Chapter 2: Jemaah Tarbiyah and Islamisation in Indonesia

The long process of Islamisation\(^1\) that planted its roots in the society of the Indonesian archipelago in the 14th century is by no means yet finished. It continues to bring about change and continuation, from conversion to re-islamisation.\(^2\) After Islam gained its roots in Indonesia until now, all efforts of Islamisation carried out by its agents mainly have aimed to bring the followers of Islam closer to practices of orthodox Islam (reform).\(^3\) Both traditionalists and modernist have been known for their role in carrying out the reform in different degree and approaches. This ongoing process has also manifested interesting and distinct phenomena through time, depending on the varying contexts of social and cultural change.

Over the centuries, Islam has played a major role, not only in shaping society but also in directing the course of Indonesian politics. The fact that Muslims are the majority in Indonesia is considered clear evidence of the importance of Islam. However, to what extent Islam has been adopted at the contemporary structural level is still debatable. In order to gain sufficient knowledge about its role, two distinct approaches: cultural and political, in the Islamisation process need to be presented.\(^4\) While cultural approach tends to focus itself effort in Islamising the society, the political (structural) approach prefer to rely on structural and political power in carrying out its Islamisation agenda.\(^5\)

Thus the emergence of Jemaah Tarbiyah in Indonesia is not an isolated phenomenon, but part of the general process of Islamisation. Through a detailed study of the model and approach of Jemaah Tarbiyah in furthering its *dakwah* or predication, we can discover the religious and political orientations of the movement, and in particular, the movement’s view of the relationship between religion and the state in Indonesia. As part of an agenda of Islamisation in Indonesia, Jemaah Tarbiyah has devoted its energies to two kinds of reform: to cultivate those who are “already Muslims” and to reform the formal political structural system according to Islamic teachings.\(^6\)

This chapter aims to analyse the strategy of Jemaah Tarbiyah in its efforts to Islamise Indonesia at the levels of society and the state. Since the issue of Islam-state relations is an important one in Indonesia, it deserves elaboration in this chapter. Through a detailed investigation of the movement, the author will argue that the Islamisation process by the *Tarbiyah* movement since the 1980s has brought cultural and political changes leading to demands that the state accommodate better the “ideals of Islam” (*cita-cita Islam*).
A. Islamising Society: Towards Orthodox Islam

In general, a cultural strategy aims to influence people’s behaviour and views. It often uses an individual and moral approach to bring about change in society as a whole. It was through such a cultural approach that Islam was first introduced, avoiding any confrontation with local beliefs. Accommodation through cultural dialogue becomes an alternative solution in minimising friction between the proponents of old beliefs and the preachers of the new religion.

The spread of Islam from the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent and China, to Indonesia was a considerable process of conversion that has made Indonesia the largest Muslim country, while also accommodating local elements from previous religions. Islam in Indonesia has shown diversity in nature; indeed any effort to generalise about current Islamic phenomena throughout the Muslim world as homogenous would be misleading.

An analysis of new Islamic movements in relation to an ongoing process of Islamisation will increase awareness of local contributions, rather than overestimating international influences. Interestingly, almost all current new-style Islamic movements throughout the Islamic world share common inspirations, that is from Hasan al-Banna of the Muslim Brothers of Egypt or Mawlana Mawdudi of the Jamaat Islami of Pakistan but they are distinguished by their national contexts and experiences.

Geographical, structural and cultural challenges contribute to the agenda and character of the new Islamic movements. It is more reasonable to speak of the Muslim Brothers-inspired movements in the context of their geographical domains, such as the Egyptian Muslim Brothers, the Syrian Muslim Brothers and the Indonesian Jemaah Tarbiyah Muslim Brothers rather than to depict these movements as a monolithic phenomenon of Muslim Brothers followers. Both the societal and structural processes of Islamisation are an important starting point in comprehending the character of this growing of Islamic activism, particularly Jemaah Tarbiyah, since it has transformed itself from a religious into a political movement.

The tension between Islam Kafah and the accommodation of local beliefs, which occurs in many parts of the archipelago, has given rise to the emergence of religious movements under the banner of purification and perfection. At times this has become a prominent phenomenon among sections of Indonesian Muslims. These movements consider it necessary to carry out a process of religious rectification in order to eradicate local cultures and customs and to embrace a process of religious revitalisation by bringing Islam into political practices, in order to liberate Muslim politics from foreign, mainly Western domination.

For many centuries, Islam in Indonesia has been embraced by its followers in different forms of expression and commitment. Initial converts, for instance,
simply perceived Islam as a supplement to their old beliefs and rituals. In the coastal part of Java, at least until the late 18th century, Islam attracted followers for economic and political reasons rather than doctrinal ones. Some historians have argued that in the coastal ports of the archipelago there were to be found more committed Muslims than their fellow Muslims in the interior areas. However, it is too early to identify coastal Muslims as “more self-conscious about their religious identity” than the majority of the inhabitants of the interior. Conflicts between coastal and inland Javanese states often occurred, but they were not necessarily triggered by religious issues. They often resulted from contesting economic priorities between the coast and the hinterlands. It is still patently true that the Islamisation process in Indonesia was slow and a long time passed before Islam became recognised as the main religion.

There are many approaches to examine the process of Islamisation in Indonesia. First, the nature of the cultural approach of accommodating local beliefs led to a syncretic form of Islam. Islam developed to provide myriad detailed practices and rituals. However, the essence of Islam as prophetic revelation in the sense of requiring of its believers a total commitment and submission to the ultimate truth had been submerged. Such a total conversion was not the case in the initial Islamisation in Indonesia. In this phase, becoming a Muslim was very simple, requiring the convert merely to accept Islam by declaring the profession of faith.

Second, the political and economic dimension of Islamisation in Indonesia informs us that increased trade in the coastal regions of the archipelago made Muslim traders the main international mercantile network. The coastal courts controlling the trade routes and landfall for ships were chiefly interested in Islam in order to preserve their economic and political interests. In many cases the Islamisation of the coastal courts involved a change of religion, while the heads of kingdoms and the political structures remained unchanged. The establishment of the Islamic kingdoms in Indonesia resulted from the process of adoption of Islam by the rulers, not from the imposition of foreign powers in the archipelago. Or it was often the case that the people of a kingdom embraced Islam first, followed by their king. In order to secure his privilege the king would take an Islamic name, without firmly adhering to the doctrine of Islam.

Third, in studying religious origins, the “authenticity” and “purity” of Islam in Indonesia has often come under question. Islam came to Indonesia by various routes, including by way of South Asia and not directly from the Middle East. It has been established that Indian and Persian customs and rituals had influenced Islam before it was transferred to Indonesia. In Indonesia, the concepts and practices of mysticism are considered to be mostly derived from non-Islamic sources. The roles of Sufi preachers were significant in this process of Islamisation since the thirteenth century. For instance, the doctrine of the “Seven Stages” (martabat tujuh) and the “Perfect Being” (insan kamil) was adopted from Persian
Sufism and attracted many kings in the archipelago to embrace Islam because both systems assured privileged status for the rulers.\textsuperscript{24}

However, considering the Middle East as the source of a “purer” Islam and condemning non-Middle Eastern variants as “inauthentic” lead to unfair judgments. Islam in Indonesia is seen by many reformist groups as being far from authentic or peripheral compared to Islam in the Middle East. The reality is that both the Middle East and beyond has played a significant role in spreading Islam and both have made their contributions in shaping broader Islamic civilisation.

