



**ISLAMIC STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS' STRATEGY
OF COMMUNICATING AND MAINTAINING ISLAMIST
IDEOLOGY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN EAST
KALIMANTAN**

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Abstract

This paper aims to explain the role of KAMMI (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia/ the Indonesian Muslim University Students Action Union) in Universities in East Kalimantan in shaping the political dynamics among students in university settings. Utilizing a qualitative approach to analyze data collected through interviews with members of KAMMI in Samarinda, findings reveal that KAMMI's main strategy to maintain its' Islamist ideology consists of three distinctive steps: 1) introducing KAMMI to potential members in high schools via vacation trip program (rihlah), 2) recruiting members during admission time via personal approaches, and 3) maintaining solidarity by utilizing small circle study groups. In the first two steps, KAMMI would introduce potential new members with personal holiness, which aims to guard the students' morality. In the third phase, members would be familiarized with the concept of "Muslim Negarawan," in which they are asked to view their campus as a political arena of competition for power.

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Abstrak

Kata kunci:

islamisme; KAMMI;
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Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan peran KAMMI (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia) dalam membentuk dinamika politik di kalangan mahasiswa di Kalimantan Timur. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif untuk menganalisis data yang dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan sejumlah anggota KAMMI di Samarinda, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi utama KAMMI dalam mengomunikasikan ideologi islamis mencakup tiga langkah utama: 1) memperkenalkan KAMMI kepada calon mahasiswa di Sekolah Menengah Atas melalui program karyawisata (*rihlah*), 2) merekrut anggota selama masa penerimaan mahasiswa melalui pendekatan personal, dan 3) memperkuat solidaritas di kalangan anggota melalui penerapan kelompok belajar kecil yang eksklusif. Pada dua langkah pertama, KAMMI memperkenalkan gagasan tentang pentingnya kesalehan pribadi untuk menjaga akhlak. Pada langkah ketiga, para anggota akan diperkenalkan dengan gagasan “Muslim Negarawan” di mana pada tahap ini mereka akan diminta untuk melihat kampus sebagai arena politik untuk memperebutkan kekuasaan.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamism refers to the politicization of Islam as religion into an ideology of power relation. As a religion, Islam is considered a frame of reference about relating to God and performing rituals regarding such ties. At some points, Islam as a religion also concerns how to build a harmonious social interaction among people in society. Islamism, however, emerged from Islam. Even though principal differences exist between them, they share several similarities (Tibi, 2010).

Revealed during a particular period in a specific place, Islam consists of teachings that perfectly correspond to such particularity. However, the rapid expansion of Islam soon after the Prophet Muhammad passed away created tensions about the ideal power configuration among Muslims and non-Muslims. Muslims after the Prophet then had to creatively interpret the Qur'an to give appropriate responses to the social realities of their time. This dynamic can still be found among Muslims in today's modern world (Rahman & Moosa, 2000).

Separation of Islam and politics is not applicable during the Prophet's lifetime, as the Prophet was the leader of the religion and the ruler of the state. Thus, the Prophet's political actions were recognized as a matter of religious importance. Without any potential contradiction between the Prophet's power as head of state and religion, Islam's early years demonstrate an attempt to foster organic solidarity among Muslims.

Interestingly, the Prophet led the newly formed Islamic community in the city of Medina in a manner that was conscious of the city's pluralism. The Prophet Muhammad made an agreement uniting all of Medina's inhabitants into a single larger community comprised of Muslims, Jews, and Christians (Jani, Harun, Mansor, & Zen, 2015). This type of agreement resembles what we would today call a state constitution, or more precisely, a secular state constitution.

Soon after the time of the Prophet Muhammad's leadership, tensions arose regarding authority in the newly born Islamic community. Therefore, the early caliphs in the Islamic community faced challenges from those who disregard the authority of the caliph to rule. However, the Prophet was ahead of the state while at the same time the head of the religion, literal and clear teachings on political authority were not set clear. The newly born Islamic community was left to decide through a simple mechanism to choose leaders. This, in many ways, has led to the early division of Islamic society in which two sects emerged; the Sunni and Shiite (Louër, 2020).

However, rapid territorial expansions made possible by the spirit of jihad in its militaristic nuance have led Muslims of the time not to overthink authority since wars of expansion were preoccupying them. At that time, Muslims successfully built a giant locality of Islamdom. The exercise of power through culture was made possible by promoting “... the building of expansive patterns of connectedness” (Salvatore, 2010). In this context, the course of power accumulation in the Muslim world was not enhanced by occupying religion to replace it by creating the state but by increasing the interconnectedness between the two.

