

book reviews

by Luqman Luqman

Submission date: 07-Aug-2023 08:38AM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 2142320594

File name: bki-article-p283_7-2.pdf (151.3K)

Word count: 1587

Character count: 9136

Luqman Nul Hakim, *Islamism and the Quest for Hegemony in Indonesia*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023, xi + 290 pp. ISBN: 9789811996610, price: EUR 93.08 (ebook).

This book is a comprehensive study of the growth and development of political Islam in Indonesia and its role in shaping the country's political landscape. It adds to the ongoing discourse on the ideology of Islamism and its progression in Indonesia. This topic has already attracted considerable scholarly attention. Hasan (2018) analyzes the phenomenon of public Islam as a transformative force for Indonesia beyond the conventional dichotomy of state versus religion. Menchik (2016) examines how the Islamic leaders from Indonesia, as a predominantly Muslim country, comprehend and apply the concepts of tolerance and democracy differently than their Western counterparts. Hilmy (2010) focuses on the reasons and justifications behind the acceptance or rejection of democracy among Indonesian Islamist groups. Platzdasch (2009) discusses the ascent and downfall of the Islamist movement in Indonesia's evolving democratic system. Hakim adds to this literature by providing a detailed analysis of the historical, social, and political factors that have influenced the rise of Islamism in Indonesia, as well as the strategies and tactics employed by Islamist groups to gain and maintain power.

This book consists of seven chapters, with the first chapter introducing the main topics and themes covered. The second chapter explores the concept of hegemony and its relevance to the study of Islamic politics, tracing its development through the Political Discourse Theory (PDT) tradition of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. The author argues that understanding Islamism and its impact on Indonesia's nation-state formation and transformation requires analyzing hegemony. Rather than assuming the separation of religion and politics, the analysis of Islamism and hegemony emphasizes the intertwined nature of social and political transformation. In this context, hegemony refers to two interconnected spheres: first, it is an analytical tool used to comprehend social transformation and the power struggles between competing political forces. Second, it involves constructing alliances between different social agents to reshape a given social order through a political project. Therefore, the politics of hegemony is a process of construction.

Chapter 3 explores the origins of competing projects that shaped Indonesia during the anti-colonial and nation-state building period. In the late nineteenth century, significant socio-political changes in colonial Indonesia paved the way for the emergence and growth of anti-colonial movements. These movements were primarily organized around three central political discourses, namely Islamism, communism, and nationalism. Although all three move-

BIJDRAGEN TOT DE TAAL-, LAND- EN VOLKENKUNDE

Published with license by Koninklijke Brill NV | DOI:10.1163/22134379-17902003

© FARIZ ALNIZAR, 2023 | ISSN: 0006-2294 (print) 2213-4379 (online)

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the CC BY 4.0 license.

Downloaded from Brill.com08/07/2023 01:33:37AM
via free access

ments shared the goal of anti-colonialism, their respective demands, aspirations, and strategies were distinctly different. As a result, the contestations among these movements impacted the dynamics of decolonial movements and their varying visions for postcolonial Indonesia.

Chapter 4 delves into the correlation between Islamism and the New Order state, which spanned from 1965 to 1998. During this period, the New Order featured a distinct discursive framework that encompassed a series of interrelated occurrences, policies, and resistances, within which Islamism was deeply entangled. Hence, Islamists were not merely outsiders or challengers, but they were integral to the discursive formation and evolution of the New Order. The New Order's hegemony of developmentalism was established as an opposition to Sukarno's Old Order (*Orde Lama*), mainly by framing "Pancasila democracy" as a master signifier. This framework functioned as a horizon for social groups to express welfare, political stability, and social harmony, which were constructed effectively to discredit Sukarno's Old Order. Eventually, Pancasila democracy became the governing instrument and rationale for restructuring state-society relations around state-led development agendas. This transformation was primarily driven by the dominant strands of modernization theory that linked economic growth to security and stability. Through these processes, Islamism was assimilated into the cultural domain, and its agencies and subjectivities were constructed to defend the appeal of the New Order's modernization projects.

In Chapter 5, the author examines the relationship between Islamism and the democratization process in post-New Order Indonesia. The chapter discusses the challenges of building a new hegemonic bloc, especially among Islamists, following Soeharto's resignation. With the support of international donors, the discourse of democratization became dominant and was seen as the key to transforming Indonesia from an authoritarian regime to a democracy. While democratization provided Islamism with a more significant role in the political and public spheres, it did not necessarily create an adequate representation vehicle for the diverse sociological groups within the *ummah*. This was particularly evident in electoral politics and decentralization.