Since the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, the Haramayn, the two Arabian holy cities of Mecca and Medina, were centres of Islamic education where many great scholars and Sufi masters passed on their knowledge to their students. A large number of these great scholars and Sufi masters were not originally from the Middle East. They came from India or Persia and developed their religious authority in the Haramayn, attracting large numbers of students from throughout the Islamic world, including Indonesia. For instance, Sayyid Syibghat Allah Ibn Ruh Allah Jamal Al-Barwaji (d. 1606) was born in India. He travelled to the Haramayn and became influential as a leading reformer and great Sufi master. He became the focal point of an international network of learning in the Haramayn.\textsuperscript{25} His two predecessors, Ahmad Al-Qusasyi (b. 1583) and Ibrahim al-Kurani (1614-1690) were among leading reformers in Mecca and Medina.\textsuperscript{26}

In fact in this era, many non-Arabs developed religious networks and were recognised for their religious authority as a main reference for Muslims to study Islamic practices and knowledge. It was through such a network that the early reformist movements in the 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} century spread their influence throughout the Muslim world.\textsuperscript{27} Syaikh Yusuf Al-Maqassari from South Sulawesi (b. 1626) and Abd Al-Rauf of Singkel (b. 1620) from Aceh were among prominent Muslim scholars from Indonesia who gained their religious authorisation from Ahmad Al-Qusyasyi and Ibrahim Al-Kurani.\textsuperscript{28}

In order to gain sufficient insight into the types of Islamisation processes in bringing religious practices of Indonesian Muslims closer to Islamic orthodoxy, the following will be elaborated two approaches of Islamisation: accommodationist and purificationist. As we shall see later, Jemaah Tarbiyah has provided an alternative to the existing orientations, seeking the balance between accommodationists and purificationists. For summary see the following table.
Table 2: Models of Islamic Reform in Indonesian Religious Movements

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1. Accommodationist Reformism

We have seen how Islam has demonstrated its ability to penetrate Indonesian life in a peaceful manner and in natural ways. The accommodative picture of Islam was not the only case in Java; most areas in the archipelago before the coming of the colonial powers and the emergence of more aggressive purification-oriented movements indicated similar trends. It was later, after long interaction between the archipelago and the Middle East that orthodox Islam took root, influencing Indonesian Islam to observe religion as it was practised by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions in seventh century Saudi Arabia. The advance of technology in sea transportation and the easing of restrictions on the pilgrimage to Mecca enabled more Indonesian Muslims to visit the Middle East and to experience more of the practice of orthodox Islam.

In addition, socio-economic changes in the archipelago in the first half of the nineteenth century resulted from the operation of large plantations and sugar mills and made it possible for rural farmers to send their children to the Middle East to be educated in a “purer” style of religion. Those graduating from such Middle Eastern training contributed in changing the nature of Indonesian traditional religious education (pesantren) which has been widely known for its easy accommodation of local traditions and as the backbone of the traditionalist wing of Islam. Muslims were now directed to observe Islamic teachings more comprehensively, such as regularly performing the daily prayers, fasting, paying zakat (Ar. zakah) and making the great pilgrimage of the Hajj.

These efforts to introduce more orthodox Islam did not immediately correspond with ideas of rigid purification but constituted a more gradual process. The traditionalist group transformed itself into an agent of reform, to draw a line between nominal and syncretic Muslims (abangan) and orthodox Muslims (santri). They started to observe regular prayers, fasting in the month of Ramadhan and making the great pilgrimage to Mecca. The old practices were still tolerated as long as they did not distort the essence of Islamic teachings. In fact, the generations of Indonesian Muslims who returned from pilgrimage from the 17th until the 19th centuries, even though they promoted orthodox Islam as they had experienced it during their stay in the Middle East, remained non-confrontational towards local beliefs. They returned to their homeland,
were accorded the title of kyai (scholar) and set up Islamic boarding schools to instruct young men to practise some otherwise neglected aspects of Islamic teachings and to educate them about other classical knowledge of Islam. Their courses contained study of Qur’anic exegesis, the Prophet’s traditions, and Islamic Jurisprudences were written in special books called *Kitab Kuning* (Yellow Book) in both Arabic and Malay.

Although Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) was traditionalist, it nonetheless carried out a significant agenda of reform in Indonesia. NU was founded in 1926 by Hasyim Asyari (1875-1947) with the support of kyai networks and their religious schools, the pesantren. While requiring the application of orthodox Islam, they still carried out reform in gradual ways. This strategy was intended to avoid cultural and social disruption in society. According to the criticism by non accommodation-oriented movements, Muhammadiyah and Persis, this accommodation pattern often was often unable to prevail against existing practices. The opponents of gradual and slow Islamisation have blamed the traditionalist approach as being too tolerant of local customs and unaccepted practices (*bid’ah*).

According to M.C. Ricklefs, in practice, the Islamic teachers associated with the traditionalist groups often have more in common with rural *abangan* than with more urbanised modernist Muslims. However, this is true only in the case of common association between *abangan* and traditionalist *santri* in the countryside; in the case of religious and political commitment there are sharp distinctions among them. The conflicts between the Communists and the *santri* community in the bloodsheds of 1948 and 1965 there was a strong cooperation between traditionalist and modernist *santri* to fight against the *abangan*. Generally speaking, the traditionalists have been unhappy to be associated with *abangan* practices and syncretism, since both traditionalist *santri* and *abangan* identities carry very different connotations and orientations in Indonesian society.

Further analysis of traditionalist *santri-abangan* relationship and how traditionalist figures rejected the accusations of practicing syncretic practices, we can refer to Abdurahman Wahid’s articles. Wahid is of the most prominent even controversial - traditionalist figures, the chairman of NU (1989-1998) and the third president of Indonesia (1999-2000). He proposed the concept of *pribumisasi Islam* (the indigenisation of Islam). *Pribumisasi* entails a cultural accommodation that proceeds in natural ways; it is a kind of reconciliation process in order to solve any conflict that might arise between religion and local culture. This indigenisation process is not designed merely to avoid resistance from local cultures but it aims to preserve the very existence of all cultures in the society. According to Wahid, the total identification of Islam with the Middle East has endangered the cultural roots of Indonesia and threatens the essence
of Islam itself. Indigenisation also is required in religious interpretation; especially important is an awareness of local circumstances, law and justice.  

Abdurahman Wahid argues that pribumisasi is not a process of “Javanization” that will bring about syncretism. In formulating religious laws, for instance, an awareness of local cultures and customs can proceed without distorting the essence of Islamic law. It is because the principle of Islamic jurisprudence also provides the significant precept, al-’adah mu’addalah, “custom is made law.” Muslims should be aware of prevailing circumstances and not simply impose their own agenda, and here the effort to formalise the implementation of shariah is included. Such formalisation, according to Wahid, relegates the substance of Islam itself to a lesser importance.

Among the traditionalists, the concept of the common good that gives a higher priority to the welfare of the community (maslahah) is considered a main principle in dealing with broader issues in society and politics. In the political arena, NU has been known for its strong commitment to accommodation and compromise, a valuable quality of flexibility in dealing with the realities of Indonesian politics. NU has tended to consider the reality of power as its main argument in order to enable its elites to gain influence in the political structure, instead of being strictly guided by ideological and religious positions in pursuing its Islamic goals.

Nonetheless, in actual practice, the flexibility of NU in dealing with political and religious issues has been accompanied by a reluctance to develop cooperation with other Islamic groups and parties. NU’s critics have focussed on the issue that NU has no barriers to cooperation with non-Muslims but hesitates to build solidarity with other Islamic groups, particularly with the modernists. The existence of different doctrines and schools (madhahib) has impeded Islamic groups from cooperating with one another. In many cases cooperation and coalition did occur at first, but was subsequently broken off. The problem did not lie totally with the traditionalists but reflected the fragile nature of Islamic interest groups that were prone to disintegrate.

In fact, many of the younger generation of NU, particularly those who studied in the Middle East and were attracted to the practices of orthodox Islam, subsequently joined Jemaah Tarbiyah. Middle Eastern countries, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Jordan and Sudan, before known as the strongholds of traditionalist students coming from Indonesian pesantren, nowadays have become the backbone of Jemaah Tarbiyah caderisation.