The turn of the twentieth century, however, turned the table. Territorial expansions started in the early day of the Islamic caliphate in the Arabian Peninsula were eventually halted by the rapid modernization in Western Europe, especially in terms of military capacity. The conquerors became conquered. The Muslims lost their conquered foreign land one by one until the Muslim lands became objects of conquest by the newly modernized European troops. The caliphate’s fall in the early decades of the twentieth century finally sealed the fate of the once superior Muslims (Barkey, 2014).

Unable to turn back the table militarily, Muslims, especially in the former center of power, sought other ways of defending Islam’s dignity and the Umma, the Muslim community. During this period of history, the seeds of Islamism in its modern sense emerged.

Both capitalism and socialism are social products that emerged as a distinct conception of what an ideal society in the modern world should look like. When Islamic teachings of the perfect community met those ideologies, a host of sub-ideologies about other synthetic forms of ideology resulting from the melting off of such thinking about ideal society emerged. In this context, Islamism started to secure a footing ground for its future expansions. Since all of these are relatively new phenomena compared to Islam as a religion per se, the ideology of Islamism could

safely be categorized as a modern phenomenon (Pfadenhauer & Berger, 2013).

Islamism, or political Islam, relates closely to the change in demographic composition in many Muslim countries. A large cohort of young population that, despite their relatively high education, find themselves on a margin of society. Such feeling of being marginalized produces social frustrations articulated around social divisions of class generation. It mainly happened after the failed experiment of global neoliberalism of the 1970s and 1980s that led to economic crises (Pfadenhauer & Berger, 2013).

Many Muslim countries have found out that the social experimentations in the 1970s to mix Islam with socialism ended with significant failure. However, the polarization of the world into two poles, the capitalists and the socialist's blocs, really brought significant pressure for Muslims around the globe to rethink and refine their perception about ideal society in which every person has equal opportunity to fulfill their life, including fulfilling religious and spiritual expectations (Bayat, 2013; Roy, 1998)

Regarding this, Bayat (2013), For example, argues that during the 1980s and 1990s, when the majority of such social experiments failed, a sizable proportion of Muslims in the Muslim world began to doubt their long-held assumptions about Islam's capacity as a religious doctrine and Muslims as social actors to bring about general social welfare. The majority of debates throughout this decade focused on the uncertainty between Islamic ideas about social movements as advocated by most Muslim leaders in Muslim nations and those leaders' capacity to implement such doctrines.

Since Islamism relates closely to a younger cohort of Muslim populations who have more education than their older generations, one of the most effective ways to seed and spread Islamism were institutions

of higher learning. In 1997, Bayat argued that the 1950s witnessed the beginning of the mass migration of low-income families into urban centers all around the Middle East and the Third World. The impact of the migration had not come into being until the early days of the 1980s and 1990s when the second generation of those migrants, which are poor and disenfranchised, step in to challenge the current power relationship that exists in the structure of their society (Bayat, 1997).

In Indonesia, a similar scenario existed too. Following the end of the struggle for independence from the Dutch and Japan's colonial ruler, the new republic witnessed widespread poverty among people, especially among the landless peasants and peasants with only a tiny share of lands of whom traditional Muslims comprised a significant proportion. This situation provided a milieu that heated public discussions regarding how best to address social problems in the newly born nation. Consequently, religious and secular ideas have had much to offer (Zarkasyi, 2008).

Assuming Indonesia as a purely secular country that adheres to liberal social values is somehow misleading because it emphasizes the importance of religion for the people (Mujiburrahman, 1999). However, the Indonesian state ideology, the Pancasila or the five principles, prioritizes religion as essential for its development. However, demand for the implementation of sharia, lose the term might be interpreted, in Indonesia as part of the constitution has been around since the very beginning of the country's modern history through today such demands seem to gain more support (Diprose, McRae, & Hadiz, 2019; Hadiz, 2017).

During the colonial era, Islam was seen as a threat to the Dutch government because it was perceived as a potential power that could cause political instability. Any attempt to place Islam as a potential political force thus would be met with severe responses. This is mostly because Islam was perceived to bring about the idea of jihad, the holy war, against the non-Muslim invaders of the Dutch.

During colonial times, the Dutch policy of non-interference exemplifies how Muslims in the Netherlands were permitted to practice Islam as long as those teachings did not contradict the ruler's political perspective. A similar policy was also followed during President Sukarno's tenure when various rebellions calling for the implementation of sharia broke out in the country. Islam was regarded in much the same way as it was during the colonial era, according to the early post-colonial history of Indonesia under President Sukarno's government (Fauzia, 2013).

