

# Religious Imagination in Nusanatara

*by* Kba 5 Bustamam Ahmad

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## The Religious Imagination in Literary Network and Muslim Contestation in Nusantara

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## THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION IN LITERARY NETWORK AND MUSLIM CONTESTATION IN NUSANTARA

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### Abstract

*This study aims to examine the history of religious imagination and contestation in Nusantara. It will trace the issue of transformation of Islamic thought as religious imagination from Middle East to the region by looking at the network of Muslim scholars, the development of institution, and the distribution of religious ideas in kitabs. I will utilize socio-historical approach as means to understanding the early development of Islamic intellectual. It is said that Aceh as the first place of Islamization process in Nusantara. It can be seen from the early historical facts such as Kingdoms of Peureulak, role of 'ulama of Pasai, and institution of dayah as place of reproduction of 'ulama in the region. It is argued that there have been many of anthropological and archaeological evidences that had influenced the early reproduction of Islamic thought in Southeast Asia. In addition, this study will also examine the current potrait of contestation among Muslim in political landscape in the country. It indicates that the identity of Muslim has to do with the roots of historical narrative in the Nusantara.*

**Keywords:** Religious Imagination; Transformation; Muslim Contestation; Nusantara



## A. Introduction

This article aims to examine the early history of religious intellectual and imagination among Muslim in Nusantara. Recently, there have been many studies on the history of Islamic thought in the region (Riddell, 2001) (Federspiel, 2007) (Martin, Woodward, & Atmaja, 1997) (Azra, 2006) (Saeed, 2006) (M. Abu-Rabi', 2006) (Lawson, 2005). I have examined on the topics of Islam in Southeast Asia by looking at the history of Islamization in Nusantara (Bustamam-Ahmad, 1999) (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2017b), Islamic studies in Southeast Asia (Bustamam-Ahmad & Jory, 2013) (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2011), Islamic movement in Southeast Asia (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2015), Islamic law in Southeast Asia (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2009), Islamic education in Southeast Asia (Bustamam-Ahmad & Jory, 2011). However, it is uneasy to trace the early of Islamic thought in Southeast Asia. Do we start from the history of the coming of Islam to the region. Many scholars have argued that Aceh was the first place of Islamization process in Nusantara (Azra, 2006: 1-10) (Othman, 2005, pp. 2-11) (S. F. Alatas, 1985). Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas maintains that "Islam emerged ... in the Malay Archipelago came about through propagation by authoritative missionaries, understandably slow at first the end of the 7th century and increasing in momentum by the 12th to the 16th centuries continuing to the present day" (Naquib al-Attas, 2011:xvii). It seems that the Islamization process took place for almost 10 centuries in Nusantara. If we start at 7th century, it will be discussed on the history of the Kingdom of Peureulak. Then, from 12th to 16th centuries, it is a must to study Islamic thought from Samudera Pasai (Alfian, 1999) (Ismail, 1993) (Muhammad, 2011)(Yakin, 2016) untill the Aceh Darussalam (Hadi, 2004) (Ito, 1984) (Latiff Khan, 2009).

Furthermore, Azyumardi Azra listed five phases of Islamic intellectual in Malay-Indonesian world (Azra, 2003a: 103-104). The first is the coming of Islam in the region to the end of the sixteenth century. There were two trends in this era: "Islam began to take root but scholarly activity was limited to partial adaptation of Islamic thought and concepts



to politics (*fiqh siyasah*), jurisprudence proper (*fiqh*), and Sufi ideas and practices" (T. Abdullah, 1994). In addition, "Islamic teaching in these fields were incorporated into *undang-undang* and *qanun* (law), and historical chronicles and annals of the local sultanates." The second is from seventeenth to eighteenth centuries, which is seen the golden of Islamic intellectual life in the region. It is said that during this era many of prominent 'ulama in the region produced a great number of wellknown *kitab*s in Arabic and Jawi, which influenced the reform and renewal of Muslim life in the archipelago.

The third era is between the second half of eighteenth century to the third quarter of nineteenth century. One of characteristic in this phase is European colonialism. The discourse in the period is about how to combat the European colonialism which falls under the concept of jihad. The fourth phase is from last quarter of the nineteenth century to the end of World War II. This was marked by the rise of Islamic modernism thought among Muslim as a response to religious reform. It is also found about the imported concept from European discourse to Islamic intellectual, such as nationalisme, nation-state, and democracy. The fifth period is from independence to contemporary era. Islamic scholarship in Malay-Indonesian world has achieved new trend as caused by political, social, cultural, and economic changes.