Chapter 6 focuses on the fragmentation of Islamism in post-New Order Indonesia and its interaction with the dominance of neoliberal democracy and the Global War on Terror (GWOT). This chapter argues that the depoliticization of Islamism, resulting from neoliberal democracy, has created space for Islamist populism to emerge as a viable discourse, appealing to marginalized groups. However, this populist discourse cannot effectively transform into a cross-cutting alliance representing the diverse demands of the *ummah* due to its fragmented nature. The chapter uses the case of the 2017 Jakarta elections

to illustrate how the construction of the *ummah* subjects remains narrowly directed towards electoral politics and patronage networks. As a result, the fragmented Islamist populist movement fails to develop a counter-hegemonic force to challenge oppressive power structures. Finally, the concluding chapter summarizes the key arguments and implications of the hegemony approach for debates on Islamism in Indonesia and the relationship between Islam and politics for comparative studies.

One of the key strengths of this book is the depth and breadth of its analysis. The author draws on a wide range of sources, including academic studies, government reports, and interviews with key players in the Indonesian political landscape. This allows for a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the complex factors that have contributed to the rise of political Islam in Indonesia, and the challenges and opportunities it presents for the country's future.

Another strength of the book is its clear and accessible writing style. The author presents complex ideas and arguments in a way that is easy to understand, making the book an engaging and informative read for both scholars and general readers interested in the topic. One of the most interesting and important arguments made in the book is the author's assertion that political Islam in Indonesia is not monolithic, but rather comprised of a diverse range of groups with differing ideologies and agendas. This is an important point, as it underscores the need for a nuanced and multifaceted approach to understanding the role of Islamism in Indonesian politics. Indeed, one of the most interesting aspects of this book is the author's analysis of the different factions within the Islamic movement in Indonesia.

The book also sheds light on the complex relationship between Islamism and democracy in Indonesia. The author argues that while Islamist groups have been able to participate in the democratic process and even gain significant political power, their ultimate goal is the establishment of an Islamic state, which may not be compatible with democratic principles. This tension between Islamism and democracy is a key challenge facing Indonesia today, and the book provides valuable insights into how it has played out in the country's political history.

Despite its many strengths, there are a few weaknesses to this book that are worth noting. The book's focus on the Islamic movement in Indonesia means that it does not provide a broader analysis of the relationship between Islam and politics in the wider region, or the world. In addition, its relatively narrow focus on Islamist organizations and their activities does not provide a complete picture of the broader social and political dynamics at play within Indonesia. The author acknowledges this limitation and suggests avenues for future research that could expand the scope of the analysis.

Overall, *Islamism and the Quest for Hegemony in Indonesia* is an important and timely contribution to the literature on political Islam in Indonesia. The book provides a detailed and nuanced analysis of the historical, social, and political factors that have shaped the growth of Islamism in the country, as well as the challenges and opportunities it presents for Indonesia's future. It is a valuable resource for scholars, policymakers, and anyone interested in understanding the complex relationship between Islamism and politics in Indonesia.

Fariz Abnizar | ORCID: 0000-0003-4085-5057
Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia
fariz@unusia.ac.id

References

- Hasan, N. (2018). *Public Islam in Indonesia: Piety, Politics, and Identity*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Hilmy, M. (2010). *Islamism and Democracy in Indonesia Piety and Pragmatism*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS).
- Menchik, J. (2016). *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance Without Liberalism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Platzdasch, B. (2009). *Islamism in Indonesia: Politics in the Emerging Democracy*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS).

ORIGINALITY REPORT

18%

SIMILARITY INDEX

17%

INTERNET SOURCES

5%

PUBLICATIONS

8%

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1

evols.library.manoa.hawaii.edu

Internet Source

3%

2

www.redalyc.org

Internet Source

2%

3

etd.repository.ugm.ac.id

Internet Source

1%

4

Submitted to University of Stirling

Student Paper

1%

5

theconversation.com

Internet Source

1%

6

pdfcoffee.com

Internet Source

1%

7

researchspace.ukzn.ac.za

Internet Source

1%

8

Submitted to University of Durham

Student Paper

1%

9

core.ac.uk

Internet Source

1%
