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PANCASILA AND THE CHALLENGE OF
POLITICAL ISLAM: PAST AND PRESENT

LEO SURYADINATA

ISEAS YUSOF ISHAK
INSTITUTE

Trends in Southeast Asia



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FOREWORD

The economic, political, strategic and cultural dynamism in Southeast Asia has gained added relevance in recent years with the spectacular rise of giant economies in East and South Asia. This has drawn greater attention to the region and to the enhanced role it now plays in international relations and global economics.

The sustained effort made by Southeast Asian nations since 1967 towards a peaceful and gradual integration of their economies has had indubitable success, and perhaps as a consequence of this, most of these countries are undergoing deep political and social changes domestically and are constructing innovative solutions to meet new international challenges. Big Power tensions continue to be played out in the neighbourhood despite the tradition of neutrality exercised by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

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Pancasila and the Challenge of Political Islam: Past and Present

By Leo Suryadinata

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Islam has become an important symbol in post-Suharto Indonesia, and political figures or parties feel they cannot afford to be seen to be against the religion or be considered unfriendly to it.
- Islamism emerges to challenge Pancasila (or cultural pluralism) again. Islamists already challenged Pancasila soon after Indonesian independence. But during that initial era under Sukarno, this challenge was already under control. Under Suharto, Pancasila as an ideology was effectively used to govern Indonesia, and political Islam was suppressed. However, Suharto began to co-opt Islamic political leaders during the last decade of his rule.
- Religious Islam grew significantly during the Suharto era and would gradually transform itself into political Islam after Suharto's fall. Nevertheless, the electoral strength of "Islamic political parties" remained relatively low.
- But since then, Islam has been used as an effective tool to undermine political rivals. The pluralists who are now in power continue to promote Pancasila, and combining with moderate Islamic organizations and through laws and regulations, have tried to hinder the further development of Islamist organizations.
- The future of Pancasila depends on whether the Indonesian government and other pluralist forces are able to control the Islamists and provide political stability and economic development in the country.

Pancasila and the Challenge of Political Islam: Past and Present

By Leo Suryadinata¹

INTRODUCTION

On 10 July 2017, President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo promulgated the new “Mass Organizations Law” (Perppu no. 2/2017) that empowers the state to ban mass organizations opposed to Pancasila. A few days later, the Ministry of Home Affairs declared Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI, or Indonesian Liberation Organization), which promotes the establishment of a Caliphate (*khilafa*) or a theocratic Islamic State, illegal. In recent years, Indonesia has witnessed the rise of hardline Islam as a challenge to the state ideology Pancasila. There are worrying signs of religious intolerance. The indicators are: the winning of Arab-Muslim candidate Anies Baswedan over the Chinese-Christian candidate Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (better known as Ahok) in the Jakarta gubernatorial election on 9 May 2017; the harsh sentence passed on Ahok over the “blasphemy against Islam” case after the election; and General Gatot Nurmantyo’s close association with hardline Muslim organizations.

Despite 87 per cent of its total population being Muslim, Indonesia has been a “secular state” or a “Pancasila state” since independence in 1945. Pancasila means Five Principles, and was first initiated by Sukarno on 1 June 1945. It includes Belief in One Almighty God (*Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*), Indonesian Unity, Internationalism, Democracy through Deliberation, and Social Justice for all People. This is a complex

¹ Leo Suryadinata is Visiting Senior Fellow at ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore. He would like to thank Dr Najib Burhani for his useful comments. Nevertheless, he is solely responsible for the contents of the paper.

ideology, which does not only address the issue of religious pluralism but also democracy and social justice. Its inclusiveness and also ambiguity, has helped make it acceptable to most Indonesians.

It appears that the first principle of Pancasila, “belief in one almighty god”, has become prominent. While “*Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*” has been interpreted as belief in god, any god;² and therefore does not have to be monotheistic phrase; some have interpreted it as “belief in one lordship”.³ In other words, they have felt that “monotheism”, not “polytheism” should be reflected in the recognized religions. During the New Order, many non-monotheist religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism had transformed themselves into apparent “monotheist” religions.⁴

Whatever the case, the principle in the Indonesian 1945 Constitution remains the guide for social and political behaviour. Clause 29 reads: (1) “The State is based on the principle of One Lordship (*Negara Berdasarkan atas Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*); (2) The state guarantees the freedom of every person to profess his/her own religion and to worship in accordance with his/her own religion and belief.”⁵

Pancasila has thus been interpreted to be in support of religious pluralism. However, in one of the earlier drafts of the 1945 Constitution, there was a clause included that required one lordship, “with the

² Prof. Mr Soediman Kaetohadipodjo, *Pancasila sebagai Pandangan Hidup Bangsa Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gatra Pustaka, 2010), p. 169.

³ Eka Darmaputera, *Pancasila and the Search for Identity and Modernity in Indonesian Society* (Leiden: E.J. Brill 1988), p. 155. “Lordship” is more abstract than “Lord”.

