

Constrained Hegemony: The State and Islamic Politics in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia

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Abstract

This paper aims to elucidate the unevenness of Islamic politics influence within the state: why has the aspiration of post-authoritarian Islamic politics in Indonesia gained influence in the democratic process despite the disappointing performance of the Islamic political parties? It argues that Islamic politics is experiencing what I call “constrained hegemony.” It suggests that the current paradoxical situation of Islamic politics is the result of the failure of Islamic politics to politically dominate the state along with the resurgence of Islamic conservatism in post-authoritarian Indonesia. Both the failure and the resurgence are determined by two intertwined factors: the legacy of the New Order power structure and the adoption of a neoliberal free-market economy. The factors operate in different ways at the political and civil society levels of the state. At the level of political society, the legacy of the New Order power structure and neoliberalism tends to weaken and subordinate Islamic forces that are organized through political parties. At the civil society level, the legacy of the New Order power structure and neoliberalism leads to the reinforcement of Islamic forces that is regimented through conservative Islamic organizations.

Introduction

This project aims to examine the unevenness of Islamic politics influence within the state: why has the aspiration of Islamic politics been able to gain influence in the democratic process of the state despite the disappointing performance of the Islamic political parties? Hamayotsu (2011) finds that the Islamic political agenda promoted by Islamic parties has failed to gain significant votes in the national electoral arena. From 1999 to 2009, votes for Islamic political parties tended to decline. However, she argues that Indonesian politics still “exploits religious ideas, symbols, networks, and resources in order to win the hearts and minds of

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increasingly pious Muslim electorates” (Ibid. 154). As observed by Tanuwidjaja (2010), the Islamic political agenda can still operate despite the struggle of Islamic political parties to gain votes. He found that this agenda has successfully penetrated the platforms of all political parties, including the nationalist-secular ones. For example, in district-based legislatures, many nationalist-secular parties deliberately promote *sharia* law. Thus, it is hard to claim that Islam as a political agenda has lost its appeal for Indonesian voters.

In the context of democracy, this unevenness seems counter-intuitive. When political openness occurs, Islamic actors tend to participate in electoral politics in order to win state power through political parties. Although they would not necessarily see democracy as legitimate, electoral politics in democracy can be instrumental in winning the cause of Islamic politics in the society (Kalyvas 2000, Robinson 1997). Interestingly, the Islamic parties are not the main channel for an Islamic agenda in the case of Indonesian democracy. One can argue that their not being so can be a “failure” (Roy 1996, Sidel 2006) for Islamic politics. However, to conclude this process is a failure would be disingenuous, since non-Islamic parties are absorbing Islamic political agendas as part of their political platforms.

The previous work of Wanto (2012) and Miichi (2015) tries to provide explanations of this unevenness. Both suggest that we need to take a closer look on Islamic politics at societal level. Wanto suggest that Party politics is only one of many strategy that might be enacted by Islamic forces. Another methods that can be chosen is through bottom-up strategies that led by *ulama* (religious leader) on the societal level (Wanto 2012, 329, 360). While for Miichi, the modernization of education and urbanization enable more people to study religion by themselves which leads to Islamization of Indonesian society (Miichi 2015, 139). True as it is, by explaining the anomaly solely at the societal level assumes that the anomaly occurs as an automatic self-

activity of the society detached from state power. Although for some Muslims, Islam cannot be limitedly defined merely as a religion, its political influence requires some relation with the structure of the state.

Aiming to understand this uneven condition of Islamic politics in relation with the state power, this article uses the lens of “constrained hegemony” which suggests that the anomalous position of Islamic politics is the result of its failure to politically dominate the state through political parties, along with the resurgence of Islamic conservatism in post-authoritarian Indonesia. The failure and the resurgence are determined by two intertwined factors: the legacy of the New Order power structure, in the form of both political forces and social organization, and the adoption of a neoliberal free-market economy. The factors operate in different ways at the political and civil society levels of the state. At the level of political society, the legacy of the New Order power structure and neoliberalism tends to weaken and subordinate Islamic forces that are organized through political parties. At the civil society level, the legacy of the New Order power structure and neoliberalism leads to the reinforcement of Islamic forces that is regimented through conservative Islamic organizations.

Constrained Hegemony: A Theoretical Construction

Before explaining what is constrained hegemony, it is important that I address the theoretical problem to be resolved. The concept of constrained hegemony aims to resolve the existing limitation in explaining the uneven influence of Islamic politics within the state. The limitation exist in terms of how to reconcile the tension between elite (top-down) and non-elite (bottom-up) processes in understanding Islamic politics within the state. Most of the literatures

are unable to provide satisfactory explanations about this unevenness without falling into one extreme or the other.

This problem can be seen for example in the work of Hadiz (2016) on Islamic politics as Islamic populism. He suggests that the influence of Islamic politics should be posited in relation to class power. The capacity of class power to represent *ummah* (the Muslim people) as a whole will determine the influence of Islamic politics on state power. In the case of Indonesian Islamic politics, the absence of a strong bourgeoisie becomes the reason that there is no strong and coherent Islamic agenda carried out by Islamic parties (Hadiz 2017, 496). The weakness then becomes the condition for the unevenness of the influence of Islamic politics, since the power elite will utilize Islamic politics only for the purpose of mobilizing support (Ibid. 498; see also Aspinall 2010). True as it is, this argument can fall into a one-sided view of the elite process in explaining Islamic politics, because it constrains the explanation on who formally dominates state power. The problem, then, is that not every agenda of Islamic politics can be determined solely by the interest of the elite. The fact that Islamic politics can gain influence at the societal level despite the failure of formal Islamic parties obviously marks this discrepancy of Islamic politics influence beyond the elite position. Therefore, there is some dimension of “non-elite provenance” (Hefner 2010) that is not captured in the analysis.

Meanwhile, other work like Buehler’s (2016) represents the other pole of the arguments. On understanding Islamic politics through the case of the promotion of *sharia* law, he suggests that the current influence of Islamic politics should be explained by the ability of Islamic groups to appropriate political opportunities in the course of democratization of the state. Due to the competitive nature of electoral politics, the elite has no other option than to accommodate the Islamic groups as part of mobilizing support from the masses (See also Pisani and Buehler 2016).

From this point of view, Buehler tries to provide a different explication from that of Hadiz. Buehler accentuates a non-elite process in the rise of Islamic political influence. However, as one can see, his emphasis on the agential capacity of Islamic groups in capitalizing the political circumstances neglects pertinent questions. Why do the Islamic groups have the capacity to influence the political process in the first place? Why are the elites unable to ignore them? Without addressing these questions, one might slip into naturalizing Islamic politics and thus leaving unexplained the role of state power in strengthening these Islamic groups.²

Constrained hegemony aims to resolve these contrasting views. It suggests that the distinction between elite and non-elite processes can be overcome if they are defined as different and yet unified political processes within the state. Before I provide a definitive definition on what is constrained hegemony, a theoretical reconstruction is needed. As a concept, constrained hegemony is inspired by Gramsci's conception of hegemony which puts hegemony as a part of the techniques for ruling the state (Riley 2011, 3). In terms of the state, Gramsci's hegemony shares the Marxist orthodoxy on the state as an instrument of the capitalist class for ruling other classes and to preserving capitalism in general (see Marx and Engels 1946, Lenin 1968; Miliband 1969; and Engels 1978). However, he suggests that the political rule of the capitalist class as a ruling class within the state will always involve two interconnected techniques, "domination" and "intellectual and moral leadership" (Gramsci 1971, 57). For Gramsci, hegemony is posited as the condition for this intellectual consent and moral leadership.