The rise of Suharto into national politics after he successfully dethrones President Sukarno by taking full advantage of the failed attempted coup by the Indonesian communist party in 1965 marked a shift in the dynamic interrelation between the state and Islam in Indonesia. About the position of Islam in the country, Seo argued that throughout most of history, Islam in the country had been placed in an ambiguous situation. In one place, it is deemed necessary for the country's overall development. On the other hand, it is also seen as a threat to the plural nature of the people of the country (Seo, 2012).

A closer look into the history of political configuration in Indonesia reveals that since its inception as a modern state, the government has been promoting cultural Islam and rejecting political Islam. Thus, the overall picture of Indonesia reveals that the country has been pleased to position itself as a paradigm for a peaceful coexistence of Islam and democracy. As the world's fourth most democratic country and home to the world's most significant Muslim population, Indonesia is a classic example of how Islam and democracy coexist (Bourchier, 2019).

Proponents of the Islamic movement in Indonesia during the early years of its inception were modernist Muslims with relatively high levels of educational attainment. For this group, Islam should not be alienated for the sake of anything, and secularization would only bring calamity for the people in general, not only for Muslims. This argument was also

accompanied by other statements claiming for the right of the Muslims in Indonesia to rule according to sharia or Islamic Law since Muslims considered themselves as having the largest share of the republic.

The demand from Muslim groups in Indonesia during its early years was to make it mandatory for Muslims in Indonesia to adhere to sharia or Islamic law. This demand was effectively articulated in seven additional words to the Pancasila, the state official ideology. Pancasila, for Indonesian, is considered a primary source of values for life, and it contains five principles that all Indonesian must revolve around (Hefner, 2000).

Among those five points of Pancasila is the principle of the oneness of God. During the drafting process of the Indonesian constitution or the UUD (*Undang-Undang Dasar*), there were additional seven words after the phrase of the first principle, “the oneness of God.” Those additional words read “and the obligations for Muslims to practice sharia.” However, they were removed mysteriously from the constitution due to fear of losing the eastern part of the archipelago, where most of the population was Christians.

During President Sukarno’s term in office, the demand for Sharia (Islamic law) to Indonesian Muslims escalated into armed conflicts. Proponents of the implementation of sharia in the country felt that it was strange for a country with the largest Muslim population not to implement the teachings of their religion. It was, therefore, the right of the Muslims whether or not to implement sharia in the country.

In the first election held in the middle of the 1950s, four parties had competed fiercely for seats in the parliament. This first election provides decisive evidence for Indonesians that the word Muslims was never free from political interests. Despite the demographic composition of Indonesia, in which almost 90 percent of its population are Muslims, Islam based party could only secure second and third position where the communist party secured fourth place.

During Sukarno's term in office, poor performance by Islamic parties was exacerbated by Sukarno's policies that sought to limit their support bases even further. Fully aware that Indonesian people wouldn't want socialism or capitalism, Sukarno coined the term "Marhaenism" as a modified version of socialism perceived to fit the situation of Indonesian people (Sirry, 2007).

Like the two Islamic parties and the communist party, Sukarno's nationalist party also had an under-bow organization active in the higher education setting to attract the educated segment of the population to join his cause. This student wing, which later became GMNI (*Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia*/National Indonesian Student Movement), managed to attract students of socialist leanings. The GMNI soon caught up in the middle of fierce rivalries with other parties' student bodies, especially those with close relation to the Islamist party of Masyumi (*Partai Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia*).

The rise of Suharto onto power did not bring opportunity for Islamic parties to grow. Instead, Suharto led Indonesia into a long period of dictatorship where dissenting voices would be addressed with severe punishments. During this phase of Indonesian history, only cultural Islam could grow. Muslims who adhere to a more political Islam will be scrutinized and kept under the radar. Since even the slightest political movement could face deadly consequences, many student movements based on university settings have no choice but to stay silent or face the wrath of the smiling general (Heiduk, 2012; Ufen, 2008).

In the 1980s, loosening ties with the military that once fully supported him, President Suharto started to embrace a more Islamic way of living to attract widespread support from average traditional and modernist Muslims. He set up the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI/ *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia*) and even went to Mecca to perform Hajj (religious pilgrim) (Barton, 2010).