⁴ For various studies on the transformation of various minority religions into “monotheist” religions, see Iem Brown, “Agama Buddha Maitreya: A Modern Buddhist Sect in Indonesia”, *Contributions to Southeast Asian Anthropology* no. 9 (December 1990): 113–24; and Leo Suryadinata, “Confucianism in Indonesia: Past and Present”, *Southeast Asia* (Southern Illinois University), vol. 8, no. 3 (Spring 1974): 881–903.

⁵ Darmaputera, *Pancasila and the Search for Identity*, p. 156.

obligation to carry out the Islamic Sharia law for its adherents”.⁶ This version of the Indonesian Constitution is known as “Piagam Jakarta” (Jakarta Charter). It was proposed by Islamic leaders on the Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence (PPPKI) but opposed by non-Muslims as well as liberal Muslims on the committee. Sukarno then asked Mohammad Hatta to persuade the Islamic leaders on the committee to have the clause deleted for the sake of national unity.

The adoption of a religious pluralist constitution was mainly due to the fact that Indonesia is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. The country is the product of Dutch colonialism rather than the continuation of Indonesian empires or kingdoms. Moreover, the Muslim population in Java consists of “liberal Muslims” and “strict Muslims”, the former is called *abangan* who were and still are for Pancasila, while the latter are known as *santri*, the majority of whom during the pre-Suharto period were against Pancasila.⁷ Prior to the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, the *abangan* appeared to have been dominant in Indonesian politics. It is also possible that many Islamic leaders on the PPPKI might have thought that once Indonesia attained independence, the Constitution could be easily amended, and the deleted clause reinserted.

⁶ Darmaputera, *Pancasila and the Search for Identity*, p. 155.

⁷ The division of Java’s Muslims into *abangan* and *santri* can be found in Clifford Geertz’s book (*Religion of Java*, Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1960). In fact, Geertz has a third category, *priyayi*, which is a social rather than religious category. Many Muslim scholars disagree with such division, especially to call *abangan* as “nominal Muslims” as if *abangan* are not “genuine Muslims”. Professor Azyumardi Azra, for instance, maintained that *abangan* is a form of Southeast Asian Islam which is “the least Arabicized form of Islam, largely as a result of a process of Islamization that was peaceful and gradual, but one should not therefore be misled by the *abangan* [or nominal Muslim] myth.” See <http://law.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1547790/BriefingPaper1-azyumardiazra2.pdf> (accessed 31 March 2018). However, one could not deny that they were/are divisions in Muslims in Java/Indonesia. It should be noted that many *santris* later also support Pancasila in order to maintain Indonesian national unity.

The early history of the Indonesian Republic witnessed a number of rebellions, the earliest of which was the South Maluku (Christian) rebellion that wanted to have separate states from the central government, and later the Darul Islam rebellion in West Java which aimed at transforming Indonesia into an Islamic state. But both failed.

The Darul Islam rebellion took a long time to defeat. It started in August 1949, led by Kartosuwirjo, an Islamist of Javanese descent.⁸ His Darul Islam Indonesia (DII) staged a period of guerilla warfare that reached its peak in 1957. Its activities were largely confined to West Java. The rebellion was crushed by the government in 1962, and his army was dissolved but without being heavily penalized.

PANCASILA VERSUS ISLAM

Indonesian political history has exhibited two kinds of nationalism which have been in competition since before World War II — an Islamic nationalism and a “secular” (Pancasila) nationalism. Already during the Indonesian Youth Congress, an Islamic youth organization that attended the congress did not officially endorse the Youth Pledge, thinking it to be too “secular”.⁹ The Pledge was for the unity of Indonesia under one people, one language and one Indonesian state. Islam was not in the Pledge.

After independence, Indonesia introduced a multi-party system that included political parties whose membership was based on ethnicity, nationalism, communism and Islam. In the 1955 General Elections, four major parties emerged — the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI, Nationalist), the Masyumi (Modernist Islamic Party), Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, Traditional Islamic Party) and Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI,

⁸ For a recent study on the Kartosuwirjo movement, see *Islam and the Making of the Nation: Kartosuwirjo and Political Islam in the 20th Century Indonesia* (The Hague: KITLV, 2012).

⁹ Leo Suryadinata, “Pre-War Indonesian Youth Movement”, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 9, no. 1 (March 1978): 99–114.

Communist).¹⁰ Members of the PNI and PKI are usually considered *abangan*, while Masyumi and NU members are usually considered to be *santri*. These parties, together with small Islamic parties, garnered 43 per cent of the votes. In other words, the secular/nationalist voters constituted a majority.