2. Purificationist Reformism

The traditionalists, then, have carried out an agenda of reform in order to bring the followers of Islam in Indonesia to practice orthodoxy. However, because of their accommodation to local customs, this has been mixed with non-Islamic
teachings. When great numbers of Indonesians were able to travel to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage of the Hajj and to study, access to the “purer Islam” of the Middle East opened up. Newly returned pilgrims were not satisfied with what they saw as the incomplete process of Islamisation and the mixing of Islam with pre-Islamic local traditions at home. Consequently, they embarked on a further process of purification.

The purification-oriented reformists call for a return to the original foundations of Islamic teaching, the Qur’an and the Hadith (the Prophet’s Traditions). In stark contrast to the methods of the accommodationists who had carried the agenda of reform in a slow and silent manner, the purification-style reformists often harshly criticised practices that they found in violation of “authentic” Islam. This group claimed that corrupt practices such as bid’ah (innovation), khurafat (mysticism) and takhayul (superstition) and other local practices caused a deterioration of the Muslim community. The tension between accommodationist reformists and purificationist reformists has regularly led to disputes and mutual criticism. In addition, the intrusion of Western traditions into Muslim countries, including Indonesia, has been perceived by purificationists as a major cause of the decline of Muslim civilization in Indonesia, since the nineteenth century, when colonial rule caused many indigenous states to lose their independence.

It is understandable that the main idea of the purification movement is to free all religious practices from extraneous elements and to follow “original” Islam strictly. Accordingly, not only religious practices and rituals must be in line with a purer source of Islam but worldly matters as well must be freed from non-Islamic influences, including Western traditions. The purification that aimed initially at internal reform within a particular community often developed into an attack on what was perceived as an external threat to Islam. During colonial times, religious leaders returning from the Middle East often opposed the Dutch and their associated local civil court system. These hajis not only appeared as a new force to oppose local traditional kyais but also to de-legitimise alien elements in colonial society. Nonetheless, some political purification-aimed reformists also chose to keep their distance from the established political system, realising that they were unable to change it. Others tried to work within the system in the hope that they might reform it after gaining solid support from the mass of the people.

In general, the purification-oriented movements do not show a common pattern in promoting the refinement of non-Islamic elements when they view the political problems of Muslims in the modern age. Some of them rigidly require religious and political practices to be totally free from things foreign, whilst other groups limit their actions to religious matters and openly accept local and modern influences in non-religious practices. It seems that the different orientations of these groups in responding to modern problems become the distinctive feature
of revivalist and modernist groups respectively. While the revivalists tend to eliminate and remove all un-Islamic influences in religion, the modernists are more concerned with the restoration of neglected aspects of Islam as it was at the time of the Prophet, for the time being, downplay the rigid purification of alien elements that already exist within establishment Islam.

The purification movements draw their ideological and doctrinal references from prominent Muslim scholars and reformers in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Chief among these are Abdullah Ibn Abd al-Wahab (1703-1791) who generated the core element of the revivalist group (uncompromising purificationist reformism) and Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) who advocated the idea of modernism (accommodative purificationist reformism). Subsequently, Abduh’s student, Rasyid Ridha (1865-1935) also played an important role in combining modernist and conservative orientations of Muslims. Both inspirations have greatly influenced the transformation of Islamic thought and the praxis of Indonesian Muslims since the late eighteenth-century.

a) Revivalism

This type of uncompromising purification-aimed reformism involves a strict application of the original sources of religious practice and worldly activity. The idea is to return to the practices as laid down by the Qur’an and the Prophet’s Traditions. The term *kolot* (traditionalist) and *moderen* (modernist) has been used in distinguishing the authenticity of the respective Islamic practices. Traditionalist *santri* have often become the focus of criticism of revivalist *santri* because of their accommodation in carrying out Islamisation. In fact, the impatient nature of this movement towards establishment Islam by embarking on radical patterns of purification has created deep and painful conflicts between the purifiers and the adherents of the old practices.

In Indonesia, early in the twentieth century, it was local religious leaders in West Sumatra, influenced by the teachings of Abdul Wahab, who generated the primary impulse of uncompromising purification, both religious and political. Their efforts not only caused religious division between the *kaum muda* (younger group) and *kaum tua* (older group) of their day but also drew upon similar roots of earlier civil war in Sumatra (1821-1837). This confrontation had been played out between the forces of Islam and Minangkabau *adat* (custom) and its champions. By launching an aggressive campaign of purification, Imam Bonjol and his Padri supporters tried to rid Islam of un-Islamic practices, such as cockfighting and gambling. They failed to defeat the adherents of *adat* because of Dutch armed intervention. One religious leader, Tuanku Nan Rintjeh felt that bare force was necessary to implant his tenets, under the rubric “to abolish all Minangkabau customs which were not sanctioned by al-Qur’an, with death as punishment for those who refuse to give their obedience.”

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Another uncompromising purification-oriented movement is the Islamic Union, Persatuan Islam (Persis). Differing from its predecessors regarding the need to use force in promoting its agenda, Persis, which is influenced by Rashid Rida’s ideas has declared itself the agent of purer Islam through education and predication. Founded by A. Hasan in Bandung in 1923, Persis developed into a cadre-type organization, which has worked for the establishment of a Muslim community strongly committed to meet “uncontaminated” Islamic obligations. Since it claims to be a cadre organization, Persis does not emphasise the expansion of membership and has tended to be exclusive in cultivating its cadres. However, it has produced a number of Islamic leaders and religious scholars who have become involved in national political activities in Indonesia. Among them are M. Natsir, Endang Syaifuddin Anshari, Isa Ansyari and many others.

Persis has striven to educate Muslims to abandon any practices not sanctioned in Islam, particularly those of traditionalist Muslims. In order to create a “backbone”, Persis established their own pesantren in Java, such as in Bandung and in Bangil, East Java. Again, the confrontational method of revivalist-type movements such as Persis in disseminating their religious doctrines has given rise to frequent conflicts among adherents of different Islamic groups. Strong cadre-type operations have proved to be more successful than broader, slower mass-based movements.

In a new phase, the seminal Salafi groups that have developed since the early 1980s represent a more conservative revivalist spirit in Indonesia. They urge all Muslims to practise their Islam based on the example of the Prophet Muhammad, his companions, and the trusted medieval scholars of the 7th and 8th centuries, the salafus-salih. Similar to the purification-oriented reformists, the Salafi groups are stricter and more rigid in implementing their ideas. They do not use a modern type of mass organization, but limit their efforts to whatever has been prescribed by the Prophet and trusted scholars. The exclusive nature of this movement requires the establishment of an Islamic community and the maintenance of networks among them. Islamic real estate and housing projects are interesting new phenomena in Indonesia and are mainly dominated by this group, and other Muslims wishing to create an Islamic living environment.

While many younger members of Persis have been attracted to join Jemaah Tarbiyah due to its similar aims of promoting the return to the Qur’an and Hadith, most members of Salafi groups have been reluctant to embrace Jemaah Tarbiyah. After having studied deeply the Salafi doctrines, many have left Jemaah Tarbiyah since they considered it too diluted in practising Islam due to its political inclinations.53
b) Modernism

Some purification-oriented reformists in Indonesia, influenced by various streams of purification movements in Egypt, have adopted different approaches in promoting their agenda of Islamisation. One such modernist group, identified by its willingness to cooperate with the challenges of modern life, promotes the call for Muslims to return to the foundations of Islam, the Qur’an and the Hadith. Their attitudes are in the main more accommodative and their programs are implemented to different degrees, depending on local social and cultural responses. Strictly speaking, this kind of purification movement is marked by its inclination to receive modern developments in conformity with Islamic teachings.

Muhammadiyah, which was founded in 1912 in Yogyakarta, Central Java by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan is a typical reform movement. It strongly promotes the ideas of religious purification and prohibits various practices considered to have a basis in pre-Islamic culture, such as visiting graves for meditation and veneration, mysticism and all forms of polytheism, but it demands less purification in the social sphere and in politics. Muhammadiyah has insisted that Islam must be adapted to the requirements of modern life through the practice of *ijtihad*, a return to the Qur’an and the Tradition in the light of individual, rationalist interpretation.  