As the largest of Muslim population in the world, Indonesia has been seen as place of contestation for Islam as well as Muslim (Hefner, 2005) See also, (Hefner, 2000) (Hefner, 2018). As an Acehnese who had been living in Java for many years, it is uneasy to describe Muslim identity in the country. This is because the representation and classification of Islamic identity always relates to variant Muslim population in Javanese society (Geertz, 1960) (Geertz, 1983) (Picard & Madinier, 2011) (Beatty, 1999). Many studies, then, tend to claim that Muslim in Javanese society are represented by the two Islamic organisations i.e. Nadhlatul 'Ulama as traditionalist movement and Muhammadiyah as modernist movement (Laffan, 2005) (Anwar, 2005). It is said that "the term 'traditionalist' and modernist' only apply to *santri* Muslim. They denote primarily a doctrinal divide, but one that is one often



overlaid with socioeconomic, political and cultural content" (Fealy, Hooker, & White, 2006: 40). The Muslim who are living outside Javanese island have been seen as marginal group to some extent. There is a process of integration of Muslim from outside the island to be a Muslim in the Javanese island as part *becoming Indonesian Muslim* (Hidayat & Gaus A.F., 2006) (Laffan, 2011).

As an Acehnese who have witnessed the implementation of Islamic law in the province (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2009), I have seen the contestation between three variants of nationalism: Islam, Indonesia, and Aceh (Otto Syamsuddin, 2013) See also (Aspinnall, 2009) (Aspinnall, 2007). Some scholars have made series studies to understand Muslim in Aceh through Snouck Hurgronje perspective (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2017a) which is very Durkheimian oriented (Samuel, 2010) (Witkam, 2007a) (Witkam, 2007b). It is also part of study on the impact of conflict in Aceh for more than three decades (Davies, 2006) (Miller, 2009). The main problem for Acehnese is how to become 100 percent Muslim and Indonesian (Taylor, 2007) (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2016) (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2017c). Thus, there is a problem how to integrate the effort of Acehnese Muslim as part of image of Muslim in the country. The issue of separation and integration Acehnese relates to theological and nationalism problems in Indonesia (Feener, n.d.) (Feener, 2013b) (Feener, 2013a) (Salim, 2009).

It has been argued that the category of Muslim identity in Indonesia is under modernist and fundamentalist group. Usually, for fundamentalist front many scholars would go through the history of *Darul Islam* (DI) until the rising of Islamic radicalism in the country (Nieuwenhuije, 1950) (Barton, 2004) (Fealy & Hooker, 2006) (Mandavile et al., 2009). Recently, study on Islamic identity in Indonesia tends to focuss on Islamic movement which is seen as a threat to the country. Many of Islamic movements are seen as threat for national ideology, such as *Jemaah Islamiyyah*, JAT, JAK, HTI, and so forth. In addition, there have been many studies on the impact of radicalism for Islamic youth in Indonesia (Wahid Foundation, 2017) (Center fo Study of Religion and Culture, 2018). Thus, studying Muslim in Indonesia will always bring us to the issues of Islamic radicalism and contestation within Islamic groups: moderat and non-moderat groups (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2013a) (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2011).



## B. The Literary Network Of Muslim Intellectual

In Islamic studies, the firstness of Aceh in the subject of written works can be investigated at from some *kitab*s that were produced by local 'ulama. The first book on Comparative Religion is *kitab*'s Syeikh Nurdin Ar-Raniry entitled *Tibyan fi Ma'rifat al-Adyan*.(Steenbrink, 1990) The first book on Islamic jurisprudence is *Shirath al-Mustaqim* which is also authored by Syeikh Nurdin Ar-Raniry (Bruinessen, 1999) (Azra, 1999a). The first *kitab* on Islamic exegesis is *Turjuman Mustafid* a work by Syeikh 'Abdur Raul al-Singkili (Johns, 1998). It is not to mention the works of Syeikh Hamzah Fansuri, a great Sufism from Aceh, had influenced Islamic thought on mysticism in Southeast Asia (Al-Attas, 1970) (Hadi W.M., 2001) (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2013b) (Mohamad Nasir, 2012). There are also some written works by Acehnese 'ulama in 18th and 19th centuries, as compiled by Erawadi (Erawadi 2011). Many of *kitab*s from Acehnese 'ulama are still major references from Islamic learning in Southeast Asia, especially in Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) (Azra, 1999a) (Azra, 2003b). It is safe to say that that the reproduction of Islamic thought in Nusantara began with the history of Acehnese intellectual (Azra, 2004b).