But the challenge continued. This can be seen in the stalemate during the Constituent Assembly (Konstituante) held to formulate a new constitution to replace the 1950 provisional constitution. The 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945) had been in force since Indonesia's independence, but was replaced by the Federated Republic of Indonesia Constitution (UUD RIS, 27/12/1949-17/8/1950) after the signing of the Round Table Agreement with the Dutch. However, the Federated Republic Indonesia Constitution lasted only eight months and was replaced by the 1950 provisional constitution (UUDS RI, 17/8/1950-5/7/1959) after the South Maluku Rebellion.

The Constituent Assembly was formed after the 1955 election to draft a new constitution. Parties who won in the election were also represented in the Constituent Assembly. Islamic parties, including Masyumi and NU, insisted on inserting the seven words (the Islamic clause) into the new Constitution. Secular parties disagreed with the proposal of Islamic parties and there was a deadlock. When Sukarno instituted Guided Democracy in July 1959, he decided to dissolve the Constituent Assembly and readopted the 1945 Constitution that gave tremendous power to the president. Pancasila remained as the state ideology.

Under "Guided Democracy" (1959–65), only three political actors, namely Sukarno, the Army and the PKI played major political roles. Sukarno attempted to keep the balance between the Army and the PKI but the balance was eventually lost in September 1965 due to the coup known as the 30 September Movement. This coup resulted in the fall of

¹⁰ For a study of the 1955 general election, see Herbert Feith, *Indonesian Elections of 1955*, Interim Report Series, Modern Indonesia Project (Ithaca: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1957). For a good short analysis of Indonesian political parties during that period, see Daniel S. Lev, "Political Parties in Indonesia", *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 8, no. 1 (March 1967).

the PKI, the removal of Sukarno, and the rise of the Army represented by General Suharto. This was the beginning of the thirty-two-year “New Order” period.

PROMOTION OF PANCASILA

Suharto, backed by the army, introduced what was called “Pancasila Democracy”. After banning the PKI and the Sukarnoist parties, he began to revitalize the army-backed Golongan Karya (Golkar) organization and conducted the first military-controlled general election in 1971. After the landslide victory of Golkar, the political party system was amended. In addition to Golkar, ten existing parties were reduced to two parties; one group consisted of nationalist and Christian parties called the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesian Democracy Party, PDI) and the other combined four Islamic parties into the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (Development Unity Party, PPP).¹¹

During the Suharto era (1966–98), the study of Pancasila was introduced in the schools. All civil servants also had to study the principles. An organization known as BP7 was established to oversee the practice and implementation of Pancasila (P4). The height of the promotion of Pancasila was in 1985 when all political parties had to use Pancasila as the sole basis for party ideology.¹² Many observers maintained that the ideology was used not only to deny Islam as an alternate ideology but also to suppress political opposition.

During the late 1970s, there was an Islamic revolution in Iran, and many Muslim countries, including those in Southeast Asia were influenced by the revolution. Radical Islam began to emerge and the remnants of the DII began to resurface. Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Bashir (also spelled as Ba’asyir in Indonesian), began to organize an Islamist movement in Java to oppose the Suharto regime and reject the Pancasila ideology. Bashir himself was also considered to have

¹¹ Leo Suryadinata, *Military Ascendancy and Political Culture: A Study of Indonesia’s Golkar* (Athens: Ohio University Press for Center for International Studies, 1989; 2nd printing 1992), p. 11.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 101–7.

been affiliated with the leader of the DII.¹³ They were arrested in 1983 but released pending sentence. Both fled to West Malaysia where they formed a radical organization known as Jemaah Islamiah (JI). Sungkar was the chairman while Bashir was his deputy.¹⁴ They were unable to return as long as Suharto was in power.

The economic situation was stable under Suharto and the army was united behind him. The technocrats also rendered full cooperation to his regime. Islamic radicalism was suppressed but mosques were allowed to be built. In addition, in 1975 Suharto established the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI, Indonesian Ulama Council) in order to co-opt and control Muslim communities.¹⁵ It was only when Suharto began to transform his rule into a personal one that benefitted his family members that the army began to split in its support for him.

Realizing that he could no longer rely on army support, Suharto began to co-opt Islamic leaders. In 1990 his deputy B.J. Habibie established the Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslimin Indonesia (ICMI, Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association) with his endorsement. Islamic politicians benefitted from this and were willing to co-operate.¹⁶

During the thirty-two-year rule of Suharto, many moderate Muslims started to change their view on Pancasila. NU under Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) began to accept Pancasila as the only ideology for Indonesia,

¹³ <<http://www.antaraneews.com/berita/215424/perjalanan-abu-bakar-baasyir>> (accessed 15 September 2017).

¹⁴ JI was established in 1993 in Malaysia. See Daljit Singh, “Trends in Pluralism in Southeast Asia”, in *Terrorism in South and Southeast Asia in the Coming Decade*, edited by Daljit Singh (Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India, 2009), p. 84.