Given this definition, the concept of constrained hegemony further develops Gramsci's hegemony by explicitly assuming that the condition of hegemony cannot be separated from

² Buehler has tried to give a glimpse insight on the condition that empower the Islamic groups. He suggests that unequal strategic relation that enacted by the state towards the Islamist relatively maintains their organizational capacity at the local level (Buehler 2016, p. 67). However, he is not clear on how this unequal strategic relation enable political empowerment of the Islamic groups.

domination. The interconnection of domination and moral leadership in Gramsci's theoretical formulation becomes the main insight for clarifying the unified position of elite and non-elite processes within the state. Thus, to develop the concept of constrained hegemony, I will deliberately re-read Gramsci's theory of hegemony through this insight of interconnection.

Gramsci suggests that hegemony is situated in the terrain of civil society, defined as “the ensemble of organism commonly called ‘private’” (Ibid. 12). The hegemonic process in civil society is manifested through gaining consent to rule from the constellation of existing social organizations such as educational institutions, religious institutions, trade unions, business communities, and other collective endeavors. The constellation of such civil society is conditioned by capitalist development which is structured by the competitive relation between class factions (intra-class) and the exploitative relation between classes (inter-class). Thomas (2009, 144) suggests that the primary role of civil society in Gramsci's conception is “to act as mediating instance or moment of ‘organic passage’ for the subaltern classes towards the state of the ruling class.” For Gramsci, civil society becomes the terrain of power struggle within and between classes for constructing consent by certain social groups. This struggle is conducted through the contestation of class interest masked as ideas.³ In terms of the concept of constrained hegemony, hegemonic practice at the civil society level can be considered a non-elite process:

³ Gramsci's hegemony extends the Lukacsian concept of reification (see Lukacs 1971) which suggests that although the commodity relation produces a fetishized consciousness within individuals that might obfuscate the class interest, the origin of this fetishization can be traced back to a certain sociological process maintained by the intellectual leadership of some social groups. That is, in Gramsci's hegemony, in order for a certain class as social agent to be capable of leading, some moral and ideal authority (i.e, worldview) must be constructed and transmitted. This process occurs to subjugate both its own class and other, low rank or subaltern classes. The transmission requires consent and acceptance wherein the ideals and interest proposed by the social agents are mirrored in the ideals of those in the other social positions. Thus, this process creates “commons sense” for the ruled (Gramsci 1971, 134) and enables social coherence and cohesion that become the political basis for the ruler of the state.

the Islamic forces have to engage in a battle to win the hearts and minds of the masses through a consensual process.

Meanwhile, the relationship of Gramsci's hegemony to elite process comes with the introduction of political society. Political society is explained as the terrain for legal monopolization of coercive forces (Thomas 2009, 137). As argued before, this concept of political society cannot be separated from other aspects of Gramsci's conception of domination as part of political rule. In this case, domination in political society determines the control over coercive forces of the state. The existence of the concept of political society is important in Gramsci's hegemony, since although hegemony emphasizes the consensual nature of ideas transmission, the material condition that enables this transmission is not necessarily free from imposition. The resemblance of Gramsci's proposition on political society to the position of the political elite comes from the fact that the political elite also can have access to the coercive means of the state. The elite position can have an effect in sustaining the social condition for ideas to exist and develop. It is noteworthy that the political society is not only a formal-politico entity, but also "organizing and co-ordinating functions that emerged throughout the social formation that connected groups and individuals to common political goals" (Whitehead 2015, 10). It can be said that Gramsci's political society resonates with the category of the elite that is addressed in the concept of constrained hegemony. The political elite is the dominant force in political society that enables organizing and coordinating rules that allow some ideas to exist while constraining other ideas, as part of constructing common political goals.

The theorization of the unified process of power at the civil society level (i.e., non-elite) and the political society level (i.e., elite), is elaborated in Gramsci's conception of the integral state. Integral state suggests a unity of domination and hegemony, between political society and

civil society, as the totality of the capitalist state (i.e., civil society + political society = the state). I argue that this conception becomes the backbone of constrained hegemony since it can provide an analytical solution for the tension between elite and non-elite processes in understanding Islamic politics. Integral state explicates the “mutual interpenetration and reinforcement” (Thomas 2009, 137) between domination and hegemony within the state. The state cannot be limited as merely “machinery of government and legal institution... rather, [it is] intended as a dialectical terrain upon which social classes compete for social and political leadership or hegemony over other social classes” (Ibid. 137). Bosteels (2014, 51) suggests that Gramsci’s integral state distinction between coercion and consent should be understood as methodological in nature rather than organic. This means that civil society cannot be posited as a “sphere outside, or prior to, the state... [but must be] conceive[d]... within a dialectically unified state form.” Therefore, the existence of civil society cannot be separated and isolated from the broader context of the state dynamics, since it is integral to the state itself.

Through this theoretical construction, constrained hegemony can be understood as a process of hegemonic struggle that is constrained into some terrain of the state itself. To be precise, constrained hegemony suggests that certain hegemonic forces become stuck or unable to extend their influence beyond the terrain of civil society. Therefore, methodologically, observation of the status of the constrained hegemony of the state power should be viewed as the aim to win over both the hearts and minds of public life (civil society) and the monopoly of coercive means (political society). The priority of the hegemonic struggle of Islamic forces for ruling the state is to establish Islamic values as the “common sense” of the civil society. Nonetheless, they also have to struggle to monopolize the coercive force at the political society level in order to sustain and guarantee their rule within the state as a whole.

The Origin of Islamic Politics Hegemony in Indonesia

The origin of the hegemony of Indonesian Islamic politics cannot be separated from the struggle for power of the indigenous Muslim petty bourgeoisie in the era of colonialism to address their marginalization. Colonial capitalism enabled a certain form of social classes that was divided into hierarchical groups according to race and positioned the native Malay-Java Muslim merchant as the lowest class among the colonial bourgeoisie that also included the Dutch and the Chinese. Kemasang (1985) observes that this social structure had a deliberate political agenda: the Dutch aimed to hinder the potential development of an indigenous bourgeoisie in Indonesia (Ibid. 64).

In its initial hegemonic development, pan-Islamism became the main ideological articulation of the Muslim petty bourgeoisie against the political rule of Western imperialism which in this case was Dutch colonialism.⁴ However, as the Muslim petty bourgeoisie needed to extend its influence beyond its class position, interaction with other political ideology becomes inevitable. This can be seen with the experience of Islamic politics under Sarekat Islam (Islamic Union; SI)⁵ which in its political line accommodated itself to many non-Islamic political platforms in its political line. This accommodation was related to the specific political

⁴ Pan-Islamism is a modern phenomenon with the backdrop of the decline of the Ottoman sultanate in 1876 and the intensification of rivalry among imperialist Western powers who had colonized the Muslim world (Lee 1942). As a notion, pan-Islamism suggests a unity of the Muslim population guided by Islam as a universal value against the domination of modern Western imperialism (Landau 1990, 4; Keddie 1969; Kia 1996). The appeal of pan-Islamism to Indonesia's Muslim middle class can be explained by the fact that Western colonialism had strong economic motives, since it attacked the Muslim trading system in the archipelago (Reid 1967, 267). Pan-Islamism therefore has provided the ideological orientation for the Muslim middle class that the solution to their marginalization is through implementing Islamic values in all aspects of modern life.