After the collapse of Suharto's new order regime, many dissenting voices started to echo in the air. The opening of political opportunities provided a foundation for the future democratization project of the country. The student movement in Indonesia during this particular period of history was vibrant. The overall atmosphere regarding the future of democracy in the country was at its best as Webber called the country might mark the rise of "a new Muslim democratic star in the far east" (Abdulbaki, 2008; Webber, 2006).

Especially for students with Islamist leanings, the Islamist party was like their second home since it provides room for reflections and testing ideas in a broader public setting. A young activist from Islamist parties practically occupied student bodies in universities all around Indonesia. The case of PKS (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*/ Prosperous Justice Party) and KAMMI (*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia*/ the Indonesian Muslim University Students Action Union) is worth noting when talking about the ideal relationship amongst students and between students and academic staff.

In conclusion, we can safely assume that the perceived resurgence of the Islamist movement in contemporary Indonesia has more to do with the local repertoire of reasoning. Instead of relying on the scripture, the rise of the Islamist movement in the post-reform era of Indonesia has been quite successful in implementing several sharia bylaws by referring such demands to local *adat* (customs or tradition), rituals, and memory of a more religious public space (Alimi, 2014). The inferior performance of Islamist parties in the election held in 2004 suggests that Indonesian people did not even find it serious for an Islamist party to enter a broader political arena of contestation.

METHODS

This exploratory research tries to explain how KAMMI, as a student organization in East Kalimantan, communicates and maintains Islamist ideology in universities in this province. This objective is achieved by utilizing qualitative analysis techniques of data collected through interviews with members of student bodies in universities in East Kalimantan.

Samarinda was chosen as a site for research because it is the capital city of East Kalimantan Province, where most public and private universities are located. This setting allows the researcher to make the case about the spread of Islamist ideology among university students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Student Organizations In East Kalimantan

In Indonesia, university students had managed to capture the spotlight of the country's politics when in 1998, together with many of the disenfranchised population, successfully toppled the authoritarian regime of President Suharto. Since then, many of the activists in the 1998 movement have now become officials in governments and play significant roles in shaping the overall shape of the Indonesian politics. Aspinall argues that the origin of Indonesia student movement in the 90s can be traced back to similar movements in Indonesia during the colonial period (Weiss & Aspinall, 2012).

Student bodies in universities in Indonesia have always wanted to be independent. Thus, they must not be regulated too tightly by the government. However, the government has always wanted to limit the potential of such bodies to have too much political power. This has effectively placed the university student bodies in a diametral position with the government. However, after successfully toppling the authoritarian government of Suharto in 1998, the idea that student bodies should

remain in a diametral position to the government still exists (Ubaedillah, 2018).

Student organizations can be categorized into two domains according to their source of funding, the intra-campus organization and the extra-campus organizations. Intra-campus organizations are student bodies that receive funding from the college budget, while extra campus organizations collect financing from sources other than the government. The relation between the two is dynamic since the same students run both types of student organizations. It means that if a student is a member of an intra-campus organization, they may also be a member of an extra campus organization. Even though both types of student organization operate within the same settings, strict differentiation regarding dual membership is practically nonexistent (Somawinata, 2017).

Intra-campus organizations are part of the university structure to serve students' extracurricular activity needs. It also provides an opportunity for students to exercise their organizational skills. Located within the university's internal network, intra-campus student organizations often influence the overall policy of the respected university where it operates. Most importantly, intra-campus organizations have the opportunity to design programs of their own reasonably independently.

In general, intra-campus student organizations can be divided into two categories, namely the UKM (*Unit Kegiatan Mahasiswa* – Student Activity Unit) and BKM (*Badan Kegiatan Mahasiswa* – Student Council). UKM usually refers to student bodies whose primary purpose is to provide extracurricular activities in specific areas of interest such as sport, religion, and others. BKM, on the other hand, refers to student bodies whose main purpose is to represent students at the university level.

Extra campus student organizations, to some extent, are the extension of many social movements in society. Those student organizations bring with them distinct ideologies. Competitions among

those ideologies are inevitable since each ideology interprets an ideal world where everybody can live happily. However, within the university's settings, competition among students from different organizational and ideological backgrounds occurs within the boundary of democratic mechanisms. Different ideological orientations among student bodies, both intra and extra campuses, translate into competition in practical politics within their universities (Ramdani, Negara, & Taufika, 2018).

Extra campus student organizations may adhere to religious values as stated in their names and organizations' goals and adhere to secular ideology. However, almost all of them agree on the finality of democratic mechanisms of power distribution. Even though they set many ambiguous criteria by which democratic mechanism is constantly evaluated and even challenged (Arifianto, 2019), in this case, only Gema Pembebasan came from the newly dissolved and banned Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI - now illegal) that secretly promotes the ideology of the Caliphate (Lufaei, 2018).