¹⁵ One Islamic scholar maintains that “Suharto formed MUI not only as a *fatwa*-making body, but an institution that translates government policies to the people.”. See Norshahril Saat, “The State and the Ulama: Comparing Indonesia and Malaya”, *ISEAS Perspective* no. 11/2015, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, 26 February 2015, p. 3.

¹⁶ For the acceptance of ICMI by Indonesian Muslim intellectuals, see A. Makmur Makka, *ICMI: Dinamika Politik Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pustaka Cidesindo, 1996); see also Abrar Muhammad, ed. *ICMI dan Harapan Umat* (Jakarta: YPI Ruhama, 1991).

perceiving it as beneficial to the moderate Muslim majority and the stability of the country. It could also prevent the disintegration of the multi-religious state of Indonesia. Later, in 1986, Muhammadiyah also accepted Pancasila as the only ideology for the Republic of Indonesia.¹⁷ It was during the Suharto period that Pancasila gained general acceptance in Indonesia, and even Muslim politicians accepted Pancasila as the Indonesian sole ideology.

Nevertheless, after the fall of Suharto, people critical of the New Order associated Pancasila with Suharto rather than with its founder Sukarno, and quietly abandoned the national ideology. Many politicians highlighted the misuse of Pancasila during the Suharto era rather than its function as the guide for Indonesian unity. Pancasila as school subject and the requirement of civil servants to study Pancasila were discontinued. Islamic political parties immediately reinserted Islam as their political ideology. In other words, Pancasila was no longer regarded as the sole national ideology of Indonesia.

THE CONTINUING TUSSLE BETWEEN PANCASILA AND ISLAMISM

The fall of Suharto following the *Reformasi* (Reform) movement gave rise to democracy in Indonesia. New political parties were formed and many were Islamic in character. Political parties can now be divided into those that continue to adopt Pancasila as their ideology and those that adopt Islam as their ideological basis. The former continue to be the largest parties while the latter continue to grow.

Since the fall of Suharto, Indonesia has undergone four democratic elections, in 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014. Support for Pancasila parties has been between 60.6 per cent and 71.0 per cent, while the combined voting strength of Islamic parties has been between 29.0 per cent and 39.4 per cent (see Table 1) In other words, Islamic parties have always been much weaker compared to the Pancasila parties.

¹⁷ Luthfi Assyaukanie, *Islam and the Secular State in Indonesia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), pp. 106–7.

Table 1: Combined Votes of Pancasila vs Islamic Parties in the Indonesian Elections (in percentage)

Year of Election	Secular Parties	Islamic Parties (including PKB and PAN)
1999	62.5	37.5
2004	60.6	39.4
2009	71.0	29.0
2014	68.14	31.86

Source: Leo Suryadinata, *Elections and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), p. 106; Aris Ananta, Evi Nurvidya Arifin and Leo Suryadinata, *Emerging Democracy in Indonesia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), p. 21; <<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-election-idUSBREA4A02Q20140511>> (accessed 18 May 2017); Alexander R. Arifianto, “Unpacking the Results of the 2014 Indonesian Legislative Elections”, *ISEAS Perspective*, no. 24/2014, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, 17 April 2014.

There is no doubt that there has been a rise in conservative Islam after the fall of Suharto. In fact, this trend already began during the second part of the Suharto regime when he could not rely solely on the military support. But when Suharto was in power, Islam was a part of his administration not only through the existence of the Religious Affairs Ministry, but more importantly, through the establishment of MUI in 1975.¹⁸ One of the functions of MUI was to issue *fatwa* (Islamic instruction) on religious issues. In the Suharto era, it had as yet not been highly politicized. However, after Suharto’s fall, especially after 2000, MUI gradually became more independent¹⁹ A Muslim scholar described this as a transformation from “*khadimul hukumah*” (servant of the government) to “*khadimul ummah*” (servant of the Muslim

¹⁸ <<http://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/what-is-a-fatwa-and-what-does-it-mean-for-indonesian-policy/>> (accessed 28 September 2017).

¹⁹ Ibid.

community).²⁰ It was during the time of President Yudhoyono (2004–14) that MUI gained further independence and grew in strength.

Yudhoyono's accommodation of radical Islam was seen in his tolerance of attacks on religious minorities. He appointed Suryadharma Ali who was close to Front Pembela Islam (FPI) and anti-Ahmadiyah as Minister of Religious Affairs, Lieut-Gen Sudi Silalahi who was pro-jihadist during the Muslim and Christian conflict as his State Secretary, and General Timur Prodopo who issued the statement to embrace FPI as his Police Chief.²¹

Both MUI and FPI have become even more active after SBY stepped down. FPI was one of the organizations used by the opposition to attack Jakarta governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama alias Ahok and was followed by MUI which issued the *fatwa* on "blasphemy against Islam" regarding the Ahok speech on the Pulau Seribu delivered in September 2016. It was reported that Yudhoyono was involved in influencing MUI in that direction as Yudhoyono's son also participated in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election. This has been denied by Yudhoyono.²² Radical Islamic organizations also gathered to support the *fatwa* issued by MUI.²³

The role of conservative Islam in defeating Ahok in the gubernatorial election is outstanding. The conservative and secular elite collaborated with the Islamists (namely FPI and HTI) in their opposition to Ahok, who

²⁰ Moch Nur Ichwan, "Toward a Puritanical Moderate Islam: The Majelis Ulama Indonesia and the Politics of Religious Orthodoxy", in *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the Conservative Turn*, edited by Martin van Bruinessen (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013), pp. 60–104.