Whilst other purificationists have failed to gain mass support, particularly in rural areas, the flexibility of the new *ijtihad* applied by Muhammadiyah has enabled it to deal with changes in Indonesian society. As a result, the advances of the reformists have been made at the expense of the traditionalist Muslims.  

This is mainly because Muhammadiyah has been able to provide social services and educational institutions for Muslims at the grassroots level. Since Muhammadiyah has focussed its activities on social and educational programs, many of the younger generation who are inclined toward political activities have little space to exercise their political interests within the organisation. In their search to meet these needs, they have found Jemaah Tarbiyah the best vehicle to develop their career in politics.

3. The *Tarbiyah* Model: An Alternative Islamisation

The emergence of Jemaah Tarbiyah represents the process of synthesis between accommodation and purification-orientated reformism in Indonesia. The movement emerged when the traditionalist-modernist dichotomy had blurred. The younger generation of Indonesian Muslims has been uninterested in involvement in the doctrinal disputes of the traditionalist and modernist groups; instead they turned to new ideas coming from the Middle East for their inspiration.
Jemaah Tarbiyah is inspired by the Islamic thought of Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949), the founder of the organisation *Ikhwanul Muslimun*, the Muslim Brothers of Egypt. The political and ideological aspects of al-Banna’s movement are well known and they have attracted the attention of scholars studying political Islam and the phenomenon of fundamentalism in the Muslim world. However, only a few observers have considered the religious and theological ideas of al-Banna, since most focus on the political and radical impact of his movement on newer fundamentalist groups.\(^{57}\)

Although many studies have linked his ideas to revivalist figures, such as Abd al-Wahab and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), al-Banna himself has never aspired to emulate them or mentioned their names in his writings and sermons. He was most influenced by Rashid Rida (1865-1935) whom he cites in his memoirs. Rida was a revivalist Salafi leader who was born in Syria and developed his intellectual career in Egypt. Al-Banna often attended Rida’s gatherings and visited the Salafi bookstore where he could read Salafi books and discuss them with the store’s owner, Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib, himself a Salafi scholar.\(^{58}\) Al-Banna was more typical leader of a movement than an intellectual or scholarly figure.

In his memoirs, al-Banna himself often stressed the influence of his traditional Sufi teachers, masters of mysticism, and rarely talked about revivalist figures. During the establishment of his social movement, and even later when it developed a more political orientation, he aspired to the model of Sufi guidance and the fellowship. Yet he was also driven by the ideal of bringing Islamic practices in line with the fundamental sources of Islam, the Qur’an and the Hadith.\(^{59}\) The establishment of the Muslim Brothers was an expression of his obsession to expand the spirit of the Sufi community into a broader context. He criticised the narrow interpretation of brotherhood applied by the Hasafi Sufi order, which he wanted to make its benefits and rules applicable to all Muslims. His long experience with the Hasafiyyah led him to reform certain aspects of Sufi practices that were, according to him, in violation of “purer” Islam.\(^{60}\) In fact, he was a devout adherent of Sufism and there was no evidence throughout his life, until his assassination, that he had renounced his Sufi practices.\(^{61}\)

On one hand, the Jemaah Tarbiyah movement is very much concerned with the idea of returning to the original sources of Islamic teachings, but on the other hand it is flexible in promoting its ideals. In these ideals not like the traditionalists who conform to cultural and local realities; Jemaah Tarbiyah prefers to promote a distinctly Islamic behaviour in society. For instance, while traditionalists do celebrate the pre-Islamic feast of the seventh month of a woman’s pregnancy (*tujuh bulanan*) adapting it with Islamic prayers, Jemaah Tarbiyah tends to avoid this practice. However, compared to other supporters of purificationist
movements, such as Persis or Muhammadiyah, Jemaah Tarbiyah is less strict but it is more concerned about promoting the role of Islam in politics.

In order to create strong cadres for the movement, Jemaah Tarbiyah emphasises the significance of cultivating “perfect character” (muwassafat) that must be thoroughly internalised. Candidate members are not fully admitted as members of Jemaah Tarbiyah until they show the required personal commitment. The qualities that all cadres of Jemaah Tarbiyah must possess are: uncontaminated faith (salim al-a’qidah), right worship (salim al-‘ibadah), perfect morals (matin al-khulq) an ability to work (qadirun ‘ala al-kash), wide knowledge (muthaqqafah al-fikr), a strong and healthy body (qawiyy al-jism), tenacity (mujahidun li nafsih), the capacity to demonstrate good management in all affairs (munazzam fi shu’nih), punctuality (harisun ‘ala waqtih) and they must be useful to others (nafi’un li ghayrih).

In order to ensure that members do physical exercise and develop new expertise, for instance, they are given special assessments. They are obliged to take exercise twice a week and to read books outside their own specialisation. The special qualities of the cadres are derived from the main principles of al-Banna’s teachings called arkan al-bay’ah, the principles of allegiance. The training manuals of PKS describe at length the significance of holding to right faith and ask Muslims not to perform spiritual healings (Ar. ruqyah) unless using Qur’anic verses, not to be associated with jinn or to seek help from the souls of the deceased. Regarding the issue of what Jemaah Tarbiyah calls the “right and uncontaminated faith” there is no mention of a need to fight against local cultures and the like. Even the case of innovation (bid’ah) or practices not ratified by Islam, Jemaah Tarbiyah follows al-Banna and tends to deal with them in a considerate manner. For instance, Al-Banna also tolerated the Sufi practice of tawasul (Ar. tawassul, the recitation of prayers requesting the mediation of the saints), which is considered an unlawful innovation by strictly purification-oriented reformists. Furthermore, al-Banna explained the way to deal with such variant practices among Muslims:

Every innovation in religious matters that has no roots in Islam and follows only personal desire is unlawful. It must be eliminated by using the best of ways. Those ways must not trigger another unlawful innovation [i.e. a negative reaction] which is more dangerous that the original innovation itself.67

One Jemaah Tarbiyah activist, Muslikh Abdul Karim, who holds a doctorate from Ibn Saud University, Saudi Arabia, and who was schooled in the traditional pesantren of Langitan, in Tuban, East Java, explained his attitude towards the different opinions on practice between the traditionalists and the modernists in Indonesia. He maintains his own traditional rituals, such as tahlilan, even

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though this practice has become a sore point of criticism from both revivalist and modernist groups.

When we were in Saudi Arabia, we established our own association that was neither too much NU nor Muhammadiyah. In King Saud University we used to perform *tahlilan* every Friday.  

In fact, both Jemaah Tarbiyah and the Muslim Brothers have similar opinions in responding to religious differences, such as in ritual and devotions. This has come about mainly because of the long involvement of the founder of the Muslim Brothers with a Sufi *tarekat*. (In Indonesia such practices are very much associated with traditionalist Islam.) And yet, in its earliest stage of development during the 1980s, Jemaah Tarbiyah inclined more to modernism than traditionalism, since most focal leaders of the movement were former active members of Islamic organizations, such as the Islamic University Students Association, Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI) and the Indonesian Islamic Students, Pelajar Islam Indonesia (PII). In addition, the influence of Saudi Arabia as a site of transmission of the ideas of the Muslim Brothers to Indonesians studying there has carried an indirect impact on revivalist and modernist views into Indonesia. What is not often discussed is the fact that activists of a traditionalist background are also in strength in the movement. They have had little public exposure because although they are culturally members of NU, they are not actively involved in it or its associated organizations.