More specifically, extra campus student organizations in campuses across East Kalimantan can be divided into those that place Islamic values and norms as the basis of their movement and those that promote secular ideology as their basis. In the first camp, there are at least three significant organizations, namely PMII (*Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia/ Indonesian Muslim Student Movement*), HMI (*Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam/ Association of Muslim Students*), and KAMMI (the Indonesian Muslim University Students Action Union).

There are several extra-campus student organizations with more secular leanings in the other camp, such as LMND (*Liga Mahasiswa Nasional untuk Demokrasi/ National Student League for Democracy*) and GMNI (*Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia/ Indonesia National Student Movement*). These two extra campus student organizations are known for their ideology of struggling against capitalism and neo-capitalism. They

have been an active force in shaping the fabric of Indonesian politics since at least 1998 and 1953, respectively.

HMI (Association of Muslim Students) is the oldest among those many extra campus student organizations. Established in Yogyakarta in 1947, two years after Indonesia announced its independence, HMI has been one of the most influential student organizations in the country. The second-largest extra campus student organization is PMII (Indonesian Muslim Student Movement). PMII was established on April 17th, 1960. PMII was initially established to be an organization for University Students who affiliated structurally or culturally to the Nahdhatul Ulama (NU), the largest mass organization in the world (Ensiklopedia NU, 2016).

PMII is relatively more successful in the State Islamic University system than in universities with no Islamic leanings. However, as the PTKIN (*Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri/* State Islamic Religious College), an Indonesian higher education system that integrates general science and Islamic studies, more and more students with no prior knowledge of Islam enroll in the PTKIN system, enriching the dynamics inside PTKIN. This appears to be the future of Indonesia's PTKIN system, and thus anticipating changes in the way religiosity is exercised among university students is fairly normal (Afrianty, 2012).

Besides PMII and HMI, KAMMI (the Indonesian Muslim University Students Action Union) is Indonesia's most recent extra campus student organization. Established on March 29th, 1998, KAMMI establishment was a response from many Indonesian Muslim students towards the future of Islam in Indonesia, especially towards the end of Islamic propagation (*da'wah*) in the country (Fitrianita & Ambarsari, 2018).

Historically, KAMMI was an extension of *Lembaga Dakwah Kampus* (LDK - Campus Preaching Organization) in Indonesia. It was established after fifty-nine LDKs in Malang, East Java, in 1998. Thus, in general, KAMMI members would proudly call themselves *aktivis dakwah* (activists of *da'wah*).

Despite being the most recent extra campus student organization with Islamic leanings in Indonesia, KAMMI is relatively successful in competing with PMII and HMI in recruiting members in universities across the country. KAMMI is known for its reputation for winning intra-campus student bodies. By putting its personnel in many intra-campus student organizations, KAMMI could influence campus policies, thus supporting the long-term vision of KAMMI to Islamise Indonesia from campuses.

Generally, KAMMI maintains a close relationship with a political party named PKS (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* – Prosperous Justice Party) since they share the same ideology as the Muslim Brotherhood of Hasan al-Banna. Thus, most KAMMI members' alumni who later enter politics are more likely to join PKS than any other political party. It is also safe to assume that most of the KAMMI members in universities share the same political platform as their PKS counterparts, making Indonesia a more Islamic yet democratic country (Surahman, 2018).

KAMMI was popular in secular campuses early but had only a few grips on PTKIN systems. Most KAMMI members came from general science backgrounds (Afrianty, 2012). However, today, KAMMI has secured a strong position within the PTKIN system of UIN (*Universitas Islam Negeri/ State Islamic University*), IAIN (*Institut Agama Islam Negeri/ The State Institute for Islamic Studies*), and STAIN (*Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri/ State Islamic College or State Islamic High School*) across the country.

KAMMI's close relation with PKS (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera/ Prosperous Justice Party*) often led to the accusation that KAMMI is an Islamist organization that wants to implement its version of Islamic sharia in Indonesia. KAMMI is one of the main actors in the context of student movements in Indonesia that gave birth to the onset of democratization in Indonesia in 1998. However, KAMMI's willingness to utilize democratic

means of competition for power is based on its belief that Muslims must rule Indonesia since most Indonesians are Muslims (Collins, 2004). Even though KAMMI has made it explicitly clear that it is more of a moral movement than a political movement, its involvement in politics through PKS signifies a different picture of the organization. This idea of securing political power via democratic means to create an Islamic-oriented government means that KAMMI can be grouped into the Islamist bloc.