²¹ Robin Bush, "Religious politics and minority rights", in *The Yudhoyono Presidency: Indonesia's decade of stability and stagnation*, edited by Edward Aspinall, Marus Mietzner, and Dirk Tomas (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2015), pp. 246–47.

²² <<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/02/02/yudhoyono-refutes-allegation-he-influenced-mui-to-support-sons-candidacy.html>> (accessed 28 September 2017).

²³ Although it was called a *fatwa*, it was actually "*sikap dan pendapat MUI*" (attitude and opinion of MUI). I owe this point to Dr Najib Burhani.

is both ethnic Chinese and Christian. Using “blasphemy to Al-Quran” as a strategy, the anti-Ahok group eventually succeeded in organizing two massive Islamic demonstrations in Jakarta (4 November and 2 December 2016). Their candidate, Anies Baswedan, an Indonesian of Arab descent, eventually won the 2017 election.²⁴

It should be noted that the two largest Islamic organizations — NU and Muhammadiyah — are considered to be moderate and they have to varying degrees accepted Pancasila as the national ideology. Nevertheless, some Islamic leaders within the two organizations do not share the view of the top leadership. Quite a few are still insisting on preaching “fundamental Islam”, and these clerics collaborated with Islamic conservatives to campaign against Ahok during the Jakarta gubernatorial election.²⁵

The twenty-first century witnesses the rise of conservative Islam outside and inside Indonesia. Some conservative organizations were established or became known soon after Suharto’s fall but the movement took off in the twenty-first century together with the radicalization of Islam outside Indonesia. There are quite a few conservative Islamic organizations in Indonesia, including FPI and HTI.²⁶ The former is a

²⁴ For a brief analysis of the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, see Charlotte Setijadi, “Ahok’s Downfall and the Rise of Islamist Populism in Indonesia”, *ISEAS Perspective*, no. 38/2017, Singapore, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 8 June 2017.

²⁵ <<http://jakartaglobe.id/opinion/commentary-jakarta-gubernatorial-election-results-in-victory-for-prejudice-over-pluralism/> (accessed 24 February 2018).

²⁶ For a good overview of Islamic movements in Indonesia, see Martin van Bruinessen, Chapters 1 and 2, in his edited book, *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the “Conservative Turn”*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013), pp. 1–20; 21–59. On HTI, see “Bubar Sebelum Makar” and other reports, *Tempo*, 21 May 2017, pp. 30–40. On a general overview of Islamic terrorism in Indonesia, see Ken Young, “Indonesian Terrorism: From Jihad to Dakwah?”, in *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, edited by Greg Fealy and Sally White (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008), pp. 211–25; Also Gwenael Njoto-Feillard, *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia in 2014*, Trends in Southeast Asia, no. 19/2015 (Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2015).

vigilante organization with several thousand members²⁷ while the latter is a kind of *dakwah* organization with 1 million members.²⁸ HTI openly proclaimed that they wanted to establish a Caliphate beyond the Middle East, including in Indonesia, and replace Pancasila and democracy with Sharia Law. Not surprisingly, Wiranto eventually announced that the government wanted to ban HTI.

On 10 July 2017, Jokowi issued the Presidential Decree on Mass Organizations (Perppu no. 2/2017, i.e. Perppu Ormas, also translated as Civil Society Law) and decided that any mass organization in Indonesia that is against the state ideology of Pancasila would not be allowed. The following day, the Home Affairs Minister declared that HTI was against Pancasila and banned it from carrying out any activities. Moderate and traditional Islamic Groups such as NU and Muhammadiyah supported the government but radical Islamic organizations criticized Perppu. Human Rights organizations also criticized it, fearing that the government would make use of the presidential decree to suppress political opponents. Opposition political elites who had vested interests were also critical of the decree.

The above presidential decree was debated in parliament and it was eventually put to a vote in late October 2017. 314 members voted for the decree while 131 members voted against, including MPs of the three opposition parties: Gerindra, PAN and PKS.²⁹ The decree was passed by parliament and the government is now able to ban radical organizations without being questioned by parliament. It is also worth noting that the

²⁷ Most recently, FPI has been “transformed” into an Islamist organization which also imbued with an Islamic ideology. See Alexander Arifianto, “Islamic Defenders Front: An Ideological Evolution?”, *RSIS Commentary*, no. 228 (4 December 2017).