⁵ Originally named Sarekat Dagang Islam (Commercial Islamic Union; SDI) and established in 1905 by a successful batik trader Haji Samanhudi, the initial purpose of the organization was to defend the interest of native merchants against their Chinese competitors who were backed by the Dutch. SI was structured like a patrolling organization responsible for protecting the assets of its members. This organizational structure led SI toward being confrontational and permissive of violence. Nevertheless, SI also operated in a modern way, using newspapers to spread the idea of the organization beyond its localities (Shiraishi 1997, 60-2).

development in the Dutch Indies which was experiencing the rise of nationalist and communist ideas. SI's leadership had to "compete with the secular and particularly with Marxist elements both within its own ranks and in other nationalist parties" (Von der Mehden 1958, 336). This accommodation to non-Islamic ideology then affected the articulation of Islamic politics in SI.⁶

Nevertheless, this inclusiveness of Islamic politics under SI did not last long. The accommodation generated class tension within the politics of the organization that led to two main conflicting political factions: the Red SI and the White SI. Representing the lower and working class, Red SI aspired for SI to strengthen its anti-capitalist politics against the colonial Dutch by giving priority to radical confrontation based on class struggle. For the White SI that was supported by the merchants, purification from the influence of non-Islamic values, especially communism, had to be priority. The tension was resolved by an organizational purge that expelled many communists, meaning also a victory for the Muslim petty bourgeoisie in SI.

The class tension that occurred in SI is not the only important tension experienced by the Muslim petty bourgeoisie. Another class tension that needs to be taken into account in understanding the hegemonic development of Islamic politics occurred within the petty bourgeoisie itself. The specific colonial development produced two types of Muslim petty bourgeoisie: the urban and the rural. This class factionalism generated different interests and responses towards pan-Islamism. The urban petty bourgeoisie's response to pan-Islamism was articulated through the idea that the struggle against colonialism should be conducted by

⁶ SI came to care less about religion. Noer's (1963) observation on the internal political debate about the status of religion in SI verifies this notion. He finds that despite its being an organization based on religion, SI was not run by a "purely religious" sentiment, but rather it operated under the principle of the "nationalist Islamic" (Noer 1963, 122). Another interesting consequence of the accommodation was the emergence of Islamic communism. Several important local leaders of SI, like Haji Misbach in Surakarta and Datuak Batuah in West Sumatera, became proponents of Islamic communism which argued about the compatibility of the idealist religious values of Islam with the materialist science of Marxist communism (McVey 1956, 171-2). One might argue that this form of articulation constructed by SI made political Islam appear inclusive.

applying modern Western methods to spread Islam. Muhammadiyah (A Way of Muhammad) is one of the first well-known Islamic organization, established in 1921, to promote the modern idea of pan-Islamism, a stream of Islamism that later became known as the organization of the modernists.⁷ The rural Muslim petty bourgeoisie had a different response since they saw pan-Islamism as a threat to their Muslim tradition that originated in Shafi’I orthodoxy. Against the rise of pan-Islamism, this rural Muslim petty bourgeoisie established Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, the Rise of Religious Scholars) in 1926 as an organization to preserve their long history of the Indonesian Islamic tradition, and NU later become the bastion of the traditionalists.⁸ While Muhammadiyah and NU are not political organizations, this division had political implications for the contested nature of Indonesian Islamic politics in its early development, especially for how Islam would be situated in the modern state.

However, the circumstances changed dramatically when the Japanese took over the colonial state from the Dutch in 1942. The Japanese takeover created new political chances for the Islamists to promote their agenda in the independence struggle ending colonialism. To obtain support and sympathy from the Indonesian Muslims,⁹ the Japanese consolidated the Islamic forces through the establishment of the Office of Religious Affairs (Shimubu) that facilitated the

⁷ Established by the puritan modernist religious figure Ahmad Dahlan, Muhammadiyah focuses on *da’wah* (religious teaching) and operates under a secular education system through which it has become a modern representation of the foundational rooting of Islamic values in Indonesian society. Most of its work is deeply social rather than political. Due to an organizational model that adopts modernism, Muhammadiyah became one of the major representation of the “Modernist groups” of Muslims in Indonesian (see Ricklef 2001).

⁸ The interest to maintain traditionalism has a strong political interest, since pan-Islamists tend to undermine their old influence in Mecca and Cairo, as two centers of Islamic teaching, and would like to increase attacks against them (Ricklef 2001, 223). The traditionalism of NU is also reflected in how a family connection with Hasyim Asyari became the main requirement in deciding the leadership of the organization.

⁹ The Japanese promoted several initiatives to maintain the confidence of the Indonesian people, one of which was accommodating the position of Indonesian Muslims. The Japanese were “establishing short-term courses for thousands of *kiai* (Muslim religious teacher), and longer courses for *madrasah* (Islamic school) teachers” (Elson 2009, 106) to propitiate the Muslims. The Japanese also made public statements that they would protect and respect the religion of Islam and its institutions, and they even revoked for Muslims the policy of bowing to the Japanese emperor (Ibid. 107).

establishment of an important Islamic political party in the early Independence period, Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia (Consultative Council for Indonesian Muslim, Masyumi) which unified all streams of Islamic tendency, especially the modernist and the traditionalist. This political unification enabled political reinforcement of Islamic forces. This reinforcement then was used during the process of establishing the new state in which the Islamic forces intended to promote a strong Islamic hegemony.¹⁰

The manifestation of Islamic hegemony occur when they pursue the agenda for strengthening Islamic value in the new constitution. This can be seen on how the Islamists to launch a clause known as “*piagam Jakarta*” (Jakarta charter) that stated that the Muslim adherents were obliged to follow *sharia* law. Although it applied only to Muslims, this clause had a powerful impact for the state since it would formalize *sharia* law in the Indonesian constitution, thus prioritizing the interest of Muslims in the new state (Hosen 2005).

However, the proposal from the Islamic forces was challenged by the secularist nationalist groups. The debate and negotiation between the Islamist and the secularist-nationalist elites led to a compromise in which the latter acknowledged Islam as an important element of the new state. The compromise resulted in a new draft of the constitution. Although it did not explicitly promote *sharia* law, the new draft suggested a more Islamic-friendly narration which included the Islamic monotheistic principle of “the One and Only God” (or *tawhid*) in the preamble of the constitution. The result of this compromise was that the Indonesian state acknowledged *tawhid* as the first idea in its state foundation known as Pancasila (*lima sila*, five principles).

¹⁰ This possibility occurred due to the Japanese promise to Indonesians to hold independence for Indonesia. To realize this promise, the Japanese also established Badan Penyelidik Usaha-usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan (Committee to Investigate Preparation for Independence, BPUPK), on June 22, 1945. BPUPK included the Islamic forces’ taking part in the independence process.