Furthermore, the history of Islamic literatures in Aceh also can be found in many of *Jawi* manuscript and *hikayat* (Iskandar, 2001). The *kitab*s tell us about the history of the world, origin of rulers, administration of government, and development of Islamic sciences. Here, some *kitab*s can be listed, such as *Bustan al-Salatin* by Syeikh Nurdin Ar-Raniry (Harun, 2009), *Taj al-Salatin* by Jauhari Bukhari (Khalid, 1966), *Sulalat al-Salatin* (Lanang, 2009), and *Ma Bain al-Salatin* (M. A. Abdullah, 2017). The books give us the potrait of historical narrative on the situation and foundation of Islamic kingdoms in Nusantara. However, it is unlikely to find any higher Islamic institutions in Indonesia that offer the *kitab*s for their students as major references for subject of history of Islam in Nusantara. Many of manuscripts have yet studied by scholars, suchs as manuscript in Zawiyah Tanoh Abe, Aceh Besar (Fathurrahman, Toru, Kazuhiro, Yumi, & Muthalib, 2010). It seems that many of local heritages are needed more



attention not only individual to study them, but also by Islamic higher education in the region.

This is because many *kitab*s explain many of foundation of Islamic knowledge for students. When Hegel explains about the spirit (*geist*) as foundation of modern philosophy (Taylor, 1975) (Taylor, 1979), Hamzah Fansuri through his poems teaches about the Islamic spirit from mysticism in his works. Many believe that there are many Persian elements in Hamzah Fansuri's works (Mohamad Nasir, 2012) (Daneshgar, 2014). This is not to say the influence of Ibn 'Arabi's works in Nusantara (Kertanegara, 2011), as a great Islamic thinker from Andalusia (Corbin, 1969) (Chittik, 1998) (Chittik, 1989). Thus, the intellectual tradition in Nusantara is more likely a blended Islamic tradition from Middle East (Arab, Persian, and Egypt). I argue that the intellectual tradition in Nusantara is more likely as what we might find in history of Enlightenment in European intellectual in 16-17 Centuries. I suspect that Hamzah Fansuri is one of key person like role of Hegel in German intellectual. The common link between them is Hegel found the spirit from Christian teachings (Altizer, 1991)(Beiser, 1999), while Hamzah expanded his thought from Islamic sufism (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2013b). A.H. Johns writes: "Acheh by this time had become an integral part of the Islamic world, and its ruler a member of the exclusive international club of Muslim rulers who bore the title sultan" (Johns, 1998: 121)

The *kitab*s as many studied by scholars examine Islamic spirit toward Islamic thought. This is important as the foundation of Islamic thought has to be clear on the root system of cosmology of Muslim life. Many of *kitab*s share to us on the history of world and direction of life before us. This system of knowledge can be seen as mean to find any metaphysical ideas in establishing of perfect tool in Islamic thought. It can be argued that in Islamic thought has system triangle of dimensions: relation between God and Human, Human and Nature, and Human and Human. It is believed that this system was a clear explanation the history of Islamic conversion in Nusantara. Any Islam religious thoughts would



focus on the triangle dimensions. The first system is to expand the human understanding toward on real duty of human on the earth as *khalifah Allah*. All of this system transmitted to Southeast Asia through what Ricci's theory as literary networks. According to this theory:

Literary networks connected Muslims across boundaries of space and culture, and they helped introduce and sustain a complex web of prior texts and new interpretations that were crucial to the establishment of both local and global Islamic identities. Literary networks were comprised of shared texts, including stories, poems, genealogies, histories, and treatises on a broad range of topics, as well as the readers, listeners, authors, patrons, translators, and scribes who created, translated, supported, and transmitted them (Ronit, 2011: 1-2).