My interviews with Jemaah Tarbiyah cadres and leaders reveal an important finding. There are significant numbers of NU background within PKS and this fact has not publicly recognised. The interviewees were specially selected figures occupying important positions in PKS, such as chairman, secretary and members of *shariah* Board, either on the Central Board of the Justice Party in Jakarta or in its provincial branches, such as East Java, West Sumatra, and South Sulawesi. About 36 persons were interviewed during 2003-2005. The religious background of respondents’ families and their affiliation with traditionalist or modernist organizations can be summarised as follows: based on parents’ religious affiliation, 19 out of 36 (53%) interviewees were from a traditionalist background and 12 out of 36 (33%) interviewees were from a modernist background. Only 5 out of 36 (14%) respondents come from a non-*santri* background (*abangan*).

When they were asked about their attachment to traditionalist or modernist organizations, 72% (26 persons) said they did not have association with either organization. Only 8% (3 respondents) and 19% (7 respondents) still identified themselves as part of traditionalist or modernist associations respectively, this being indicated by formal involvement or simply by self-identification. The tendency of PKS members to be reluctant to mention their previous association with traditionalist groups is mainly influenced by their goals to bring all Islamic forces into unity.  

This is summarised in the following table.
Table 3: Traditionalist and Modernist Affiliation of PKS Committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Traditionalist</th>
<th>Modernist</th>
<th>Abangan</th>
<th>Non Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though Jemaah Tarbiyah emerged within a revivalist milieu and has adopted the Muslim Brothers’ model in implementing its agenda, it has not adopted all of their ideas. Jemaah Tarbiyah is more a reflection of the younger generation of Muslims who are trying to find alternative references to the established Muslim groups, modernist or traditionalist.

Jemaah Tarbiyah has tried to play a major role as an agent of reform and to function as a mediating force among the various streams of Muslims in Indonesia. It has been accommodative in promoting its ideals in order to gain support from communities of different religious expression and has downplayed the role of religious purification. In general, as long as there are Muslims who believe that Islam is a way encompassing all aspects of life, Jemaah Tarbiyah will accommodate them.  

Based on the Jemaah Tarbiyah agenda mentioned above in its effort of bringing together Islamic forces in Indonesia, more aggressive revivalist groups, in particular those of Salafi groups, have often accused the activists of Jemaah Tarbiyah of sacrificing their Islamic principles to promote their ideas and recruit their members, since they have always kept an eye on popular support. In contrast, Jemaah Tarbiyah has been seen by traditionalist groups to be too radical in implementing its ideas, in particular in its demand for the formalisation of Islamic law. Its attempted role in integrating all Islamic forces has placed the movement in an ambiguous position. It criticises both traditionalist and modernist practices from time to time, but it also tries to urge them to unite under its Islamic political Islam.

The distinctive character of Jemaah Tarbiyah, in comparison with mainstream Islam in Indonesia, is its strong individualistic pattern of Islamisation. In general, the process of Islamisation has followed two templates. Firstly, that of communal conversion in which Islam is adopted by a tribal group, by certain members of society or by the inhabitants of a village. This pattern of Islamisation provides sufficient space these newly converts to maintain their own cultural identities and group interests. Those espousing the new doctrine are mainly downplayed and submerged by the old. Secondly, the template of individual conversion, in which new adherents accept not only the new religion but also a new cultural and ethnic identity. Individuals have to be ready to break off ties with their old society or group. The commitment to the new doctrine takes priority. These patterns of conversion lead to the possibility of alienation from the old group, association and even territory. The former type of Islamisation requires no “definite crossing of religious frontiers and the acceptance of new worship as
useful supplements and not as substitutes.” The latter type entails a greater struggle for the reorientation of faith and a more meaningful change, in which individual consciousness plays a large part. In this kind of individual Islamisation Jemaah Tarbiyah has relied on its strength and basis for caderisation.

Building on the individual pattern of Islamisation, Jemaah Tarbiyah has made strenuous efforts to cultivate and educate the commitment of individuals to Islam. The Tarbiyah model of Islamisation aims to call “existing Muslims” to embrace total Islam as an all-encompassing system (shamil). Islam is to be the only guidance for life (minhaj al-hayah) providing all the spiritual and worldly needs of human beings. It is law, civilization and culture, political system and governance. Muslims who follow the concepts of tarbiyah believe that there is no single matter remaining which is not under the rules of Islam. As the first caliph of Islam, Abu Bakar (d. 634) said, “if the robe for my camel has been lost, I will certainly find it in the Holy Book (the Qur’an).”

During its early development as a new, underground group, Jemaah Tarbiyah had a very limited scope for spreading its ideas. Under the New Order regime, the movement’s new orientation, mainly derived from foreign influences, might have raised more public suspicion than broad acceptance. The capability of the activists of the movement to disseminate their new ideas of Islam as encompassing the whole of life required an acceptance of universal Islam, rather than an ethnically or territorially-associated Islam. The individual call (al-da’wah al-farziyyah) gained tremendous ground, as is indicated by the Justice Party’s political success during the 1999 and 2004 general elections. In both general elections, PKS gained about 1.4 million and 8.3 million supporters through the work of only 70,000 and 400,000 cadres respectively. However, PKS’s strategy of anti corruption and its campaign for social welfare also became attractions for voters during the 2004 general election.

The individual pattern of Islamisation, however, needs a long process which involves individuals and small groups. In contrast to older patterns of Islamic conversion, which for the most part was carried out by influential figures and professional teachers, including traders, saints and Sufis, in Jemaah Tarbiyah it is the students of reform minded religious teachers who have principally carried out the Jemaah Tarbiyah model of Islamisation. They have advanced predication and set up religious circles (halaqah) on university campuses. They have attracted many students and provided them with moral support and academic tutorials. A student who is interested in studying Islam in a “specific way” may be motivated to attend regular halaqah.

Through the halaqah, new members are cultivated and their responsibility toward Islam is enhanced. They are not only encouraged to observe the obligatory duties as prescribed in the five principles of Islam, but also optional and recommended responsibilities, such as reading the Qur’an, pursuing religious
knowledge, visiting their Muslim brothers and sisters so on. In this stage, members of *halaqah* are obliged to cultivate their religious capacities and devotions and to call other people, including their friends and families, to observe all religious obligations.\(^{79}\) By attending regular *halaqah*, usually, once a week, the members are expected to observe all religious obligations in the right manner according to the Qur’an and Hadith.

In addition to ordinary students working as agents of Islamisation, there are ideologues as well trained in Islamic institutions either in the Middle-East or in other modern Islamic schools in Indonesia, such as the Pesantren Gontor in Ponorogo, East Java, Pesantren Maskumambang in Gresik, East Java, the Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies of Ibn Saud University in Jakarta (LIPIA) and other State Institutes of Islamic Religion (IAIN). They are attracting large numbers of students, from the secular state universities, who are convinced of the effectiveness of *tarbiyah* as an alternative model in carrying out Islamisation in Indonesia. For them, *tarbiyah* is “truly a process of Islamisation that encourages deep changes in individuals in terms of morality, intellectuality and spirituality.”\(^{80}\)

**B. Islamising the State: Towards a Pragmatic Approach**

The structural approach of Islamisation tends to use a collective pattern, in which Islamic predication is mediated by the state. The structural change of the state, including its elites and apparatuses, enables its proponents to insist upon the implementation of Islamic teachings in society. Demands for structural change, however, make the government feel threatened, whether change is carried out in a gradual or a revolutionary way. Since the proponents of the structural approach believe that Islam must play a role within the state, they differ in regard to how best to pursue their goals. Does Islam need to be implemented through formal legislation, or is it enough to present it as a moral and inspirational source of the state’s rules and legislation? In other words, as formulated by Dawam Raharjo, “how (are we) to promote Islamic ideas in a religiously democratic system that acknowledges the influence of religion in the state’s affairs?”\(^{81}\) Within these parameters, most Indonesian Muslim scholars have differed in defining the concept of structural Islamisation and its scope within a context of pluralism.