The political unification that enable Islamic hegemony did not last long. The modern state's accommodation of Islamic values did not necessarily suffice to resettle the aspiration of Islamic forces to be unified forces. This create contestation of interest over Islamic politics itself. The first form of contestation emerge in some elements within the Islamic forces that believed an Islamic Indonesian state was not negotiable for Indonesian Muslims. The emergence of the Darul Islam movement (DI) represents this case.¹¹ Another form of contestation was related to the inherent division within Islamic forces itself. Masyumi as a unified body of Islamic forces had to meet the challenge when younger modernist politicians took over the party and demanded a modern viewpoint.¹² The change of orientation resulted in widespread marginalization of the traditionalists. Consequently, it created internal tension through the re-emergence of old frictions between the traditionalists and the modernists which then resulted in the separation of NU from Masyumi.¹³

¹¹ Named after the aim of founding an Islamic state (*Dar al Islam*), the birth of DI cannot be separated from disappointment in the failure of the Islamist elite to achieve that goal This disappointment exacerbated a loss of confidence in the leaders of the new state, since DI wanted the Indonesian state to take a strong stance towards the Dutch in the midst of the struggle for maintaining independence. As a formation coming from the military wing of Masyumi, DI then decided to take up arms against the new republic, declaring itself to be in a struggle to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia. While the rebellion itself lasted only several years, it can be said that DI's experience became a major reference for the next generation of Islamists who had an interest in establishing an Islamic state in Indonesia. (see Horikoshi 1975).

¹² This tension also had a politico-economic dimension. The traditionalists and modernists had different interests for controlling the Department of Religious Affairs. As argued by Mietzner (2009), this department became an important site for Indonesian Islamic forces, as part of the state machinery to distribute institutional and material resources for the Muslim constituencies. It is unsurprising that the conflict was resolved in 1952 when the traditionalists decided to separate their position from Masyumi by establishing Partai NU (NU Party) after the modernist element claimed the ministry for itself (Ibid. 76).

¹³ The situation was exacerbated with the political constellation in the new republic. The initiative of the first President of Indonesia, Sukarno, promoted Nasakom (nasionalisme, agama, dan komunisme; nationalism, religion, and communism) as a political consensus to strengthen the unity among the new elite in order to influence the internal tension in Masyumi. Because the traditionalists and the modernists had a different social base, it was important to engage with the other political forces. The traditionalists were based mostly in Java and had a pragmatic political orientation that aimed to maintain the interest of the traditionalist Islamic community through "a flexible, moderate, and compromise-oriented" politics . This approach brought them into a close relationship with a nationalist-populist party, Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Nationalist Party, PNI) which had a close relationship with Sukarno. Most of the social base of the modernists came from regions outside Java and allied themselves with the socialist and other non-Muslim parties. The modernist agenda was to promote political and economic modernization through technocratic and rational policy. The modernists also refuted traditionalist compromise politics as lacking principles and conceptual thinking (see Mietzner 2009, 76).

This political split between modernist and traditionalist Islam had an effect on how the Islamic hegemony was accommodated in post-colonial state. It can be said that the influence of Islamic politics in the post-colonial state become uneven. The favorability of the new regime to Java's economic development while excluding outer-Java created resentment among the modernist Islamist Masyumi. This resentment led to their alliance with the United States-supported rebellion in 1957, known as Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesian-Perjuangan Semesta (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia-Universal Struggle, PRRI-Permesta), in Sumatera and Sulawesi.¹⁴ Sukarno's government intensified its anti-colonial politics with the support of the Communist Party of Indonesia (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI) as a progressive force to support its anti-colonial cause. The militaristic Masyumi was sidelined in Indonesian politics which resulted in its being banned in 1960, and for years many of its leaders were jailed. Interestingly, Sukarno's marginalization of Masyumi was accompanied by accommodation of the traditionalist NU. The reason for NU's accepting the invitation of Sukarno was to ensure the representation of Islam in the new political climate and also to balance the influence of PKI in Sukarno's administration (Haidar 1994). NU's acceptance resulted in a political post in the Department of Religious Affair in Sukarno's cabinet, replacing the position of Masyumi.

The inclusion of NU and the marginalization of the modernists in Masyumi in the initial political development of the post-colonial Indonesian state suggests a strategic relationship between the state and Islamic politics itself. As a state that recognized Islam as the source of political value, the position of Islam was hardly to be denied. It is noteworthy to see that the

¹⁴ For the central government, the maneuver by Masyumi was considered treason against the new republic since the rebellion was supported by the United States. For Sukarno's government, the rebellion only invited the imperialist force to intervene in the political dynamic of Indonesia (Kahin and Kahin 1997).

accommodation occurred in the context of the political circumstances of post-colonial struggle. When the context changed, the form of political accommodation also changed. This historical backdrop provides important insight about the nature of the Islamic politics hegemony in Indonesian as inseparable from the political-economic dynamic of Islamic forces to influence state power.

The New Order's Hegemony and Islamic Politics in the Authoritarian Regime

The pattern of the accommodation of the state toward Islamic politics changed dramatically with the rise of Suharto's New Order regime in 1965. The change was rooted to Suharto's New Order agenda to transforming the economic base of the post-colonial state. As argued by Robison (1986), the aim of the New Order was to promote a political regime that was friendly enough to meet the interests of capitalism.¹⁵ To sustain the agenda of capitalist development, the New Order regime pursued political stabilization to sustain economic growth (Huntington, 1968). This political development leads to the emergence of a new hegemonic project known as repressive-developmentalism (Feith 1982). Repressive-developmentalism is referring to "strong state regimes engaged in facilitating fast capitalist growth... characterized by a heavy weight of power and a strong drive to eliminate or subordinate all potential centers of countervailing power" (Ibid. 493). Thus, the rise of Suharto opens up a period of authoritarian rule in Indonesian state.

¹⁵ To support this new orientation, Suharto consolidated the state power solely in his hand in order to establish a political order conducive to capitalist development. He strengthened the position of the military and the bureaucracy as the power foundation of his authoritarian regime (Robison 1978). In the process of constructing his political alliances, Suharto enfolded the Chinese business groups rather than the Muslim forces (Winters, 2011). Suharto's preference for the Chinese reflected the new government's interest to preserve the financial support of the economic group that had long dominated Indonesia (Ibid. 158).

As the political forces that support the establishment of the New Order regime,¹⁶ it seems that the new regime should accommodate the aspiration Islamic forces. However, this possibility was never been realized since the regime has its own agenda tries to control Indonesian politics to sustain political stability for economic development. in 1973, the regime introduced the policy of “political fusion” (*fusi politik*) as part of an attempts to enact political control. This policy aims to simplify all political parties, including the Islamic parties. Through this policy, the regime enforced Islamic forces that organized in several political parties to be unified under one party, known as PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, United Development Party). With the introduction of political fusion, the regime disregard any possibility for re-establishing Masyumi. Although interestingly, the failure of the modernist Masyumi to revive leads to the rise of the traditionalist NU as the leaders of New Order’s Islamic politics.

The consequence of the stabilizing the politics through authoritarian political fusion enable depoliticization of Indonesian politics which constraining the political activity of parties (Rogers 1988, 248). It pruned the relationship between the political parties and the masses which enabled a loss of political education at the grassroots level. The New Order attempt to control the Islamic forces through depoliticization reached its peaked in 1978 when the regime decided to introduce the “single principle” (*asas tunggal*) in the Broad Outline of State Policy (Garis-garis Besar Haluan Negara, GBHN) in the parliament. The “single principle” aimed to make Pancasila the state ideology and prohibited any political ideology, including Islamism.¹⁷ The Islamic forces in PPP rejected the introduction of “single principle” since it would have relativized the position

¹⁶ With Sukarno’s decision to disband Masyumi and the emergence of conflict that threatened the social base of NU due to the promotion of land reform legislation, it had been politically justified for the Islamic forces to displace him with Suharto. It is unsurprising that at the time of the political rise of the New Order, the Muslim force fully backed Suharto’s maneuver to topple Sukarno by aligning with the military.