Islamic thought in Southeast Asia has been reproducing by people from one area to another area in the region which is called as Muslim zone. Muslim zone is the Malay-Indonesian maritime region. While mainland is Indochine which is influenced by Buddhism (Federspiel, 2007: 92). It can be said that reproduction of Islamic thought was more sea-based culture rather than mountaineous based. That is why the spread of ideas through literary networks very fast as the ideas were connected by maritime ways. Muslim had controlled the maritime not only for religious purposes but also for trading in the Straist of Malacca (Karim, 2009) (Pinto, 2011) (Hussin, 2007) (Alfian, 1999). As result, the impacts of literary networks were the reconstruction of religious education, re-printing of *kitab*s and phamplehts (Abushouk, 2007), and re-emergence of network between Nusantara 'ulama, and the position of Islam in Islamic kingdoms (Azra, 2000b).

One of the most unique religious education in Southeast Asia is *dayah/pesantren/pondok/surau*. I have argued that this institution as a center of Muslim civilization in the Malay world (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2010). Most of dayah are built in triangle of meeting place of Muslim: mosque, market, and river. Many of people from mainland were coming to dayah for studying of Islamic subject. Mosque is a place for Islamic ritual. But, it funtion is not only that, but also as a center of gravity for society, where any of social works were conducted in this area. Market is a place





for trading of local people. Meanwhile, river is a way from them to come the market. In this public area law and custom has been implemented according Islamic teaching. Islamic boarding school, then have become as a vehicle for the transforming of Islamic thought among Muslim society. This is what we call as literary networks among idengenous people in Southeast Asia (Madmarn, 2002) (Roff, 2004).

This process of learning has expanded into the network of alumni among the pesantren people. There have been many studies on the network of 'ulama in Nusantara (Abaza, 2003) (Abaza, 1999). One of best example of network is 'ulama of Haramayn which was conducted by Azyumardi Azra in his works : (Azra, 2000b) (Azra, 1999b) (Azra, 2004a). According to Azyumardi Azra: "The Indian Ocean region plays important role in networks of the 'ulama in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There is a number of 'ulama coming from the Indian Ocean-particularly, the Yemen, the Indian sub-continent and Southeast Asia who were involved in the international networks of the 'ulama" (Azra, 2006:178). There are two networks of 'ulama in Malay-Indonesian world through two '*ulamas*: Ahmad al-Qushashi and Ibrahim al-Kurani. The first is 'Abd Rauf al-Singkili of Aceh and Yusuf al-Maqassari. The second is Abu al-Tahir b. Ibrahim al-Kurani, Muhammad Hayya al-Sindiof India originally and Muhammad 'Abd al-Karim al-Sammani (Azra, 2006: 221). This networks has influenced the early of Islamic thought in Southeast Asia (Riddell, 2001) (Riddell, 2002).

The literary networks can be looked at the distribution of Islamic thought among religious thinkers. Many said that the problem of wujudiyah as one of best lesson learned on the reconstruction of Islamic thought. As mentioned above, the mysticism become an issue that attracted many debates among 'ulamas (Azra, 2012). The process on knowing self and God had tended to be a major issue in 17 and 18 Centuries. What I would like to emphasize is study on gnosiology gives a foundation for those who want to learn Islamic thought in that era (Noer, 1999) (Al-Attas, 1963). Thus, Sufism become a mediated knowledge among Muslim, especially for those who are practising *tarekat*. The

network of *salasilah* is a means of distribution of religious authority in Sufism. Many of works from Middle East were transformed to Muslim society in the Archipelago. The combination Shari'ah and Sufism has influenced the way of life of Muslim in Malay world (Azra, 2000a).

The situation is changed rapidly after the coming of European colonialism to Nusantara. The intellectual tradition is decreased steadily. Many of Muslim went to war against the Dutch. 'Ulama produced treatise on the spirit of *jihad*, such as *Hikayat Prang Sabi* in Aceh (Alfian, 2006). Fatwas were issued as religious legitimation for *jihad*. One of the great impact of colonialism to rise of concept on contestation between 'adat and Islamic law in Muslim society. This theory was proposed by Christian Snouck Hurgronje as part of colonialization process in Nusantara (Witkam, 2007a) (Witkam, 2007b) (Benda, 1958).