Historically, Islam has been understood and applied by Indonesians in both its political and cultural aspects in various stages. To struggle for Islam in society and the state, Muslim activists have used both cultural and political expressions, depending on social and political contexts. “Cultural Islam”, as it was initiated by the generation of the 1960s and 1970s, by no means neglected the political consciousness of Muslims. The political aspirations of Indonesian Muslims, however, had to be expressed in terms of temporary and short-term goals by
the means of a political party. Against this it must be understood that Indonesian Muslims subscribe to the idea that there can be no ultimate separation between religion and society, though there may be many ways to implement this principle.

Generally speaking, the political experiences of Muslims in the Middle East have taken three types of expression, secular, fundamentalist, and moderate. A secular orientation emphasises the need to completely differentiate the state and religious affairs; in contrast, the fundamentalist approach considers that Islam and the state are inseparable. This position requires its followers to establish an Islamic state. The moderate stance seeks to compromise between secular and fundamentalist goals. In the case of Indonesia, a secular orientation, which promotes the total separation of religion and the state, has been not prominent. Similarly, a fundamentalist orientation, even though gaining momentum, has received little support. In general, Indonesian Muslims hold moderate attitudes towards the status of religion in the state. The main debate has been around the question of whether Indonesia should be ruled according to Islamic law or Islam is to be considered one source of laws and allow other sources of legislation than Islam. The debate has taken place between the group who understands Islam as a political ideology (the legal-formalist position) and those who consider it as merely a moral force in politics (the substantialist). Even though in the 1950s, all Islamic parties demanded the implementation of some aspects of shariah, their aspirations were channelled through democratic ways.

Therefore, the struggle to create an Indonesian Islamic state by particular groups promoting radical action has failed, while any efforts by Muslim activists to control political directions has been crushed by the regime of Soeharto’s New Order. The political expression of Muslims is no longer directed to a struggle for the establishment of an Islamic state, but rather it has given priority, explicitly or implicitly, to “colouring” the existing government with Islam. For the proponents of political Islam, their struggle mainly aims to promote some aspects of Islamic law to be accommodated within the national laws.

Yet, in order to neutralise the influence of the forces of political Islam among Indonesians since the late 1980s, the New Order has also actively supported Islamisation at the structural and societal level. The establishment of the Association of Muslim Intellectuals in Indonesia, Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia (ICMI) in 1990, led by B.J. Habibie, a close associate and minister of Soeharto, succeeded in placing its cadres in strategic positions, including some ministerial posts, which under the Soeharto regime had been seen as the fruits of new Muslim Middle class groups in the process of social mobilization. However, the phenomenon of ICMI also represents the success of the regime in monopolising power and co-opting Islamic forces in Indonesia. It was an “instrument designed and used by President Soeharto for his own purposes.”
At the very least, the role of Muslims within the system during that regime had the effect of increasing the development of Islam at the grassroots level and in some areas of state structure.\(^8\)

Corresponding with the two streams of cultural and political orientation in Indonesian Islam, there are two typologies for explaining Muslim views. The political Islam group calls for a legal and formal approach and the cultural group promotes a substantialist approach. Apart from these two, there is an emerging tendency in political Islam to play a mediating role between formal-legalistic and substantialist strategies, regarded as pragmatic. Here the role of Jemaah Tarbiyah in shaping the political praxis of PKS is the phenomenon to be addressed.

1. The Legal Formalists

The legal formalist group views Islam not merely as a religion that consists of ritual and worship and a source of ideology; it is the main ideology. For this group, the establishment of a political party based on Islamic ideology is important. The group struggles for the recognition of Islamic law and tries to safeguard the implementation of shariah as the all-embracing way of life through the organs of the state.

Two common ways to promote the legal formalist strategy are channelled either through the establishment of an Islamic state or through struggle within the political system. The former demands revolutionary change and may result in radical changes in the existing regime that are not based on the Islamic principles. However Islamic groups are supposed by radical groups to comply with the people’s expectations and lead to revolution or contra-state movements.\(^8\) This approach requires that Islam must be politicised.\(^9\) In the case of Indonesia, the regime has been quick to handle such Islamic state-aimed movements harshly. As well, the obstacles in creating an Islamic state through revolution and confrontation have come not only from the ruling system but predominantly from Indonesian Muslims themselves.

A political approach that focuses on struggle through the establishment of a legal political party, even though it is not free from government intrusion, at least provides the possibility of achieving its goals. The hostility of the regime towards organised Islam during the New Order period contributed to reducing the survival of Islamic parties in the long term. The only Islamic party that might have survived at that time was forced to follow the regime’s interests. The supporters of Islamic political Islam found themselves not only increasingly oppressed by the regime but they also increasingly isolated from the Indonesian people. However, the situation changed after the fall of the New Order in 1998, resulting in the emergence of a remarkable number of new Islamic parties. This political party approach believes that Islam is a practical religion, offering
guidance in political, social, economic and international affairs. In order to promote the ideas of Islam, politics indeed needs to be “spiritualised.”

It seems that current Islamic parties in Indonesia are quite aware of the social, political, and cultural dynamics of their country. Parties promote most Islamic aspirations in modest and moderate ways in order to gain public support. They understand well that political change in Indonesia happens only through the accommodation of political groups and the majority support of the Indonesian people. Any effort to impose an Islamic orientation without considering social and political contexts not only will fail but also will surely meet with great resistance from the people. This has been proved by the fact that Islamic parties that devoted to the formalisation of shariah in Indonesia performed poorly during the 1999 and 2004 general elections.

2. Substantialists

The substantialist group, on the other hand, supports secularism, believing that Islam is not an ideology. Any effort to make Islam a political ideology will result in the relegation of Islam to the sidelines and neutralise specific values of the religion itself. An ideology that results from human thought and truth is subject to the contexts of time and space, whilst Islam as a divinely revealed religion is far from human limitation. For this group, the establishment of an Islamic party is not necessary, because in political matters, they believe Muslims may derive various ideologies from many sources, including Islam.

Nurcholish Madjid, Abdurahman Wahid, and many proponents of cultural Islam are the champions of the substantialist movement. Rather than trying to implement Islamic laws that are derived from certain religious traditions, they prefer to formulate the substance of Islamic teachings and laws into general principles. For instance, Madjid asserted that Islamic ideals are indeed in line with humanity in general. Islam provides the values of inclusiveness, pluralism, and tolerance. Religion, in its original message, refrains from seeking to force or impose an exclusive political and social system on its adherents, which opens up for discrimination against others. Another prominent figure from this group is Dawam Rahardjo. According to Rahardjo, instead of promoting a legal formal approach, Muslims should uphold the values and the essence of Islamic teachings on liberation and justice. These two principles are the key to a true understanding of the message of Islam, and the Indonesian political system and law should reflect these principles.

Abdurahman Wahid advocates the idea of substance and essence rather than symbols and formalisation by instituting the “de-confessionalisation” of Islam from Indonesian political discourse. According to him, Muslims should not demand an Islamic state because it would be impossible for one to exist. It opens up the possibility of further violation of non-Muslims’ human rights because it
would affect the status of non-Muslims and regard them as second-class citizens. The discourse of “de-confession” promoted by Wahid does not aim to support the establishment of a totally secular state in Indonesia, but rather it is his strategy to accommodate Indonesian Islam within the context of pluralism, even though Islam is the majority religion of Indonesian citizens.

The mainstream discourse on Islam and state relations in Indonesia has never gone beyond the boundaries of a moderate stance. The proponents of liberal Islam, according to some Muslims in Indonesia, have gone far beyond Islam in promoting their substantialist ideas. The leading Liberal Islamic Network, Jaringan Islam Liberal (JIL) does not really represent the face of secularism. This is because the major role of Islam in politics and governmental affairs can still be accommodated, without following a formal legalist direction. Ulil Abshar Abdalla is the chair of JIL. He is known to be a supporter of secular and liberal ideas. He recognises the historical fact that Islam as lived out by the Prophet Muhammad contained a large measure of political experience and practice. However, Abdallah does not agree that Indonesian Muslims should follow totally the political practices of the Prophet and his companions. What is needed is a new understanding of the political example of the Prophet so that this can then be applied to Indonesian realities and circumstances.