²⁸ “Khilafah dan Solusinya”, *Tempo*, 21 May 2017, p. 38.

²⁹ <<http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2017/10/24/19081611/pemerintah-bersyukur-dpr-akhirnya-sahkan-perppu-ormas>> (accessed 8 February 2018); see also <<https://www.gosumut.com/berita/baca/2017/10/24/melalui-voting-akhirnya-dpr-sahkan-perppu-ormas-jadi-undangundang#sthash.a39lkKtf.dpbs>> (accessed 8 February 2018).

protest of radical Islamists outside the parliament was small, indicating that there was either a split among the Islamists, or that the opposition parties did not see any benefit to be gained from openly challenging the law.

NEW ISLAMIC INTERPRETATION OF PANCASILA BY ISLAMISTS

At this juncture, it is important to raise a new issue. Pancasila so far has been interpreted by both secular and conservative Muslims as religious pluralism, and is hence in contradiction to Islamism. However, there is a new attempt, which is often unnoticed, to redefine Pancasila in order to meet the Islamist interpretation of an ideology based on Islam. This was proposed by an organization that was only formed in 2005 as a result of a congress sponsored by MUI. This organization is called Forum Umat Islam (FUI), which is a loose organization; some even describe it as an Islamic movement that is in favour of the Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia (NKRI, Unitary State of Indonesia) and Pancasila.

While HTI is against the NKRI and Pancasila, and wants to establish a chapter of Islamic Caliphate in Indonesia, FUI argues that NKRI in fact is already an “Islamic state” as it has Islamic banking, accepts zakat and the principles of sharia. Although the practice of sharia has not been complete, it is only a matter of time that the practice would be improved. Therefore, FUI has promoted the concept of “NKRI bersyariah”, i.e., the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on sharia”.³⁰

FUI has also made efforts to show the public that the primary cause it has been upholding since the beginning of its history, that is, the implementation of *sharia* in Indonesia, is not [to be]

³⁰ Fahlesa Munabari, “Reconciling Sharia with ‘Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia’: The ideology and framing strategy and framing strategies of the Indonesian Forum of Islamic Society (FUI)”, *International Area Studies Review* (2017): 1-22, p. 8. Please note that there are various spellings for the term “Sharia”. In Indonesia, it is spelled as Syariah; in Malaysia, it is written as Sharia or Shariah.

against Pancasila as both the basic ideology and the supreme source of law of the Republic of Indonesia. The forum argues that the first article in Pancasila, which is “Belief in One God”, serves as the *raison d’être* of the implementation of *sharia* in Indonesia. According to FUI, the term “Belief in One God” in this regard refers exclusively to the one and only God which Muslims all over the world worship. Consequently, in the eyes of FUI, it is only natural that, based upon this article, any product of laws and regulations in the country shall be in accordance with God’s commands and injunctions — *sharia*.

Pancasila can be accepted after giving a new interpretation, i.e., belief in one supreme God, in fact, belief in Allah. It rejects pluralistic interpretation of the first principle of Pancasila.

While appearing to accept Pancasila, FUI actively organizes protests and supports political parties (such as PKS) and political candidates whom they think are beneficial to the development of FUI.

The main member of FUI is FPI. The leader of FPI, Habib Rizieq, was one of the people who supported NKRI, but continued to see Pancasila as a hindrance to proper implementation of *sharia*. When we examine closely the concept of “NKRI bersyariah” (United Indonesia with Sharia Law), we see that FUI and FPI have not been talking about “Pancasila Bersyariah” (Pancasila with Sharia Law).

Rizieq’s submitted an MA thesis on “The Impact of Pancasila in the application of Islamic Sharia in Indonesia” in 2012 to the Department of Islamic Studies at the University of Malaya, in which he discussed the development of Pancasila in Indonesia and the implementation of various Islamic rules in the country since independence.³¹

He argues that Pancasila had been used by Indonesian presidents (rulers) such as Sukarno and Suharto to promote their own belief system

³¹ See Al-Habib Muhamad Rezieq bin Husein Syihab, “Pengaruh Pancasila dalam penerapan Sharia Islam di Indonesia”, (disertasi untuk Sarjana Syariah), Jabatan Fiqh dan Usul Akademi Pengajian Islam, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 2012. I would like to thank Dr Ahmad Najib Burhani for providing me with this thesis.

— Sukarno with his “Marxism, Communism and Socialism”, while Suharto with his “*kejawen*” (Javanese mysticism). It was also used to maintain their power. Nevertheless, in the process, Islamic laws have been able to infiltrate into Indonesian society and politics. This was especially the case after the fall of Suharto. Rizieq maintains that in personal life, family and social life, sharia laws have in fact been introduced.