The Strategy Of Communicating And Maintaining Islamist Ideology

On campuses in East Kalimantan, extra campus student organizations compete to win votes for intra-campus student bodies. In doing so, they need members within their universities. In the hope of winning intra-campus bodies, a sense of solidarity among the same members of an extra campus body is expected to translate into votes. Thus, for many extra-campus student organizations, having a large number of members in certain universities means they can win more intra student bodies and exercise more influence on the university's policies.

Among many extra campus student organizations with Islamic attributes on their name, KAMMI is the only one consistent in preaching Islamism or political Islam. KAMMI members, as mentioned earlier, are proud to call themselves da'wah activists. This means that for members of KAMMI, doing the daily business of recruiting and training members is not very different from doing the holy task of da'wah (Arifianto, 2019).

Infusing religious ideas, mainly Islamism, into campus politics is somehow beneficial for KAMMI in general. By framing the organization as a means for university students to grow in devoutness, KAMMI can garner support from nearly every segment of the campus, particularly in the outside area of the PTKIN system, where the majority of students have never attended previous intensive Islamic learning, such as *pondok pesantren* (Islamic boarding school).

KAMMI is very enthusiastic in promoting itself as the guardian of the students' morality in general. They pose western lifestyles as a threat to the Islamic way of life. Hence, it provides students with a simple choice: Islam or western lifestyles. In fact, the most effective strategy of KAMMI for maintaining its' existence and spreading its' wingspans lies in its simplicity, its' fairly simple way of looking the campus life. Most of KAMMI's programs fall within the daily life of Muslims, especially Muslim students. For example, they frequently host seminars on how to dress for female students, socialize between males and females in campus life, avoid courtships among different sexes in campus, and many other similar topics.

However, once the students joined the organization, KAMMI would offer them political ideas of Islamism, a much more serious topic. Here, KAMMI in almost every campus in East Kalimantan is consistent in sharing the same idea. The idea behind this strategy is simple. First, entice new students with the idea of becoming smart and pious, then, draw them with the idea of having political power to entice other students, in general, to become smart and pious. Hence, most of the discussions for members with higher seniority levels are about how to wield political power to influence campus policies.

Operating in the same settings with other Islamic extra campus student organizations such as PMII and HMI, KAMMI is always in constant competition to influence students in general. PMII and HMI are usually more liberal in their understanding of Islam, thus offering fewer political Islam topics. The two extra campus student organizations are generally against the idea of political Islam or Islamism.

The political standpoint of both PMII and KAMMI had led them to be in diametral position vis a vis KAMMI in terms of ideological contestation. PMII and HMI are supporters of liberal democracy even though, to some extent, the two have different opinions about how such liberal democracy works in the context of Indonesia. On the other hand,

KAMMI resembles what most scholars call the post-Islamist strategy of securing political power (Bayat, 1997). However, KAMMI is not very well known for its transparency in propagating such a strategy. It is known for its' exclusiveness when it comes to opening up about political standpoints on the relation between Islam and democracy.

For example, in Mulawarman University (Samarinda, Indonesia), KAMMI has secured most of the intra student bodies and thus can undertake many campus-sponsored programs. Generally speaking, most of those programs are infused with Islamic values and norms. By infusing, and to some extent covering, the programs with Islamic symbols, members of KAMMI who sit in intra campus student bodies expect that students, in general, would associate KAMMI with youth piety.

To entice new students to become its members, KAMMI usually brands itself as an organization that suits the personification of smart and pious students. This alone can attract a large number of students to become members. However, this strategy usually works better on secular campuses. In many campuses that are well known for their Islamic studies, KAMMI usually can only maintain not very strong grips. The reason is relatively simple; on those campuses, students are usually have undertaken previous studies on Islam in *madrasah*, or Islamic school thus are more familiar with Islam and Islamic lifestyle, even though only in its' traditional sense. In IAIN Samarinda, for example, KAMMI can only have a few members compared to those of the HMI and PMII. Since most of the students who came to IAIN Samarinda had previous learning on Islam in *madrasah* or *pesantren*, they are not attracted too much to Islamic symbolism brought about by KAMMI as its' core branding strategy. They have already experienced Islam in their previous study, thus looking for something different on their campuses. Moreover, many of those students are also more familiar with traditional ways of being Muslims, where they treat lecturers and instructors the same way they treat traditional *kyai* or ulema.

In secular and Islamic campuses, KAMMI must comply with democratic mechanisms of winning student votes for seats in the intra-campus student bodies. This makes KAMMI apply different strategies for each of those settings.