During this era, such social sciences and humanities from the West had been influenced Islamic scholarship. Thus, many of social theories were utilized in analysing of Muslim society in Southeast Asia (S. H. Alatas, 1963). At the same time, some prominent Islamic scholars from the region also finished their post-graduate studies in Western universities. It can be said that the tradition of orientalism become widespread in reconstructing of Islamic thought in Southeast Asia. It is not surprising when Osman Bakar arguing that "Malay-Indonesian Islam has shown not only the meaning and significance of diversity and pluralism within the unity of Islam but also the way in which American Islam can be of significant influence in the Muslim world" (Bakar, 2003: 22).

### **C. Cosmological Life of Muslim Society**

I would start to discuss the construction of Muslim identity in Indonesia by looking at aspect inter-play of cosmological life. I used this tool when I examined the issue of *Islam Nusantara* by emphasizing on metaphysical problems. Here I pay attention on the concept of spirit in religious life as found in Western scholarship. This will lead us to reconstruction of foundation of religious life in Nusantara. I did this, for example, when I made comparative studies between Hegel and Hamzah



Fansuri to understand the foundation of Islamic studies in Indonesia (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2013b). This also can be found in certain studies like Charles Taylor on Hegel (Taylor, 1975), Henry Corbin on Ibn 'Arabi (Corbin, 1969), and Syed Naquib al-Attas on Hamzah Fansuri (Al-Attas, 1970). Doing study on the spirit can enhance our understanding the ethic, religiosity, and knowledge within Muslim society.

I have classified that five types of political foundation by seeking spirit religious and cosmological life in Indonesia which influence the establishment of Muslim identity in Indonesia (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2017c: 215). The first is Hinduism-Buddhism-Javanese (HJB). Before the coming of Islam in Nusantara, the spirit of HJB had spread in the entire of the islands, especially in Sumatra and Java. Many scholars have studied on the impact of the HBJ in the society (Covarrubias, 1973) (Eiseman, 1990) (Geertz, 1980) (Lombard, 2008) (Marsden, 1811). It can be said that the HBJ was a template for any religions that arrived in Nusantara, especially for Islam and Christian. There are two words to describe of becoming Muslim in process of Islamization: *salin* (exchange) and *masuk* (embrace). The *salin* means someone who convert to Islam is just process of cultural exchange as we found in Javanese texts. Thus, the Islamization proces is still un-finished project among Javanese Muslim, as it is said that: "Many Javanists still feel Islam is essentially foreign, not part of their identity in the way Indic culture came to be" (Stange, 2010: 10). Meanwhile, the proces of *masuk* is to embrace or enter to Islamic religion. This converting proces can be found in history of Islamization in Sumatra (Naquib al-Attas, 2011).

The process of *salin* and *masuk* has to with second aspect i.e. the Islamo-Javanese cosmology. It means that in Indonesia there is a strong spirit that can not be changed by any Islamic. Islamo-Javanese then can be named as *religion of Java* or sometimes called as *Kejawen* (Pranoto, 2007) (Endraswara, 2006) (Simuh, 1999). It does relate to study of Geertz when he classified Muslim in Java as *santri*, *abangan*, and *priyayi* (Geertz, 1960) (Handler, 1991) Also, (Inglis, 2000). The impact of the categories, the identity of politic in Indonesia still understood as *politik aliran*, which is influenced by Islamo-Javanese (Ibrahim, Siddique, & Hussain, 1986). This tradition is a middle path

of negotiation between Islamic and Javanese identity which sometimes called as *Islam Nusantara* (Tim Penulis JNM, 2015) (Sahal & Aziz, 2016). But, the tension does not stop there, as some of creative tension still can be found in political landscape.

The tension has to do with the third aspect i.e. Islamo-Arabic. There have been many studies on the impact of Islamo-Arabic to Nusantara (Jacobsen, 2009) (Azra, 2000a) (Azra, 2006) (Abushouk, 2007) (Othman, 2005). I would argue that this factor then has great impact in process of *masuk*, not in *salin*. Here, Arab or Middle East is recognised as a good model of Islamic identity in Nusantara. Thus, *masuk Islam* is becoming Arab or at least adopting its tradition in daily life. It seems that this process can be found in Sumatra where there is an ethnic group i.e. Malay (T. Abdullah, 1994) (Riddell, 2001) (Reid, 2005). The history of Islamization in Sumatra, especially in Aceh, is narration of Islamic identity under becoming Muslim which is not quite similar to Islamization in Java. In Java there less Arabization than in Sumatra (Naquib al-Attas, 2011). However, I have argued that the influence of Persian also played important role not only Islamic knowledge, but also in political landscape (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2013c) (Daneshgar, 2014) (Atjeh, 1977) (Marcinkowski, 2012).