In short, while JIL members strongly opposes the idea of imposing an organic relationship on Islam and the state, they still tolerate a degree of religious influence within the state. They insist, too, that all religions, not just Islam, should be treated equally before the law. Based on the experiences described above, Jemaah Tarbiyah realised that to participate in Indonesian politics it needed to develop a pragmatic approach.

3. The Pragmatic Approach

It appears that the phenomenon of Jemaah Tarbiyah and its political party, PKS, represents a kind of synthesis between legal formalist and substantialist inclinations. The political expression of PKS has shown a more pragmatic approach in which it has tried to steer a course between the demand for the formal acknowledgment of Islam and the substantialist issue. In fact, Jemaah Tarbiyah, with its revivalist experience in its role as a religious movement has transformed itself into a political party which is very much aware of the need to use political vehicles in a way which is likely to allow compromise with the existing system.

a) Relations between Jemaah Tarbiyah and PKS

In general, the establishment of a political party became an urgent decision for Jemaah Tarbiyah in order to Islamise the national structure. However, by forming a political party, Jemaah Tarbiyah, which had previously organised its activities
in covert ways to avoid the regime’s oppression, was transformed into a legal institution. In 1998, during the early days of its establishment, the Justice Party (PK) functioned to carry out its mission as a “vehicle” to interact with society and the state in legal ways. The first priority for Jemaah Tarbiyah activists after establishing the party was to formulate the relationship between the movement and party. Even though in the early stages of its establishment, not all members of Jemaah Tarbiyah had chosen to channel their activities into a political party, some of them preferring to establish non-political organizations instead, all members finally accepted the decision after the majority of activists decided to form a political party through an internal referendum in 1998. Like it or not, they have had to follow the result of consultation and referendum among the core cadres of Jemaah Tarbiyah. Furthermore, the obligation for members to support the establishment of a political party has strengthened the principal tenet of the movement that says “al-jama’ah hiya al-hizb wa al-hizb huwa al-jama’ah”, which means “the movement is the party and the party is the movement.” This tenet emphasizes the unity of religious and political association in which there is no distinction between the party and movement. The term jemaah (Ar. al-jama’ah, movement) is used when a religious movement is unlikely to carry out its mission in legal ways because of the political repression of the regime. In addition, the term hizb (Ar. al-hizb, political party) is used when the regime has lifted all political restrictions to allow all segments of society, including religious movements, to promote their ideas in legal and structural ways.

At this stage, Jemaah Tarbiyah and the Justice Party are united as one institution, each synonymous of the other. Before the setting up of the party, individuals who interacted within the networks of Jemaah Tarbiyah were responsible for all recruitment and training activities. Thus, after the establishment of PK, all members of Jemaah Tarbiyah automatically became members of PK and all religious training and activities were taken over by PK, now PKS. The leaders of Jemaah Tarbiyah were accommodated in an institution of the party called Majelis Syura (the Consultative Board) and all members of Jemaah Tarbiyah must vote for PK. The concept of sirriyyah al-tanzim wa alamiyyah al-da’wah, meaning “the structural of organization is secret and the predication is open” was only valid before the establishment of a formal political party. Most members of Jemaah Tarbiyah believed that during the repressive era of the regime, keeping the structural organization of the movement and its coordinators were unavoidable, but when the regime promoted openness and freedom of expression, the secret nature of the movement was no longer necessary. The formal organization of PKS has been considered the formal form of Jemaah Tarbiyah movement itself.
However, nowadays the term “Jemaah Tarbiyah” is still used by Indonesian Muslims to refer activists of PKS.

There is also a group of Jemaah Tarbiyah that has not agreed about the total transformation of the movement into a political party. They have preferred to consider the party as no more than the political wing of Jemaah Tarbiyah. However, the opinion of this group is peripheral since most members of Jemaah Tarbiyah have accepted the existence of the political party as a manifestation of the movement. For those who had not admitted the existence of political party, were excluded from Jemaah Tarbiyah memberships.

So the establishment of the political party in 1998 was a momentous event for Jemaah Tarbiyah. There was broader political change in that year, and Jemaah Tarbiyah was able to benefit from the new situation and to form itself into an open organization. For years involved in secret activities, it finally found the momentum to appear as a legal political party. The PK then transformed itself into PKS, and was immediately promoted to represent the mission of Jemaah Tarbiyah in developing a strong social capital and a basis for supporting the political ideas of the movement.

b) Political Realities and Religious Ideals

However, besides its pragmatic attitude in politics in promoting the agenda of Islamisation, PKS still envisions promoting Islamic ideas in Indonesia. It has faced obstacles in its involvement in political activity. Yet the solid and loyal cadres, who are the result of an intensive individual process of Islamisation through regular tarbiyah training, have enabled the movement to develop the party. Conflict and friction within the party so far has been easily resolved, since it is strongly supported by core activists of Jemaah Tarbiyah who have no vested interests in conflict.

However, since PKS has become a political party of considerable size, accommodating some non-Jemaah Tarbiyah cadres as well, dispute is likely to occur. So, to what extent is the party able to maintain its religious aspirations and make compromises with political realities and challenges in Indonesia? Dilemma often occurs between accommodating the militant cadres’ demands and those of pragmatic political players. This conflict of interests among PKS members has manifested itself in decisions that to some extent have showed inconsistency. The following discussion will show how doctrines of Jemaah Tarbiyah have provided guidelines for its cadres involved on the political stage in Indonesia.

Many observers and scholars of Indonesian politics have wondered about the attitude of the new party towards the existing system. The question is often raised in academic debates about the phenomena of Islamic activism in politics, “are Islamists ideological or pragmatic?” However, as is common in political
games, the involvement of religious movements in political activities by integrating with the existing political system will usually entail a degree of political compromise. The experience of PKS offers many examples of how the party has diluted its ideology to conform to political realities. However, while there are central principles that serve to guide activists, the conflict between idealism and pragmatism remains widely discussed in Indonesian politics.

The principle of “to interact but not to dilute” (yakhtalituna walakinna yatamayyazun) has encouraged activists of Jemaah Tarbiyah to socialise with others beyond the movement. This principle has no clear-cut direction other than to advise the cadres to maintain their Islamic distinctions and not be contaminated by existing corrupt practices. The challenge to be involved in social and political affairs was prescribed by the Prophet Muhammad in his saying: “the one who interacts with others and is patient is better than the one who does not interact with people and shows his intolerance.” The risks of being co-opted by the system are accepted by Islamists, and they still believe that neglecting political activities is much worse.

The flexibility of PKS in conforming to the ideology of the social and political realities of Indonesia is based on the consideration that involvement within politics should not trespass the limits of Islamic teachings or shariah but it also should not strictly restrain the political creativities of activists. In elaborating this concept, a member of the legislation of PKS, Zulkieflimansyah, told a story that gives a lesson in keeping the balance between holding the ideology and compromising with political realities.

A knowledge seeker came to a grand teacher asking him to teach him wisdom. The teacher taught him nothing but asked him to look around his temple while he held a lamp. The only thing that he remembered from his teacher was not to let the lamp go out. With care he kept it on and went around the temple. He then went to his teacher saying that he had finished his job and gave the lighted lamp back to him. Immediately his teacher asked his opinion about the library in the temple. The wisdom seeker was surprised because he had not even looked at the library, so busy was he with keeping the lamp alive. Finally, he repeated his job and focussed on observing the details of the library and all the other places within the temple. He proudly went back to his teacher informing him of his observations. The grand teacher asked, “Where is my lamp?” The poor student was shocked because he had left it somewhere while he was busy observing the building.