¹⁷ This decision cannot be separated from the election result of 1977 in which PPP gained a significant vote. The election result signified a political threat to the legitimacy of the regime, since Islamic political aspiration was influential among the masses (Liddle 1978).

of Islam *vis a vis* other religions,¹⁸ especially the indigenous religion (Iqbal 2017).¹⁹ With the political fusion and single principle policy, the political process of Indonesia become fully depoliticize. The masses were no longer able to participate in the political process since all parties politics were being controlled and promoting aspiration through ideology was being repressed. This de-politicization also meant that the political process would be contained at the elite level, producing unaccountability in politics. In Gramscian view, this political structure of the state that produced by the New Order politics disentangle the political aspiration of the masses at the civil society level from the dynamics of the political society.

The disentanglement of political society from the dynamic of civil society enable ambiguous effect on the relationship between the regime and the Islamic forces. While at political level the Islamic forces were clearly controlled by the regime, at civil society level the regime promote several political initiatives to accommodate Islamic forces. This accommodation can be seen the establishment of an Islamic body known as Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Indonesian Council of Ulama, MUI) in 1975. MUI is functioned as an advisory council of for the government related to Islamic affairs. The composition of MUI of Islamic scholars that affiliated with acknowledged Islamic organizations. Most of these Islamic scholars come from the two major Islamic organizations, Muhammadiyah and NU (Hosen 2004). One can argue that the

¹⁸ The rejection did not appear only in PPP. Many Muslims saw the implementation of this policy as *shirk* (idolatry). One Muslim community that reacted harshly to this policy was in Tanjung Priok, Jakarta. They were using mosques to campaign about how the New Order regime had turned into an anti-Muslim government. The government responded to their campaign by incarcerating many members of the community. on September 12 1984, the community mobilized a great recitation occasion to protest the government's unjust behavior toward it. The government answered the mobilization by cracking down on the participant, using repressive means. Eighteen people died and 53 participants were injured due to the violent measure of the government. Known as Tanjung Priok Tragedy, this moment left deep marks among the Muslims regarding how the state systematically marginalized their position (see Akmaliah 2014).

¹⁹ During the parliamentary assembly, many legislators from PPP decided to walk out, as they protested "single principle." The regime countered the resistance of the Islamists by manipulating the leadership composition of the PPP. The general chairmanship of the party that had been held by NU was assumed by a government figure (Radi 1984, 152).

forming of MUI was a political cooptation by the regime towards the Islamic forces. But, this political cooptation can has as a political significance for Islamic forces since the state provided an institutional channel for them to shape and influence the policy of the state. Although the political space remains limited regarding Islamic affairs.²⁰

The regime accommodation to the Islamic forces then culminate with the establishment of Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals, ICMI) in the early 1990s. ICMI is an Islamic organization that gathered Muslim intellectuals, professional, and businessman from various Islamic organizational backgrounds who aimed to support Indonesian development under the New Order regime. Hefner (1993) argues that the establishment of ICMI was related to the regime's need to gain support from the emergent Muslim middle class. This Muslim middle class had grown in the juncture of the success of Indonesian development due to the government's achievement in reducing the inflation level from 600% to 10% in 1969 and the significant contribution of the oil boom that brought economic growth to 8% (Dick 1985, 88). When Indonesian development was hit by a crisis in the 1980s, the government was forced by international capital to deregulate the economy (Soesastro 1989). As the regime (partially) did so, especially in the banking /financial sector, it needed a new social base to support its new development agenda. The existing social base that came from the military and the bureaucrats that had sustained the regime before the crisis needed to be re-arranged. With the government concerned about pursuing economic reform, the regime needed a new approach and started to embrace the Muslim middle class as the main supporter in the new political circumstances. It is unsurprising that ICMI "presented an opportunity to conjure

²⁰ Liddle (1996 614) even suggest that the regime has positively attitude toward various Islamic organizations' since they the regime can be really responsive to change certain policies that were considered disadvantageous by these Islamic organization.

up a corps of new mandarins that could countervail the influence of the military bureaucracy in particular...” (Robison and Hadiz 2004, 115).

Other mode of New Order’s political accommodation towards the Islamic forces was conducted through incorporating many elite figures from the forces to join the political machinery of the state. Apparent incorporation can be seen in how plenty of student activists from the student organization of Masyumi, Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (Islamic Student Association, HMI) were recruited into the main political instrument of the regime, Golongan Karya (Functional Group, Golkar). Many of these activists became the future political elite of the organization (Suryadinata 2007, 338). Moreover, the regime allowed these activists to partake in the bureaucracy as they become an important part of sustaining the regime’s policy. Even at the local level, the regime encouraged ex-members of Darul Islam to become the functionaries of Golkar (Temby 2010, 6). Thus, to some extent, the ruling class in the authoritarian regime had certain behaviors to accommodate some element of the Islamic forces’ becoming part of the power alliance.

The state even played an active role in supporting the necessary infrastructure for the development of the religion of Islam during Suharto’s era. Hefner (1993) finds that under the New Order regime, the number of mosques constructed by the government increased significantly. For instance, in East Java the number grew from 15,574 in 1973 to 25,655 in 1990. A similar situation occurred in Central Java where between 1980 and 1992 the number of mosques doubled (Ibid. 10). The regime was also actively involved in the massive expansion of Institute Agama Islam Negeri (State Islamic Institute Colleges, IAIN) which during the 1970s and 1980s produced a large number of graduates educated in Islamic law, theology, and education. In this process, Suharto even developed a presidential foundation, the Amal Bakti

Muslimin Pancasila (Pancasila Islamic Charity Service), that was tasked with supporting the construction of 400 mosques and training for preacher to be posted in several area in Indonesia.

While the accommodation suggests an asymmetric relationship between the regime and Islamic forces, it also indicates that to some extent the relationship between these two elements was not necessarily contradictory. This argument comes from the fact that they shared the anti-communist tendency which had contributed to the political change in the Indonesian state after Sukarno. As stated by Hamka, an initial leader of MUI, the reason on why the Islamic forces should welcome the invitation of the regime to form MUI was because they were both shared anti communist sentiment (Hosen 2004, 151). This common interest against communism facilitated the regime for allowing the Islamic forces to maintain their influence and ideas in the authoritarian environment.

This accommodation that provided by the regime, albeit limited, enable a space for the Islamic forces to outmaneuver the state power. The Islamic forces started to use cultural methods to spread their ideas and an implicit political agenda to make the society more receptive to Islamic agenda. Interestingly, the attempt to spread out Islamic message to the New Order's public did not occur monolithically. There was a struggle of Islamic ideas on how the relationship between Islam and politics should be developed in the context of New Order politics. One of the position of Islamic ideas that emerge during New Order was what Hefner (2000) nuancedly argues as "civil Islam." Civil Islam posits a pluralistic interpretation of Islam that enriched the treasures of Islamic thought and tradition. "Civil Islam" suggest that every Muslim has responsibility to engage with political and economic issues in order to create an Islamic civil society "affirming democracy, voluntarism, and balance of countervailing power in a state and society" (Ibid. 12). The condition of civil Islam generates Islamic thinking like the

Neo-Modernist Islam which aimed to provide humanistic, moderate, and rational interpretation of Islam has a close affinity with the interest of the regime to construct a “model of faith, reason and common sense, apolitical and moral... in ascension and socially responsible practice” (Cone 2002, 54-5).²¹ From this current, a democratic based Islamic thinking starting to emerge. One of the key proponent of Indonesian Neo-Modernist Islam is Nurcholish Madjid (1983). He suggests that the ultimate ambition of Indonesian Muslims is to establish democracy. For him, the importance of democracy lies in its function, since it provides an open political rule that can anticipate and correct any political wrong-doing by the government and also guarantee that the government will rule according to the aspirations of the people (Ibid. 19).