Moreover, there is no tension between number two and number fourth i.e. Christianity – Javanese. It can be said that history of Christianity in Indonesia is more likely a story of making buffer zone by Dutch during the colonial era (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 2008). Some says that the conflicts between Islam and Christianity were motivated not only by religion, but also by political and economic interests (Azra, 2006: 30). This is can be traced from the history of Muhammadiyah as a creative respond to the Christianization in Java (Shihab, 1998). Or, the experience of Christianization in North Sumatra as buffer zone between Aceh dan Minangkabau. Historically, the area of Aceh, North Sumatra, West Sumatra, and Riau were tailored by Islamic identity under the influence of Malay culture (Andaya, 2008) (Andaya, 2001). However, the Dutch put great effort to made any programs of Christianization in border between Aceh and North Sumatra (Simanjuntak, 2011). Untill today, some prominent Christians still see Muslim as real threat for them (Wanandi, 2014) Also, (Hefner, 2000).





The fifth is Islamo-Malay. This spirit can be found only in out side Java-Bali island, especially in Sumatra island. The Javanese Muslim are tended to be closed to Hinduism, Budhism, and Christian, while they unlikely to Arabic and Malay culture. This binary opposition can be said as foundation of conflicts in Indonesia. Conflict interest among these group, especially among elites, is increased. This last aspect is not seen a major issue in Indonesia, because Javanese-Muslim are controlled not only Islamic discourse at national level (Latif, 2005) (Rahardjo, 1993), but some strategic positions in the goverment and parliament (Effendy, 2003). Historically, the Islamo-Malay have been play important role since the coming of Islam to Nusantara (Azra, 1999b). However, during the process of national integration and participation, the Islamo-Malay has been as periphery and marginal entities. To some extent it seen as national threat for ideological state.

By examing five categories of concept and power, I would argue that contestation of political identities in Indonesia always relate to foundation of binary conflict within Muslim and also with non-Muslim. As response to the fact of binary conflict, we will may find some other concepts such as traditionalism, modernism, fundamentalism, radicalism, and conservatism (Muqoddas, 2011) (Zulkifli, Setiadi, Widiarsi, & Redaksi KPG, 2014) (Suyono, Kalim, & Redaksi KPG, 2015).

#### **D. Religious Contestation in Political Landscape**

In this section I will go further by looking at the figures from each of group above. Recently there is a creative tension between Muslim and the state after the PDIP took power in 2014. This party is nationalist party which are mostly controlled by non-Muslim. The chair of this party is Mrs. Megawati Soekarno Putri, eldest daughter of Indonesia's founding president, Soekarno. It can be said that Megawati is *Abangan* Muslim. Meanwhile, she proposed through her party Mr. Jokowi as president candidate for national election. Mr. Jokowi was mayor of Solo with F.X. Hadi Rudyatmo. In 2012 Mr. Prabowo Subianto elected him and Mr. Basuki Tjahaja Purnama as governor and vice-governor for Jakarta's local





election (*Pilkada*). After they won the local election in Jakarta the binary conflict between Muslim and non-Muslim in Indonesia occurred.

As some surveys mentioned that Jokowi was potential candidate for national election 2014, Muslim started to re-consider what if Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), non-Muslim and Chinese from Bangka Belitung, as governor for Jakarta. This critical issue is responded by Muslim leader as a threat for Muslim, as it is also chance for non-Muslim to be a leader in Jakarta. The result is Jokowi who is *abangan Muslim* as the president of Indonesian and Basuki who non-Muslim and Chinese as governor. The PDIP under Megawati leadership also had to control parliament for balancing power. One of Islamic movement, FPI (Islamic Defender Front) urged Muslim not to support non-Muslim as leader. This campaign became snow ball for sentiment of anti-Muslim in Indonesia. This Islamic front is under leadership of Habib Rizieq Shihab. He is an Arab descendant who live in Jakarta with Arab community.