KAMMI is more successful in secular campuses because most students can easily be enticed with Islamic symbols. Thus, all it has to do is strengthen the brand of being the religious guardian of the students' morality. In other parts, most students in Islamic campuses in the province have already experienced forms of Islam in their previous learning. They are more enticed to a different understanding of Islam, such as liberal and progressive schools of thought that HMI and PMII generally offer.

In general, KAMMI's primary strategy for spreading its wings of Islamism in Islamic and secular campuses in East Kalimantan consists of two main elements: promoting Islamic morality and pious modern lifestyle; and utilizing a small-size study circle.

Solidarity among KAMMI members is maintained relatively well. There are always connections between existing members and alumni that link them together. For senior members of KAMMI who soon will graduate from campus, alumni provide information about job vacancies or opportunities to continue studying to master level. For junior and fresh members, alumni provide living examples of how KAMMI could successfully lead them to become pious successful people in their future lives.

For KAMMI in East Kalimantan, recruitment for new members begins even before the academic year on campus starts. Alumni of KAMMI who work in many senior high schools as teachers usually introduce their lifestyle to the students. They would also give brief accounts on how to navigate successfully through university life since most of their students would likely end up being university students.

Some prospective university students come from SMA IT (*Sekolah Menengah Atas Islam Terpadu*/ Islamic Integral Senior High School), the

chance of becoming KAMMI members when they go to university is even higher. Since many of KAMMI alumni work in such schools, they would entice their students to join KAMMI once they get admitted as university students. Since for KAMMI recruiting, new members are also part of the holy task of da'wah, the incentive for doing so is comparatively more significant.

When new student admission comes, members of KAMMI in the university would organize welcoming programs for potential members. They would make several recruiting points near admission offices in their campuses and offer help for students who work on their paperwork. These KAMMI members would also circulate brochures about the profile of KAMMI and its programs both at the national and local levels. In this period, many new students would join KAMMI, especially those new students who have previous encounters with KAMMI either in their previous schools or others.

Competition for new members among many extra campus student organizations is fierce during this time. Members from different extra campus student organizations would challenge each other to get attention from potential new members. It is not very rare, therefore, that clashes between them occur.

During the early days of the life of the new students on campus, KAMMI and other organizations would keep trying to recruit new members. For KAMMI, this is done by promoting Islamic morality and pious modern lifestyle. New students are enticed to know more about how to dress and behave in campus life according Islam as understood by KAMMI. In this regard, many new students would be exposed to reading materials that talk about such issues in popular language.

On a few occasions, new students would be asked to join for a *riblah*, KAMMI's term for student trips, without them knowing that the real goal for such a vacation is to get introduced to KAMMI. This strategy is effective since new students usually feel that they have nothing to lose

by joining organizations. A member of KAMMI in one university in Samarinda told me during an interview:

“We were asked to join a student trip; all we knew was that trip is purely for vacation. However, at the end of the trip, we were asked to join KAMMI. Since we don’t have a problem with KAMMI and we are comfortable with many of its senior members, we, then, decided to join” (Interview, May 2019).

KAMMI’s new members are demanded to behave Islamically on campus. They are asked to represent piety in their way of life. This can be very challenging for new members who are young and curious about their new campus environment. When most other students can behave in a relatively more casual way, KAMMI members are obliged to tell themselves that such a way of life is not very Islamic thus, they have to make sacrifices in order to maintain their piety.

To overcome challenges brought about by the campus environment deemed un-Islamic, KAMMI members use small circle study groups. Each of these small study circles consisting of five to ten members is led by one senior member as a mentor. This mentor is responsible for instilling a sense of solidarity and belonging in new members. On the other hand, new members are demanded to respect their mentor and his/her decisions regarding the course of their small circle.

Issues discussed in this small circle study can be divided into two main topics. The first set of topics is issues regarding becoming a good Muslim in general. It consists of how to pray properly, read the Qur’an, pay the zakat, fast during Ramadan, avoid *zina*, and courtship between different sexes, and other issues of the daily life of the students. On the other hand, the second set of topics is more complicated since it relates to issues of political Islam. It consists of the issue of state-religion relation, Islamic perspectives on political power and its distributions, and the like.

In discussing these topics, a senior member will be tasked to be a mentor to guide the trajectory of the discussions. In this case, senior members upon whom the task is delegated may invite former members of KAMMI whose work is related to politics. The mentor then helps the members understand the former member's points correctly.