Other Islamic position that also occur in the context of New Order’s civil society was hardline Islamic current. This stream was signified by its direct opposition to the regime. However, the sources of their hardline Islamic position were varied. The first inspiration derived from the experience of the Islamic revolution in Iran with its revolutionary interpretation of Islam that derived from Shiite tradition (van Bruinessen 2002, 131). While another sources for hardline Islam was developed by the role of Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Missionary Council, DDII). Founded in 1967 by a former chairperson of Masyumi and also a prominent figures in modernist Islam, Muhammad Natsir, DDII is an Islamic organization that initially aimed to disseminate Islamic teaching. However, as an organization, DDII has strong affinity to conservative Islamic current that mostly developed in Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia.²² This connection makes DDII has particular interest to spread out conservative

²¹ It is unsurprising that many proponent of this current have a convenient position in state structure, such as a vice-chancellor of IAIN (Cone 2002, 61). This mode of thinking became the main position of the Islamic forces that initiated the establishment of ICMI.

²² This connection could occur because Natsir was a member of the founding committee of Rabitat al-Alam al-Islami (World Muslim League, the Rabita), an international Muslim organization supported by conservative Saudi Arabia which aimed to counter the influence of Nasser’s Arab radical nationalist movement.

interpretation of Islam. The Saudi's financial support not only granted DDII to build mosques, train preachers, and establish an educational program for continuing religious study in Saudi Arabia, but also encourage them to spread out the idea of conservative Islam. In the 1970s and 1980s, DDII deliberately disseminated the thinking of conservative Islamists like the founder of Ikhawnul Muslimin (Muslim Brotherhood, IM) Hasan Al Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Yusuf Qardawi and Al Mawdudi (Van Bruinessen 2009, 5). Many Indonesian graduates from Saudi Arabia supported by DDII also played an active role in spreading this Islamic conservatism that derived from Wahabi tradition (van Bruinessen 2009, 5).²³

DDII's important role on developing Islamic conservatism had two apparent organizational implications for Islamic politics. First, the conservatism of DDII successfully penetrated the old network of DI. Two preachers who were well-connected in DDII circles, Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Basyir, revived the political agenda of DI in their Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) in Ngruki, Central Java (Van Bruinessen 2002, 129). Second, DDII dissemination of the conservative idea that comes from IM facilitated many members of the Muslim middle class to replicate IM movement by establishing a covert Islamic politics known as Tarbiyah (education) movement in the early 1980s. This movement used a specific system consisting of an open study circle known as *halqah* that is usually held in campus mosques, and a more secretive one called *usroh* held in the homes of their members. This structure was needed since the theme of the education was quite risky in that they rejected "the Pancasila state and of un-Islamic practices in modern Indonesia" (Ibid. 133).

It is important to note that although the conservative Islamic groups might have strong opposition to the regime, they were not necessarily disconnected from the politics of the regime

²³ DDII also engaged with an anti-Shi'a campaign. With support from Saudi and Kuwait, DDII denounced Shi'a as a "fatal deviation from Islam" (Van Bruinessen 2002, 127).

itself. Suharto attempts to control the military that at that time led by Christian general figures, Benny Murdani, enable internal conflict within the military in the mid 80s. To counter Murdani's influence, a military faction called as "Green army" was organized under the supervision of Suharto. The use of "green" in here was deliberate since it represent the Islamic symbolism as the faction aimed to mobilize religious sentiment to challenge Murdani's personal identity. From this internal struggle, the "Green army" started to organize support from outside the military, especially coming from the conservative Islamic groups. The support of the regime to the position of conservative Islamic groups was deepened with the rise of a general that coming from "green army" faction, Faisal Tanjung, replacing Murdani in early 90s (Jahroni 2004, 214). Tanjung's leadership in the military marks the integration Islamic conservative groups to the politics of the regime. One can argued that this process effects to the enforcement of certain element Islamic politics in the late phase of authoritarian rules.

It can be said that although Islamic politics had been marginalized, the influence of the Islamic forces did not diminish accordingly. The New Order's hegemony might sideline the political position of Islamic forces. It is important to note that the marginalization of Islamic forces did not necessarily means fully eliminate Islamic politics itself. The regime marginalization simultaneously isolates the existence of Islamic forces at civil society level which maintained the influence of Islamic politics from any political suppression. The influence of Islamic politics strengthened when some element of Islamic forces, which is the conservative Islamic groups, was utilized for the purpose of the regime's politics. As Suharto fell and Indonesia experienced a political change, this social formation of Islamic forces became an important factor on why Islamic politics could gain influence despite the failure of the Islamic parties.

Constrained Hegemony of Islamic Politics in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia

The fall of Suharto in 1998 eliminated the hegemonic power of New Order's repressive-developmentalism. It seems obvious that for Islamic forces, this condition can be opportunities. As the forces that domesticated (i.e, incubated) at the civil society level of the New Order state, the eradication of New Order hegemony might lead to the revitalization of Islamic hegemony. However, I argue, two important factors such as the legacy of New Order's politics, in the form of the remaining old political elites and social organization, and the adoption of neoliberal agenda of free market economy contributes to the unevenness of Islamic politics influence that leads to their constrained hegemony within the authoritarian state. The reason on why the unevenness can takes place is due to the different political process that facilitated by these two factors in both political and civil society level. At political society level, these two factors seems to weaken and subordinate Islamic politics that organized in political parties. While at civil society level, both factors precisely leads to the reinforcement of Islamic politics in its conservative form of social organization.

The penetration of these two factors occur in the midst of Indonesian political transition. Neoliberalism as a factor shape post-authoritarian Indonesian through the imperative of economic reform. As the fall of Suharto was nudged by 1997 economic crisis in Indonesia, neoliberal agenda occur as the critique to the New Order capitalist policy that heavily driven by state developmentalism. Unlike the 80s reform in which the state only conduct partial economic restructuring in financial sector, the economic reform for the 1997 economic crisis required a deep and comprehensive adjustment. Through the role of the international financial institutions (IFI) such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the Indonesian

government had to submit to the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) that required the Indonesian economy to be structurally deregulated, liberalized, and privatized. The submission to the SAP signified the adoption of free-market economic project known as neoliberalism. This adoption transformed the Indonesian state structure in which its economy become more integrated into the global market, which in turn unleashed the need for *reformasi politik* (political reform) (Robison et al 2005).

The implementation of neoliberal reform facilitated the continuation of New Order legacy. The process occur through the reorganization of oligarchic elites that had been incubate during New Order rule. As argued by Robison and Hadiz (2004, 50), the elite consolidation occurred not through rejecting neoliberal market reform, but by selectively exploiting the neoliberal agenda and using it according to the elites' interest. As these elite forces become powerful, the Islamic forces could not escape their influence. The 2004 election signified a moment when the non-Islamic elites captured the Islamic forces under their influence. The political fragmentation of the Islamic forces coincided with the political maneuvering of the non-Islamic elite to accommodate some segment of the Islamic forces as part of the electoral nomination.