It is interesting to note that many of nationalist elites support for Jokowi. It can be added that traditionalist group such as Nahdlatul 'Ulama also took the same position. PKB (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa*) gave their voices to Jokowi as well. This situation is tailored with the unconditional collaboration between Islamic traditionalist and nationalist under the influence of Soekarno's daughter. However, many provinces that fall under Arabic and Malayic character areas tended to support Prabowo for the president. The votes were mostly coming from provinces in Sumatra islands. This shows that there was a contestation between Javanese-Traditionalist-Christian Nationalist against Malay-Arabic-Islamic Nationalism.

This situation is similar when the Islamic front held a demonstration in Jakarta against Ahok during the *Pilkada*. To respond Ahok candidature, the Malay-Arabic-Islamic-Nationalism proposed Anies Baswedan as rival for Ahok. Anies Baswedan is Arab descendant in Jakarta and was former minister education and cultural affairs in Jokowi's era. There was a rumour in social media that if Ahok won for the election, he could be a vice-president for Jokowi next leadership in 2019 election. Muslims saw this is a political jihad to dismiss Ahok in the *Pilkada*. Even many surveys show



Ahok on the top of potential candidate, Muslims still run demonstration against non-Muslim leadership. When I was in Jakarta before the election, I heard that during *Jum'at* prayer, *khatibs* spread the message against non-Muslim leadership. A friend of mine told me that the presence of Ahok in Jakarta's election give serious impact for Muslim community in Jakarta, in the sense that "if you don't support Muslim, means you agree non-Muslim to be a leader".

This situation reminds us to parliament debate during the president election in 1999, when Megawati as president candidate from PDIP. The Islamic group held a *Poros Tengah* (Middle Axis) under the leadership of Amien Rais, former head of Muhammadiyah. The MUI issued a recommendation not to support women as leader in the country. This is not because Megawati's personality, but also because of her supporters from non-Muslim fronts. Amien Rais then asked Abdurrahman Wahid as candidate from *Poros Tengah*. Finally, Abdurrahman Wahid won as the president of Indonesia while Megawati as vice-president. However, Wahid only ran for his presidential for only two year, because the parliament under *Poros Tengah* took him from his power as president. Then, Megawati became a president until 2004.

In 1999 the conflict was inside the parliament. Meanwhile, in last three years, the conflict had been outside the parliament. Muslim movement run the protest against non-Muslim as leader. At the same time, the issue of communist also had been a sensitive issue for Jokowi's leadership, as he also has a very good relationship with Chinese government. He has a full support from PDI-P and a retired general Luhut Binsar Panjaitan, a former Kopassus and Indonesian ambassador for Singapore under President Abdurrahman Wahid (Connelly, 2014). This situation leads to rising of anti-government among Islamic hardline movement. To respond this issue, the government brings this crisis under the threat of national ideology. Whoever any movements that does not support Pancasila as national ideology would be banned, as it happened to Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia. However, the pressure to ban FPI is not quite successfully, as it is believed that the movement was built under power of military shadow. The chair of this movement Rizieq Shihab

was suspected by sexual scandal with a woman. He then took a trip to Saudi Arabia as exiled strategy. It is interesting to note that Saudi Arabia offered Riziq Shihab for unlimited stay in that country.

While Shihab in Saudi Arabia, there is a new Malay religious preacher from Pekanbaru, Abdus Somad. He is a lecturer at State Islamic University of Syarif Qasim in Pekanbaru. He is not well known in Indonesia, until all of his videos were uploaded on Youtube. Soon, many invitations coming from every corner of the country and also from neighbor country. He was graduated from al-Azhar University. Currently some of Azharite alumni are also attracted Muslim attention, including Abdus Somad, Tuan Guru Bajang Muhammad Zainul Majdi from Lombok who is governor of Nusa Tenggara Barat for 2 periods, and Habiburrahman El Shirazi a novelist from Semarang who wrote a Islamic novel which attract million readers.

The rising of Azharite alumni is not predicted at the beginning. However, Azharite Alumni played important role during Old and New Order era in Indonesia (Abaza, 2003) (Abaza, 1999). In last decade of Azharite alumni are well organised under the *Ikatan Keluarga Alumni Timur Tengah* (IKAT). It is hard to find any resources on study of Azharite alumni in current era, as some scholars tend to focus on Islamic hardline movement, such as FPI, HTI, ISIS, etc. It can be argued that Muslim political power is not from the parliament, but from periphery (Dijk, 2016). Mosque becomes a gravity of Muslim brotherhood. Many of Islamic preachers are giving their sermon in mosque, including Abdus Somad. Then, they utilize social media as a tool for disseminating of religious ideas.

