.5 Internet, Public Sphere and Civility Functions.....	25
2.5.1 Civility and Social Interaction in Cyberspace.....	30
2.6 I slam and the Internet.....	33
2.7 Summary.....	36
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	38

3.0 Qualitative Research as a Methodology	38
3.1 Qualitative Content Analysis.....	39
3.2 Construction and Understanding of <i>Texts</i>	40
3.3 Procedure and Analysis	42
3.3.1 Coding.....	42
3.4 Summary.....	43
CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS	44
4.0 Finding.....	44
4.1 Nature of an Islamic state conversations	49
4.2 References	58
4.3 Netiquette and Civility Functions.....	59
4.4 Discussion.....	62
4.5 Summary.....	73
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION.....	74
5.1 The Internet and Islam in Indonesia	74
5.2 Suggestion for Future Studies.....	76
BIBLIOGRAPHY	77
APPENDIX	84

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table No.</u>		<u>Page</u>
4.1	Codes of netters and agreement of an Islamic state issue	49

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure No.</u>		<u>Page</u>
2.1	Habermas's model of civil public sphere	28
4.1	Three categories of main actors (Muslim, non-Muslims and anonymous)	43

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ORLA	-	<i>Order Lama</i>
ORBA	-	<i>Order Baru</i> or New Order
MPR	-	People's Consultative Assembly
HMI	-	Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam
PII	-	Pelajar Islam Indonesia
ICMI	-	Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Se-Indonesia
Komkamtib	-	Komando Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban
SIT	-	<i>Surat Izin Terbit</i>
SIUPP	-	Surat Izin Usaha Penerbitan Pers
ISPs	-	Internet Service Providers
URLs	-	Uniform Resource Locators
ASCII	-	American Standard Codes for Information Interchange
NII	-	Negara Islam Indonesia
PKI	-	Parti Komunis Indonesia

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 GROUND FOR CONCERN

In 1965, Indonesia was governed by the New Order regime headed by General Suharto from the army. The regime adopted *Pancasila* as its ideology. Under the name of developmentalism, the Indonesian media were expected to be a partner of the state. The press in this regard was 'controlled and guided' by various laws and procedures. Talks or narration on Islam especially related to 'sensitive political issues' like an Islamic state were 'observed'. For the New Order regime, 'political Islam' was a force that impedes the progress of developmentalism.

Since 1980s, the Internet has come to Indonesia (Che Mahzan, 2006). Legally, cyberspace where the Internet operated was not within the realm of control of the New Order. The opportunity to enlarge the public sphere was made possible by the new technology. In realizing such action, Indonesians utilized the mailing list as their new public sphere. In that sphere, people can narrate their ideas, opinions and experiences without fear of the 'ground rules.' Theoretically, a public sphere is conceived as a space for the communicative exchanges of opinion that empower permit the citizenry to challenge the influence of the state (the New Order regime). In the other words, through mailing lists Indonesians can now compete and contest the truth of discourses (ideas and opinions) as presented by the state.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problems raised are (1) what was the nature of conversations that was being conducted by the netters, (2) what was the standard of netiquette among the netters and (3) how the new public sphere performed its civility functions.

We attempt to examine the above three specific questions with regard to an Islamic state, a topic considered to be a taboo for the New Order regime. In this work, we utilised the *Apakabar* mailing list archive by excavating Hamline's *Apakabar* Database. This study utilizes the qualitative methodology with an emphasis on content analysis.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study include the following:

- i) To examine the nature of conversations on sensitive topic like an Islamic state, which was discussed in the *Apakabar* mailing list.
- ii) To explore the standard of netiquette among netters with regard to conversations on an Islamic state issue.
- iii) To identify whether the public sphere of mailing list could conceivably perform the civility functions.

1.3 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

1.3.1 Internet

The Internet is a new technology instrument. It was first introduced to Indonesia in 1980s. In the beginning, its access was limited to academics and researchers in a few selected institutions like Bandung Institute of Technology and Universitas Indonesia. By the late 1980s, many Indonesians especially students were engaging in e-mail

‘conversations’. Indonesian students, in particular that studied overseas, realized the potential of the new media as a vehicle for serious conversations on issues, as shown by the success of many mailing lists.

1.3.2 Islamic State

An Islamic state implements *shari’a* law in the state. The Islamic state concept in Indonesia is very much related to Jakarta Charter history. During the constitutional debates in 1945, the famous “seven words” about an ‘Islamic state’ were briefly incorporated into the constitution, but then quickly removed from the draft. The “illegal” removal became a sore issue for Muslims who wanted an Islamic state in Indonesia. The seven words, read as follows; the Indonesian state is based on Belief in the one supreme God with the obligation to live according to Islamic law for Muslims (Saifudin, 1979).

1.3.3 Public sphere

Public sphere as a space for communicating information and points of view which eventually transforms them into an arena of open communication that supports free speech, transparency and diverse voices (Habermas, 2004).