How the legacy of New Order and neoliberalism effect the impairment of Islamic politics through parties can be traced back in their attempt to rule the post-authoritarian state. This possibilities cannot be separated from the historic role of the Islamic forces in supporting *reformasi* movement (Kadir 1999). Islamic forces, through their neo-Modernist current, also contribute comprehensively in developing the idea of Islamic democracy that become hegemonic and successful to mobilize the population to support democratic Indonesia against Suharto's authoritarian rule (See Thaha 2005). Two important figures that becomes the leaders of

reformasi movement, Amien Rais and Abdurrahman Wahid, were also chairpersons in Muhammadiyah and NU, respectively. The contribution entailed political leverage from Islamic forces to be a decisive factor in the transitional process.

These possibilities then realized when Indonesia held its first democratic election in 1999. The victory of Abdurrahman Wahid's nomination as the first president of the post-authoritarian Indonesia provided opportunity for Islamic forces to promote agenda of Islamic politics.²⁴ Yet, the prospect for the Islamic forces to rule the state without any problem seems far from reality. As Wahid became the first president after the 1998 reform, he had to proceed with the reform agenda that had been presented. His effort to promote reform unfortunately was not running smoothly. Wahid ruled without any clear agenda on economic reform and development. The state bureaucracy inherited from the New Order regime also became an obstacle because of the administration's incapability in promoting a market economy (Parker and Skytta 2000, 42-43). The absence of effective state machinery to support reform combined with Wahid's erratic leadership created difficulty for the first government of a post-New Order regime. Robison and Hadiz (2004) argue that the difficulty was rooted in the structural condition of the state, in which the new government had to face political power that resisted any institutional change suggested by the IFI. They even see the erratic behavior characterizing Wahid's leadership as "a response to the overwhelming political obstacle to reform faced by Wahid and the meagre political resources he was able to mobilize to drive a reformist agenda" (Ibid. 217).

²⁴ One has to remember that during the transitional phase in 1999, Indonesian politics had not yet implemented direct election because the constitution had not been amended. As parliament became an important arena for electing a president, the Central Axis led by Amien Rais successfully endorsed Wahid in October 1999. To maintain political stability, the vice-president position was given to PDI-P's presidential nominee who was also the chairman of the party, Megawati.

The difficulty of Wahid's administration to enact reform had an impact with his Islamic supporter base. Unclear political maneuvering of the administration to promote reform isolated many elements of the Islamic forces that supported Wahid's presidency. This can be seen in Wahid's carelessly dismantling some positions of his ministry without considering the Islamic parties that had supported his candidacy. This careless measure created tension within his Islamic base and triggered old conflict between the modernists and the traditionalists. The modernists saw that Wahid's administration had abandon his promise to accommodate the aspiration of the Muslim community. This tension then undermined the political unity ended the "intra-Islamic honeymoon" which resulting in the fall of Wahid's presidency and internal fragmentation of Islamic forces (Mietzner 2008, 263).

The failure of Wahid's administration elucidate the momentum for the weakening of Islamic forces. The weakening thus enable political captures of the agenda of Islamic parties by the old elite forces that reorganized during political transition. The peak of elite capture toward the Islamic parties occurred with the victory in the 2004 election of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. As a figure, Yudhoyono came from a non-Islamic party, Partai Demokrat (Democratic Party, PD). He also had a strong connection with the New Order regime. He had been an army general who during Suharto's rule played an active role as a chairman of a military faction in the parliament that participated in electing Suharto to his seven terms. During his own campaign, Yudhoyono's and his party's proclaiming themselves to be a religious-nationalist force successfully gained support from Muslim voters, especially the educated urban middle class (Miichi 2015, 136). To support his presidency, Yudhoyono embraced two Islamic parties, Partai Bulan Bintang (Moon and Star Party, PBB) and Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Justice and Prosperity

Party, PKS), as part of his official coalition.²⁵ The success of Yudhoyono by bringing a catch-all platform into his candidacy affected the Islamic parties to move into centrist politics. The Islamic parties became more tolerant of a non-Islamic agenda and accepted political pluralism in their organizational platform.²⁶ This situation leads to the weakening the influence of Islamic forces that organized as parties at political society level.

Meanwhile, the legacy of New Order and neoliberalism enables different processes at post-authoritarian's civil society level. Unlike to what happens in the terrain of political society, the political elite that nurtured by New Order politics plays an important role in strengthening the position of Islamic forces, particularly the position of conservative Islamic groups, at civil society level. The political elite organized social organization for the conservative Islamic groups as part to maintain their interest in civil society. As noted by Hadiz (2011), the close relationship between the elite and conservative Islamic forces can be seen in the case of the formation of Pasukan Pengamanan Swakarsa (voluntary security guard, Pam Swakarsa). Pam Swakarsa originated from an Islamic conservative group that in the past had taken a critical position against the regime. It was organized by the military, with the pretext on the military accusation

²⁵ With the failure of Islamic parties in 2004, Islamic forces started to re-calculate their position in the existing political constellation. The impetus to revisit their position came from established Islamic organizations like NU and Muhammadiyah. The experience of the 2004 election generated political tension and division among Muslims that prompted them to de-politicize their organizational position. They were no longer attached to any Islamic parties, especially the Islamic parties that had been deliberately established by their cadre, like Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (National Awakening Party, PKB) for NU and Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party, PAN) for Muhammadiyah (see Mietzner 2009)

²⁶ The consequence of elite capture during Yuhoyono's rule and the repositioning of Islamic forces through its parties was the re-insulation of Islamic politics from its social base. The Muslim constituents no longer had an official political channel and direct connection with Islamic parties. Interestingly, at the same time, this situation enabled the spread of Islamic politics beyond party constraints. This moderation prompted the condition for the absence of a political monopoly over an Islamic agenda by Islamic parties, thus mainstreaming Islamic politics into the political constellation of the elite. The elite accommodation to Islamic politics can be considered merely as a symbolic gesture to gain popularity among Muslim voters. However, it is hard to deny the appeal of Islamic identity as a political advantage for gaining votes in electoral politics (See Pepinsky et al. 2012).

that the resistance of the student movement was influenced by communist forces.²⁷ The leader of Pam Swakarsa, Habieb Rizieq, was part of the network of conservative Islamic groups that had a strong link with DDII (Hefner 2012, 110).

The experience of Pam Swakarsa marks an important condition for the distinct development of Islamic politics. Pam Swakarsa inspired the formation of many conservative Islamic groups (or militants) to preserve the interest of the political elite in the new state (Mudhoffir, 2017). The inclusion of the conservative Islamic groups under elite politics entailed the strengthening of influence of Islamic conservatism in civil society. With the existence of this kind of conservative Islamism, the adoption of democracy as the result of political reform would not necessarily lead to a diverse and vibrant civil society. Instead, any plurality of ideas would have to meet the challenge from conservative Islamic groups. The conservative Islamic groups might prevent any thought or idea that could be considered problematic according to their view. This hindrance can be seen in how, after *reformasi*, the conservative Islamic groups forcefully protested against many public activities that were demanding the state to resolve the 1965 pogrom according to human rights principles as they fear that it will allow communism to live in Indonesian (Zurbuchen 2002). Although their claim seems ridiculous, their power to systematically suppress and limit the development of public discourse facilitated the illiberal democratic space in civil society (Hadiz 2004).