To response the rising of Muslim preacher and mosque as gravity center for Muslim, the government took the power by selecting the head of State Intelligence Agency as the head of National Body of Mosque (*Pengurus Dewan Masjid*). The government also approach Abdus Somad through several meeting with elites in Jakarta, such vice-president Jusuf Kalla, head of BIN and also from national police (Polri). This symbolic meeting can be seen as an effort the state to control the rising of new Muslim political power from outside parliament. The state banned Islamic



movement that does support for national ideology and control to some prominent Muslim leader outside of the parliament.

However, the tension still there, especially for choosing who will run for the next president election (*Pilpres*). I was told that the government still want by diplomacy means to approach Habib Rizieq to come back to Jakarta. But, he does not want to return as police has been waiting for arresting him. What the main concern of his presence is his influence to Muslim group as he did during local election in Jakarta, in which Basuki did not win the election by the fact that he is non-Muslim and "the case of al-Maidah." Rizieq could unite the sentiment of non-Muslim and communist issue for the next election in 2019. Currently there is a rumour that Muslim leader will propose Tuan Guru Bajang as candidate for next election. It is also said that Anies Baswedan can be a good candidate as he won in last election in Jakarta.

I would like to highlight an issue that play critical role in understanding Muslim identity in contemporary era. The first is "the Chinese is coming." The issue of Chinese in Indonesia is unlikely to be linked with religious identity. However, in last five years, the issue has become crucial, especially when Chinese government support the current Indonesian government (Suhandinata, 2012) (Suryadinata, 2007). I would not bring this issue in political and economical affairs, but it has to do with socio-religious matters. The rising of Chinese after the *Reformasi* has been on problem of cultural affairs. But, there has been an issue among ordinary society that Chinese is a communist country and has an ambition to control natural resources in Indonesia, as it happened in many Countries (Jacques, 2012) (Cardenal & Araujo, 2013) (Haytop, 2014) (Easton, 2013). The situation becomes more hot issue when some of Chinese workers in Indonesia which sometime seen as national threat in term of security affairs.

The issue of China has to do with problem of communist in Indonesia. Many Indonesian Muslim see this can be a threat after the China control "everything" in the country. Ariel Heryanto says that "Indonesia's New Order authoritarianism would not have existed nor survived so well without the magical power of the discursive phantom of the 'Communist threat' (Heryanto 1999: 151). I suspect that Muslim still see 'Communist threat' is blended when the



Chinese interests are coming to Indonesia. Thus, they may go further by establishing Islamic-nationalism to prevent the rising of communist power in Indonesia. In last 3 years many of Communist symbols can be seen in some of the provinces in Indonesia. This brings the stigma that the current government has a double standard toward between "Communist threat" and "Islamism threat".

#### **E. Conclusion**

This study has examined the early history of Islamic thought in Southeast Asia. The beginning of Islamic thought in the region can be investigated through the process of Islamization in Aceh until the arrival of European colonialism. This province can be argued as a center of Islamic intellectual tradition in Nusantara. Many of great 'ulamas from the Middle East and South Asia were coming to Aceh for establishing of Islamic thought. There were many elements of Islamic thought that had blended the Islamic intellectual in Aceh. As we have seen above that there are five phases of Islamic thought in Southeast Asia. Each of phase has own characteristic in terms of reproduction of Islamic knowledge among Islamic scholars in Malay-Indonesian world. This situation has given the dynamic of Islamic intellectuality through the literary networks. Muslim scholars have challenged the influence of social sciences from European thought. I would give this issue to other writer to seek how the impact of social sciences and humanities to reproduction of Islamic thought in Southeast Asia.

Finally, this article shows that there are many dynamics of Muslim contestation in Indonesia. It indicates that the identity of Muslim has to do with the roots of historical narrative in the Nusantara. I would argue that there are three factors that important role in this crucial issue. First, there are still a process of Islamization on politics in Indonesia. The Muslims have tried to adjust how to locate Islam in national identity along with another spirit of identities in Indonesia. Second, if we see the current position of Muslim in Indonesia, they still see communist and non-Muslim as a national threat. In this article we have discussed the case of Ahok in Jakarta. Third, I would say that there is a steady influence of Azharite alumni in national political landscape. I am sure that in the future this new emerging Muslim group will play crucial role in socio-political arena.





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