1.3.4 Mailing list

A mailing list is an electronic discussion forum that anyone can subscribe to. When someone sends an email message to the mailing list, a copy of that message is broadcast to subscribers. Mailing lists provide a simple and effective communication mechanism it also usually sets a certain common set of netiquette guidelines. Mailing

lists played key roles in spreading up-to-date information, accelerating a greater awareness of the issues prevailing in their own countries (Hambridge, 1995) .

1.3.5 Netiquette

Netiquette comes from word 'Network Etiquette'. It means using network technology with knowledge, understanding and courtesy, includes certain net rules and procedures which are formally used when people access to the Internet (Hambridge, 1995).

1.3.6 Civility

Civility is showing respect for the people we deal with on a day to day basis. In this study, ten civility functions were identified (Hodges & Pavela, 2003), including (a) promote human dignity, (b) uphold the right to privacy, (c) foster understanding and empathy, (d) know the limitation of the medium, (e) protect freedom of expression, (f) respect the work of others, (g) preserve and protect network resources, (h) welcome newcomers, (i) discuss and define community standards and (j) help mold the future.

1.3.7 Conversations

Conversations are 'what is said and listened to' between people (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Holman & Thorpe, 2003). What we construct in conversation are linguistic products, for example conversations that are interconnected with other linguistic products to form an intertextuality or network of conversations. Our realities exist in the words, phrases, and sentences that have been combined to create descriptions, reports, explanations, understandings etc, that in turn create what is described, reported, explained and understood (Berquist, 1993). Conversations can range from a single speech act to an extensive network of speech acts that constitute arguments

(Reike & Sillars, 1984), narratives (Fisher, 1987), and other forms of discourse (Thachankary, 1992).

1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter one in this study deals with the introduction (background of the study, problem statement, objectives, significance and operational definition). Chapter two provides the literature review. It will look at Public Sphere Theory as a guideline to conduct this study. Chapter three provides the methodology (a qualitative method as a research design). Content analysis is used to analyze the data. Chapter four will deal with data analysis, the findings and discussion part of the study. Meanwhile, the last chapter, chapter five provides conclusion and suggestions for future study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on the Indonesian media system toward Islam and the Internet as an instrument to express ideas and opinions through mailing list. With regard to its functions, mailing list plays an important role to give some space to the netters to convey their messages over certain interests or issues. The selected issue for this study is about an Islamic state as posted in the *Apakabar* mailing list. This study utilizes Public Sphere Theory as its underpinning theoretical framework.

2.0 NEW ORDER AND *PANCASILA*

In 1966, Suharto's founded and formed the *Orde Baru* or ORBA (translated as the New Order) government of Indonesia replacing the Sukarno's Old Order that governed Indonesia from 1966 to 1998. In the New Order, the trilogy concepts of *pembangunan* (development), *pemerataan* (equity) and *stabilitas* (stability) were emphasized (Hill & Mackie, 1994: xxix). In addition, harmony and *kekeluargaan* (patrimonial) were regarded highly. In an effort to bind Indonesians together, *Pancasila* was propagated as the state ideology. In brief, *Pancasila* can be generally summarized as Belief in God, Nationalism, Humanitarianism, Democracy, and Social Justice. By the mid-1970s, the government made public its plans for *Pancasila* mass indoctrination. This programme formally approved by the 1978 session of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), the highest policy making body in Indonesia.

To some Muslims *Pancasila* was unacceptable and *ulama* even spoke of *shirk*. In 1980, at an Army commanders' meeting, Suharto lashed out against oppositions to

Pancasila. Suharto said, the Armed Forces had to remain vigilant and protect the state ideology by force if necessary. In 1985, Suharto decreed that all parties and organizations in Indonesia would have to accept *Pancasila* as their *asas tunggal* (sole foundation), and non-complying organizations would from then on be regarded as illegal bodies. Islamic organizations like *Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam* (HMI), for instance, which had both Islam and *Pancasila* written into its statutes, had to strike out Islam. Others had to replace Islam with *Pancasila* as their basic principle, and had to search for other ways of maintaining their Muslim character. Islamic organizations that did not comply like *Pelajar Islam Indonesia* (PII), were ordered to dissolve in 1988. To Suharto ideological conflicts (with *Pancasila*) were not conducive for the national integration as well as for the economic betterment of the country. Thus, during the first decade of his rule, Suharto set an agenda of unification and development under the flagship of *Pancasila*. Initially, Suharto banned the communist party (and communism in general) and disallowed Masyumi, the old and the biggest Islamic political party, to rehabilitate (Luthfi, 2004). The Masyumi was a front in which various Muslim organisations were joined, not all of them reformist. The Masyumi's leadership remained dominated by persons close to the reformist organisation *Muhammadiyah* and (in the case of its most charismatic leader, Mohammad Natsir) the puritan *Persatuan Islam*. *Muhammadiyah*, established in 1912, was inspired by `Abduh's modernism and engaged in social welfare activities, establishing hospitals and schools. *Persatuan Islam* was a much smaller organisation that distinguished itself by its literal interpretation of Qur'an and *hadith* and its uncompromising attitude to later accretions.