However, the elite process is not the only process that enable the reinforcement of conservative Islamic position at civil society level. The penetration of neoliberalism reinforce the conservative interpretation of Islam since it provide a cultural channel for consumerist

²⁷ However, during the political transition, the fear of a communist revival became a crucial factor in the collaboration between this Islamic group and the elite. This fear was only rhetorical since the formation was aimed at crushing the student movement which at that time demanded total reform, potentially undermining the interest of the existing elite (Hadiz 2000, 7).

expression for the Muslim middle class and ideological expression for the lower class as to response their social marginalization. The penetration of neoliberal free market that amplify Indonesian Islamic conservatism manifested into what Rudnyckyj (2009) describes as “market Islam.” Market Islam can be considered a transformation of the concept of “civil Islam” in Indonesia. If civil Islam puts emphasis on the social responsibility of Muslims in the face of state power, then market Islam is concerned less with state and social issues and more with personal morality aimed “to merge religious practice and capitalist ethics” (Ibid. 183).²⁸

Market Islam enable the construction of Islamic symbolism as the solution for the capitalist “worldly difficulties” (Joshnloo 2013, 1865). Hasan (2009) observes how ideational construction promote of a new model of Islamic *da’wa* (preaching). Unlike its predecessor in the New Order era when Islam was usually preached to a limited audience, this new model of *da’wa* was able to “creatively translate and package Islamic messages for mass consumption” (Ibid. 247). Although this model had strong motives for capitalist accumulation since the mass consumption “opened up market opportunities for so-called Islamic products” (Ibid. 247), it had a consequence on how Islam would appear in the public face. The need to provide mass consumption of Islamic teaching bypassed any of the complexity of learning that is embedded in Islamic scholarship. The requirement for deep learning in order to understand Islam became redundant since the message was instantaneously provided by the *da’wa* agent. It is unsurprising that market Islam enabled the development of a consumerist orientation among the Muslim middle-class post-authoritarian state (see Rinaldo 2008; Heryanto 2011).

²⁸ The practicality of market Islam for many Indonesian Muslims became an important factor for the conservative resurgence of Islamic life at the civil society level in the post-authoritarian state. In the backdrop of political transition and social uncertainty due to the continuous effect of economic crises, this approach became appealing for many Indonesian Muslims. Rudnyckyj also suggest that accentuation in individual religious practice provided a practical way for Muslims to address a broader social problem surrounding them: that the social difficulty faced by Muslims was the consequence of their lack of piety and effort to enhance individual religious practices (Rudnyckyj 2009. 197).

However, “market Islam” is not the only effect that created by neoliberalism. Neoliberalism also reproduces economic inequality that leads to social marginalization for some members of Indonesian Muslim, especially for the Muslim lower class. This condition of social marginalization creates class resentment for the Muslim lower class. As the constellation of social organization inherited by the New Order regime hindered any development of leftist/progressive forces to channel class resentment, most of the Muslim lower class can only make use on what available for them which are the conservative Islamic organization (Hadiz 2011, 32; Alamsyah and Hadiz 2017). This condition leads to the incorporation of class discontent of the Muslim lower class within the organization of the conservative Islam. The expression of class resentment within conservative Islamic organization perpetuate with the event of 9/11. As argued by Tibi (2002), the event of 9/11 provided a narration for Islamic forces to challenge the secular international order and Western life-style. This international context empowered Indonesian conservative Islamism since it become a concrete solution for the problem for the marginalized Muslim population.

The case of Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defender Front, FPI) can be an example on how the lower classes also empowered and utilized conservative Islam to meet their own interest. As a vigilante organization founded in 1998 by the leader of Pam Swakarsa, Habib Rizieq, FPI provided an institutional channel for the urban poor to express their class resentment through Islamic sentiment. As observed by Wilson (2014), FPI’s use of the Quranic edict *amar maruf nahi munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil), attracted “unemployed youths and men from slums, poor neighborhoods and peri-urban areas” (Ibid. 248). FPI successfully appropriated local conflicts and defined them as part of a larger Islamic response to the decadence and immorality directed toward the Muslim community (Ibid. 250). The attraction of the lower class to FPI was

related to three important reasons: “defending notions of a socially heterogeneous and conservative community in the wake of demographic and socio-economic shifts; using this process as a means of increasing their own social and political capital; and having a means through which to voice generalized rather than specifically religious resentment and grievances at the state, social and political elites and impacts of market capitalism” (Ibid. 268).²⁹

The penetration of neoliberalism to the New Order legacy of conservative Islam that leads to the emergence of market Islam for the middle-class and Islamic class resentment in the lower class facilitates non-elite process of Islamic politics. Since both the middle-class and the lower class frame their own interest within the language of Islam. For the middle-class, Islam become important justification in fulfilling their demand for consumption. As for the lower class, Islam becomes the only available idea and organization that can help them to address their social marginalization.

Conclusion

The rising influence of Islamic politics despite the failure of Islamic parties in the context of the post-authoritarian period best understood as constrained hegemony of Islamic politics. Constrained hegemony is resulted from uneven power and influence of Islamic forces in post authoritarian Indonesian state. While the Islamic forces have been unable to dominate the terrain

²⁹ Saefullah’s (2017) observation of the religious turn in the contemporary Indonesian punk underground scene also affirms that notion that Islamic conservatism become the voice to deal with their pertinent situation. He suggests that the fall of Suharto was not in tandem with the affirmation of left-wing ideology (in this case, anarchism) in punk communities, but rather cast doubt in punk communities about left-wing ideology because that ideology fails to provide any satisfying solution in life (Ibid. 272). The market economy threatened the everyday life of the punk community, as it had to face the increased social and high financial costs of maintaining an underground scene. With the failure of left-wing ideology to provide an answer to their predicament, Islamism successfully penetrated the community, since it offered “a moral framework for youths to deal with the hardship of living in the modern capitalist world” (Ibid. 283). This process enabled a conservative turn in a community that traditionally identified as left-wing aspiration.

of the political society of the state due to the existence of a powerful elite, their influence at the civil society level remains unchallenged. The legacy of the New Order and the adoption of neoliberalism provided structural constraint and the enablement of Islamic politics. At the political society level, the adoption of neoliberalism generated a reorganization of the old force, facilitating the defeat of Islamic forces' ambition to dominate the state. Interestingly, these same factors also contributed to the resurgence of Islamic conservatism that has reinforced the influence of Islamic forces at the civil society level. Therefore, this process suggest that the influence of Islamic politics become constrained at the level of the civil society of the state.

Constrained hegemony illuminates the status of Islamic politics in Indonesia. Rather than seeing Islamic politics as external to Indonesian politics, Islamic politics is integral to the power dynamic of the state itself. The contingent nature of Islamic politics in the state derives from its changing relation to the existing dominant power that rules the state. It also suggest that the inability (or ability) of Islamic politics as a hegemonic forces should be defined in the context of the political struggle over the state manifested within the whole unity between civil society (non-elite) and political society (elite) terrain. This proposition helps us to think that the politicization of Islam cannot escape state power. Islamic politics can be influential because they are sustained by the state role in nurturing the value itself. This nurturing role has direct and indirect consequences in empowering the political capacity of Islamic politics.

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