However, in national laws as such, sharia laws still have to be implemented. This process has encountered tremendous hindrance in Indonesia due to the secular system of the state as well as strong prejudice against Islamism. He in fact puts the blame on the practice of Pancasila.

In October 2017, the Pancasila issue was raised again by a radical Islamic group. Eggy Sudjana, an opposition activist and lawyer, mentioned again that Pancasila in fact was Islamism. He referred to the first principle of Pancasila, “Belief in One Almighty God”, which he argued was an Islamic Concept of Allah.³² However, many moderate Islamic groups disagreed. The chairman of NU, Imam Aziz, rejected Sudjana’s argument and noted that his interpretation of Pancasila was misleading. Pancasila was formulated not for one religion but for many other religions in Indonesia.³³

THE SURVEY ON THE RISE OF ISLAMISM

A recent national survey of Indonesia conducted by LSI between 20 and 30 May 2017³⁴ clearly shows that Indonesian society has been

³² “Hanya Islam yang sesuai Pancasila kata Eggy Sujana”, YouTube, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWBhzPC-zQA>> (accessed 25 January 2018), also <<http://redaksiindonesia.com/read/pancasila-itu-islam-upaya-melawan-eggi-sujana.html>> (Accessed 25 January 2018).

³³ <<https://tirto.id/ketua-pbnu-tafsir-eggi-sudjana-soal-pancasila-mengada-ada-cxTf>> (accessed 25 January 2018).

³⁴ The survey was commissioned by ISEAS and the results were published by ISEAS in stages. One of the pilot publications is by Diego Fossati, Hui Yew-Foong and Siwage Dharma Negara, *The Indonesia National Survey Projects: Economy, Society and Politics*, Trends in Southeast Asia, no. 10/2017 (Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2017).

“Islamized” in the following sense:³⁵ on the question that the Indonesian government should prioritize Islam over any other religion, 49 per cent of respondents expressed agreement. On the question that Indonesian regions should be allowed to implement sharia law at the local level, 41 per cent expressed agreement, but when asked whether the sharia law should be implemented throughout Indonesia, slightly fewer respondents (39 per cent) agreed. When asked whether there would be any benefit to implementing sharia law, 67.2 per cent of the respondents believed that “it would help strengthen moral value” rather than “it would help propagate Islam” (9.85 per cent).³⁶

Regarding the question that Islam should become Indonesia’s only official religion, 36 per cent of the respondents agreed. When asked whether it is very important to choose a Muslim leader in the election, 58 per cent of the respondents expressed agreement. On the question that blasphemy against Islam should be punished more severely, 63 per cent of the respondents expressed agreement.

If we can use the survey as an indicator of the strength of Islam in Indonesia, it appears that it has been significant in recent years. Those who wanted to prioritize Islam constituted half of the population and those who wanted to introduce sharia law throughout Indonesia was about 39 per cent, which is quite high. It also becomes clear that Islamic background is crucial in the national election (58 per cent).

Another survey done in Indonesia and released on 31 October 2017 shows that nearly 20 per cent of secondary and tertiary education students are in favour of establishing an Islamic Caliphate (including in Indonesia).³⁷

³⁵ Ibid., p. 24.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 21.

³⁷ The survey, conducted by a Jakarta-based organisation, polled over 4,200 Muslim students, mostly in top schools and universities on Java island. See *Straits Times*, 2 November 2017 <<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/1-in-5-indonesian-students-support-islamic-caliphate-survey>> (accessed 28 November 2017).

The findings in the above two surveys appear to be inconsistent with the results of previous elections which showed that the political parties that campaigned for political exclusivism and religious sectarianism gained lower votes. We need to carefully examine the surveys to see if the ground has significantly changed since the end of the last general election.

Perhaps the strength of Islam in politics may have been overestimated. The indicator used to show its recent strength during the gubernatorial election campaign against Ahok might have been misleading as during that demonstration, there was no purely Islamic issue but mainly political ones involving the entrenched interest of many political groups and personalities such as SBY and Prabowo. Once these political elements are removed, Islamism's own strength appears limited. The demonstration against the "Mass Organization Law" and the banning of Hizbut was small in number and ineffective. In addition, Islamism until now has not been able to influence the military establishment, although a few generals or retired generals may be keen in using Islam as its political capital.

SECULAR STATE, MUSLIM STATE OR ISLAMIC STATE?

A well-known American academic John L. Esposito in his 1984 book entitled *Islam and Politics* identified three types of political orientations in countries where there is a large number of Muslim population. The first type is the "secular state" in which there is a separation between state and religion. The only example that he gave was Turkey. The second type is "Islamic state" which adopts the sharia as the law of the land. Examples are only Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.³⁸ These two types of state are few in numbers.

³⁸ In fact, many more countries can also be classified as "Islamic states" as they claim to use sharia as the law of the land, such as Iran, Sudan, Brunei Darussalam, etc.