Many Muslims were angered by their terse exclusion from positions of real political power by Suharto, as they gradually found themselves marginalized

politically (Mayring, 2005). To the ‘developmentalists’, Islam was a threat to the *pembangunan* (development). Perhaps such fear toward Islam was very much due to the previous historical experiences. Historically, attempts to make the *shari`a* as the basis of the Indonesian state was not new. In various parts of the country, the Islamic organizations played a dominant role in the struggle for independence. The *Negara Islam Indonesia* party (NII) strived for an Islamic State with its own Constitution, explicitly based on the *shari`a*, and a judiciary where *ulama* delivered Islamic justice (Bruinessen, 1996).

However, not all Muslims were against the New Order. ‘A new generation of Muslims’ was arguably strong supporters of Suharto's agenda of *pembangunan* (development). These Muslims were also known as ‘renewalists’ (Hassan 1980) and ‘neo-modernists’ (Barton 1995, 1997). Many of this ‘Muslim generation’ were educated in religious and secular institutions; proficient in both Islamic and Western knowledge. This ‘new Muslim generation’ was less concerned about issues like an Islamic state, about the schism between ‘Orthodoxy and Modernism’, or about the difficulties of living within an increasingly multireligious society’ (Ricklefs, 2001: 343-44). Moreover, the ‘new Muslim generation’ was active during the early period of Suharto's rule and some other emerged during the 1980s. Mohammad Sjafaat Mintaredja (1921) and Abdul Mukti Ali (1923-2004) were examples as of those who were active during the early period of Suharto's rule. Both served as Ministers in the first Suharto cabinet, as Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of Religious Affairs respectively (Luthfi, 2004).

The wave of the delegitimation of ‘Islamic ideals’ reached its culmination in the mid 1980s, when many members of the ‘new Muslim generation’ came on to the political stage. By the early 1990s, they were playing a more influential role in

Indonesian politics than at any time since the establishment of the New Order in the mid-1960s (Brown, 2003). The 'new Muslim generation' argued that the 'ideal Islamic state' as espoused in 'old texts' was no longer relevant for Muslim political life. For them an Islamic state is that political model previously supported by the older Muslim generation either under the guise of the concepts of 'theo-democracy' or 'Islamic democratic state.' To 'the new generation' this kind of idea ultimately harms the true meaning of democracy. It is important to note here that the concept of an Islamic state was never openly criticized by the older generation of Muslims .

The rejection of the concept of an Islamic state where *shari'a* law is paramount began in the early period of the New Order. One of the earliest Muslim critics of the concept was Muhammad Sjafaat Mintaredja. Mintaredja argued that Indonesian Muslims were not likely to establish an Islamic state, not only because Indonesia is a pluralist country in which its constitution does not allow them to do so, but also because the idea of an Islamic state is theologically untenable. The Qur'an and the *hadith*, the two most authoritative sources of Islam, according to him, do not have the doctrine of an Islamic state and the Qur'an does not request Muslims to specifically establish a particular model of polity (Luthfi, 2004).

In the middle of the New Order period, Suharto seemed to be 'closer' to Islam. At a personal level, in 1991 he made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Suharto inaugurated the Islamic bank and was the first to buy a token share in it. Suharto strongly endorsed *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Se-Indonesia* (ICMI) daily paper, and it was he who gave it its name, *Republika*. The Christian ministers who had long controlled the economic ministries were replaced by Muslims with ICMI connections, after the 1992 elections. However, the discussion on an Islamic state remains contained in many Islamic circles (Bakhtiar, 2003).

An Islamic state concept is very much related to Jakarta Charter history. During the constitutional debates in 1945, “seven words” were briefly incorporated into the constitution, but then quickly removed from the draft. The ‘illegal’ removal became a sore issue for many Muslims. Since 1957, when the Constituent Assembly voted for a nationalist state, the Indonesian Pancasila State has been secular. The so-called “seven words”, “with the obligation to implement *sharia*’ by its adherents”, were deleted from the first principle, “Belief in the One Almighty God”, in the original draft of the Indonesian Constitution (Saifudin, 1979).

In ‘deleting’ the seven words, Sukarno said:

“The state we want is a national state of all Indonesia. If we establish a state based on Islam, many areas whose population is not Islamic, such as the Moluccas, Bali, Flores, the Kai Islands, and Sulawesi, will secede. And West Irian which has not yet become part of the territory of Indonesia, will not want to be part of the Republic.” (Saifuddin, 1979:50)

In sum, Islam under the New Order regime was viewed as a set of humanistic values, rather than as a complete system for living encompassing all life spaces in the legal exoteric prescriptions of Islamic law (*fiqh*), conformed to the objectives of the New Order government which was encouraging consciously or unconsciously, the movement towards privatized religious practice (Cone, 2002). Moreover, despite all the efforts of the state apparatus to ‘control or tame’ Islam, the religion was a potential source of opposition to the regime (Kolig, 2001).

2.1 PANCASILA AND THE PRESS

The New Order of Indonesia promoted ‘development journalism’ where ‘positive news’, not the conflict laden ‘negative news’, were favored for the development of the state. Positive news is considered as essential for stability and progress of the state