For new members, topics discussed in the small circle study are limited to the first topics. In general, the ultimate aim of small circle study for new members is to bolster their sense of belonging and solidarity. This objective is achieved by signifying the association between being members of KAMMI and being pious. Thus, in the eye of new members, being a member of KAMMI means that they must try their best to become pious Muslims first.

Many members of KAMMI interviewed during data collection revealed that this strategy of utilizing small study groups helped them become more pious and prosperous in their study. One informant, for example, said during an interview:

“Before I attended the study group, I used to wear a small veil just to cover my head merely and part of my chest, I used to dress like other girls in college. After attending a few sessions, I began to understand how to dress properly according to Islamic teachings about veil for women. Now I always wear long veil” (Interview, May 2019).

Once the new members get used to issues of personal holiness, they would be introduced to issues of political Islam. Members would no longer be considered new members in this group of topics, but rather “members”. They must also pass various assessments in order to graduate from the status of new members. In this regard, not every new member will pass the assessments.

KAMMI believes that campus should be a place to train future political leaders of the country. Campus, therefore, should provide

democratic atmosphere where students can try real politics. Having this in mind, after successfully training its members to become pious students, the next step to take is to win intra campus student bodies in campuses where they belong to.

KAMMI members take this political game very seriously. For KAMMI, winning intra campus student bodies in their university means that it can influence the dynamic of campus life to be as ideal as possible according to its' understanding of Islamic Statesman hood, or "*Muslim Negarawan*".

The ultimate aim of winning campus student bodies for KAMMI members is not for the sake of winning itself. Instead, winning those intra campus bodies is an instrument to achieve the ultimate goal of Islamizing campus life by crafting decisions that affect students in general. In this regard, KAMMI would subtly impose its' version of Islamic life upon students. For KAMMI members, justification for this is that since they win the student bodies democratically, they are the accurate representation of students thus, any decisions made are for the best interest of students in general.

This mode of operation utilized by KAMMI members resembles Islamist one. It starts with blurring the line between Islam as a religion, thus sacred, and certain interpretations of Islamic life, then proposing that supporting the latter means supporting Islam therefore, doing otherwise would be considered opposing Islam.

Since KAMMI self-proclaimed itself as a student body and a campus preaching organization, the first intra-campus student body it wants to secure is the intra-campus preaching body known as *Lembaga Dakwah Kampus* (LDK/ Campus Preaching Organization). In almost all campuses in East Kalimantan, KAMMI is the main player, if not the only player, in such a preaching body.

This gives KAMMI significant advantages over other extra campus student organizations, for the LDK is supposed to help the university guard the students' morality from destructive influences from outside. However, the essential political benefits of securing intra-campus preaching bodies are that it gives KAMMI more significant opportunity to connect other intra-campus student bodies in the university.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Extra-campus student organizations provide an ideological basis for students to compete for intra-campus student bodies seats. Once intra-campus student bodies are secured, cycles of recruitment of new members for extra-campus student bodies and placements of members in intra-campus student bodies are undertaken repeatedly to ensure that a specific agenda of the extra-campus student body can be achieved.

In universities in East Kalimantan, KAMMI is perhaps the most successful extra campus student organization that leans very much to Islamist ideology. Operating in campus settings, members of the organization must comply with democratic mechanisms of the distribution of political power. In this regard, KAMMI utilizes several different strategies for different areas of contestations with other student organizations.

KAMMI's main strategy to maintain its' Islamist ideology can be divided into three distinctive steps, namely: 1) introducing potential university students in high schools via vacation trip program (*rihlah*), 2) recruiting new members during admission time in campus via personal approaches, and 3) maintaining solidarity by utilizing exclusive small circle study groups. In the first two steps, KAMMI would introduce potential new members with the idea of personal piety, which aims to guard the students' morality from bad influences of western lifestyle. In the third phase of a small circle study group, members would be familiarized

with the idea of “*Muslim Negarawan*”, in which they are asked to view their campus as a political arena of competition for power. This is also considered as a way to train themselves for future political battles in a much more realistic setting.

Suggestion

As digital natives, Muslim university students tend to have fewer problems balancing fun appearance and religious commitment. Such skill allows them to have much greater flexibility in preaching their belief to their fellow students in the vicinity of their campus and in their online life. Therefore, it is fruitful for further research regarding Islamic Student Movements to include similar movements organized through digital media. It will enrich our understanding of how certain Islamic teachings, including those that fall within the ideological realm of Islamism, spread among the young and educated population. Eventually, it will also help us understand the intricate relationship between online and offline Islamic movements in the contemporary world.

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