However, in his view, the largest in number is called “Muslim state”. He defines this kind of state as follows: “While indebted to Western models for their political, legal and social development, they incorporate certain Islamic constitutional provisions. For some, Islam is declared the state religion, and shariah is said to be a source of law”.³⁹ The examples given by Esposito are Tunisia, Algeria, Iran, Jordan and Malaysia. It is interesting to note that he named only one country, i.e., Malaysia, from Southeast Asia as a “Muslim state”. Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam are not mentioned. Using his definition, one can classify Brunei Darussalam as an “Islamic state” while Indonesia as a “secular state”, as there is a separation of state and religion, and Islam is not the state religion of Indonesia.

There is no discussion on whether these types of Muslim-populated countries develop from one type to another. Nevertheless, one can argue that a “secular state” can be transformed into a “Muslim state”, and a “Muslim state” can also develop into an “Islamic state”. It seems unlikely however that a “secular state” can transform into an “Islamic state” directly.

However, Dr Luthfi Assyaukanie, an Indonesian Islamic scholar, identifies three political orientations for Indonesian Muslims: Islamic Democratic State, Religious Democratic State, and Liberal Democratic State.⁴⁰ These models were developed based on the role of Islam in contemporary Indonesia. All these models are “democratic”; the only difference is whether the country is “Islamic”, “Religious” (should be “multi-religious” and not based on Islam), or Liberal.

The first model was based on the constitutional democracy period when an Islamic party, Masyumi, was in power. This “Islamic party model” was against theocracy (and hence against religious elite ruling

³⁹ J.L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984), p. 94.

⁴⁰ Luthfi Assyaukanie, *Islam and the Secular State in Indonesia* (Singapore Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009).

the country) and secularism. It advocated democracy and women being given equal rights. However, it failed to reconcile the conflict between God's sovereignty and people's sovereignty. And towards the end, it advocated illiberal democracy. The most important exponents of this model were Moh. Natsir and Sjariffuddin.

The second model was based on the New Order democracy when Suharto ruled Indonesia for over thirty years. This state encouraged religions and hence is known as multi-religious system. This model did not satisfy Islamic political party leaders as they had to rely on the state, and there was strong state intervention in Islamic religious activities. The model also rejects the Islamic state. Pancasila as the state ideology was accepted by major Islamic organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah. The most well-known exponents of this model were Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholis Madjid.

After the fall of Suharto, the third model arose which derives from the failure of the second model. It advocates a clear separation of religion and politics. This model is being advocated by young Muslims in various organizations such as Liberal Islam and Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial (LKIS, Institute of Islamic and Social Studies). Luthfi argues that in fact, this model has been used earlier, i.e., soon after independence, when political power was in the hands of the "secularists".

Models 2 and 3 appear to have acceptance of Pancasila or religious pluralism by Muslim organizations but Luthfi's views seem to be too optimistic.

When Luthfi presented his models, ISIS had not emerged and had not offered an Islamic Caliphate Model in Indonesia. The HTI was not yet developed in Indonesia either. However, the rise of militant and conservative Islam in Indonesia has made the Indonesian political scene more complex. Luthfi would have argued that this militant Islam/conservative Islam is not significant as models.

CONCLUSION

Pancasila, which is *mainly* interpreted as "cultural pluralism" or as a religiously neutral philosophy, has been the state ideology since Indonesia attained independence in 1945. However, the ideology has

been challenged by Islamists soon after independence. Nevertheless the violent opposition to Pancasila was limited in scale and area. During the Sukarno era, it was already under control. Pancasila as an ideology was effectively used by Suharto to govern Indonesia, political Islam was suppressed but Suharto began to co-opt Islamic political leaders during the last decade of his rule. In fact, religious Islam grew significantly during the Suharto era and gradually religious Islam was transformed into political Islam after Suharto's fall. Nevertheless, the electoral strength of political Islam in the form of "Islamic political parties" was still relatively low as it was unable to gain the majority of the votes during post-Suharto general elections.

However, Islam remains on the political scene.⁴¹ With globalization and the rise of radical Islam, Indonesia's politics has also been affected. Islam has become an important symbol in post-Suharto Indonesia, and political figures or parties cannot afford to have the reputation of being anti-Islam or of being unfriendly to Islam. Both Islamist and non-Islamist politicians in opposition have been using Islam as a weapon to undermine political rivals. Those non-Islamist opposition groups may not intend to establish an Islamic state, but their behaviour has undermined religious pluralism. The pluralists who are now in power have not surrendered. Using their power, and combining force with moderate Islamic organizations, they have tried to hinder the further development of certain Islamist organizations, by issuing various laws and regulations to promote Pancasila and religious tolerance.

⁴¹ For the most recent publication on the Islamist movements and parties, see John Esposito, Lily Zubaidah Rahim and Naser Ghobadzadeh, eds., *The Politics of Islamism: Diverging Visions and Trajectories* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

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