The pragmatic inclination of the party is also supported by the application of principles of Islamic jurisprudence and a strong encouragement to practice ijtihad.
in responding to issues that are not clearly prescribed by the Qur’an and the Hadith. Among these famous principles are the concepts of *maslahat* (Ar. *al-maslahah*, the common good), *akhaffud durarain* (Ar. *akhaf al-durrarayn*, choosing the lesser of two evils) and *ma la yudraku kulluh laa yutraku kulluh* (something that cannot be wholly attain does not mean it can be left out totally). These principles have made a great contribution towards the exercise of political pragmatism, as in the case of NU, which has used just such jurisprudential principles to justify its political decisions.\textsuperscript{114} The following are some precepts adopted by PKS in justifying its political decisions:\textsuperscript{115}

First, in order to decide among favourable options, *Jemaah Tabiyah* activists must consider these formulas (1) giving priority to something definite rather than something uncertain, (2) giving priority to something that has great benefit rather than small, (3) giving priority to communal interests rather than to the individual, (4) giving priority to permanent benefit rather than temporary, (5) giving priority to essential and fundamental issues rather than the superficial and symbolic and (6) giving priority to something that affects the future rather than the present.

Second, in order to choose among harmful consequences, the precepts are (1) avoiding further harm, (2) eradicating all harmful actions (3) not using destructive means to avoid harmful things, (4) choosing something that is less harmful and (5) choosing something harmful that affects particular interests rather than the general good.

Lastly, in order to choose among mixed favourable and harmful conditions, the precepts are as follows (1) giving priority to prevent destruction rather than taking benefit, (2) small destruction is tolerable in order to gain a large benefit, (3) temporary destruction is acceptable in order to gain continuous benefit and (4) giving priority to assured benefit, regardless of uncertain negative impacts.

These jurisprudential precepts are often applied by the party to justify its political decisions that to some extent have no consistency with its main doctrinal ideas. For instance, the case of appointing a woman as a president is a problematic issue for many Muslims. During the Indonesian presidential elections of 1999, the Justice Party had no alternative but to support Abdurahman Wahid for president. Even though most figures of the Justice Party disagreed with Wahid’s religious ideas, the party supported Wahid instead of Megawati in order to minimise further harmful conditions for Muslims. Wahid was the candidate of the Central Axis (*Poros Tengah*) supported by Muslim groups. In addition, doctrinal issues related to the prohibition on a woman becoming a president became a decisive consideration. The Justice Party itself still held the opinion that a president must be man.\textsuperscript{116}
However, after one and a half years of enjoying the position of president, Abdurahman Wahid was forced to leave, due to an impeachment process by the Peoples Consultative Assembly (MPR). The Justice Party and its cadres were among the protesters who urged Wahid to step down. Nonetheless, after Megawati replaced Wahid, the Justice Party gave support to her and downplayed its opposition towards a woman president.\textsuperscript{117} Jurisprudential precepts and political considerations were used to justify this pragmatic decision. Supporting Megawati was less harmful than maintaining Wahid in power, which might cause further damage for Muslims. Indeed, not all constituents have agreed on this issue, asking responsibility for those who elected her. As was stated in \textit{Syariahonline.com}, a website run by activists of PKS:

\begin{quote}
Any decision to propose a woman as a president must have risks and consequences. The appointment of Megawati as the Indonesian president, intentionally or accidentally, would carry consequences for those who elected her.\textsuperscript{118}
\end{quote}

In short, the nature of Indonesian politics has necessitated that PKS follows a realistic, pragmatic approach to deal with all issues. This is because both radical and secular inclinations in promoting Islam in Indonesia would not find favour with the Indonesian people. Down-to-earth approaches become an unavoidable option in order for political parties to survive. In its religious activities Jemaah Tarbiyah has shown its accommodative ways in promoting its ideas. In addition, the history of Jemaah Tarbiyah in responding the New Order regime’s oppression also has indicated its well-prepared strategy of avoiding conflict and confrontation with the regime, while keeping the spirit of reform, instead of revolution and confrontation. The following chapter will give a detailed analysis of how Jemaah Tarbiyah was able to flourish within a hostile environment of the New Order period.

\textbf{ENDNOTES}

\begin{enumerate}
\item In this regard “Islamisation” means the effort to call people to adhere to Islamic teachings. To some extent, Islamisation also has been understood as a process of conversion. But since the process of religious conversion has rarely involved total conversion, Islam in Indonesia is still perceived as being far from Islamic orthodoxy and piety. For some Muslims, Islam is not only understood as a religion of ritual but also as a system of thought and a way of life. Islam requires its adherents to embrace total Islam (Islam Kafah).
\item Re-Islamisation is the process to make a nominal Muslim into a devout one.
\item Reform in an Islamic context is different from reformism within Christian traditions. Islamic reform (Ar. \textit{al-Islah}) aims to return Islam to its original message since some various misinterpretations and distortions had occurred. See John L. Esposito, ed. \textit{The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World} Vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 242. In this chapter Islamic reform in Indonesia is defined as the efforts to bring Muslims to embrace Islamic orthodoxy.
\item As suggested by Snouck Hurgronje Islam in Indonesia has been categorised as religious and political. Harry J. Benda, “Christian Snouck Hurgronje and the Foundations of Dutch Islamic Policy in Indonesia,” \textit{The Journal of Modern History} 30 no. 4 (December 1958), 341-342.
\end{enumerate}
For instance through various interactions involving religious, economic and political factors, not only ordinary people were attracted to Islam but many local elites and royal families of the Indonesian kingdoms embraced Islam as their religion. Marriages between a Muslim preacher and a daughter of a royal house assisted the process. Or at times, the lower orders would embrace Islam first and their masters later. See M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since C. 1200* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), 3-17, R. Jones, “Ten Conversion Myths From Indonesia,” in *Conversion to Islam* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1979), 158, and Paul B. Means, “The Religion Background of Indonesian Nationalism,” *Church History* 16 no. 4 (December 1947), 238.

Mahfudz Sidiq, “Peran Serta Da’wah dalam Politik” (Paper presented at the Square House Building, University of New South Wales, 9 August 2002).


This term has been widely used by Islamist groups in Indonesia to indicate their commitment to struggle for Islam. *Kafah* (Ar. *Kaffah*) means a full submission in embracing Islam. The Qur’an II: 208 says, “O you who have believed, enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”


Ibid.


Ibid., 31.

R. Jones, “Ten Conversions of Myths from Indonesia,” in *Conversion to Islam*, 158.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid. 98-99.


Ibid.


Abdurrahman Wahid, “Islam, the State, and Development in Indonesia,” in *Islam in South and South-East Asia* (New Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1985), 85.

Ibid.


38 See Wahid, “Pribumisasi Islam,” 82.
39 Ibid., 83.
40 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
43 The coalition among Indonesian Muslims in 1999 within the Middle Axis group (Kelompok Poros Tengah) to propose Abdurahman Wahid from NU as president Indonesia has been considered by Muslims as the beginning of integration among Islamic forces, however it ceased when Wahid was forced to leave his position by his Muslim allies.
46 Ibid.
49 Christine Dobbin, "Islamic Revivalism in Minangkabau at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century,” *Modern Asian Studies* 8 no. 3 (1974), 319.
50 Bruinessen, "Global and local in Indonesian Islam," 46-63.
51 Dobbin, "Islamic Revivalism in Minangkabau at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century," 319.
52 Ibid., 335.
53 Interview, anonymous, Jakarta, 14 March 2003.
55 Ibid., 123
60 Ibid., 46.
63 Ibid.
64 Interview, anonymous, Jakarta, 24 March 2003.
68 Muslih Abdul Karim is currently member of Shariah Council of the Central Board of the Prosperous Justice Party (2004-2009).
69 Tahliilan is the repetitive recitation of the shahadah or some such phrase of prayer performed in a group often for a recently deceased person. According to the revivalists and modernists it has no foundation in Islam and is considered an unlawful innovation in worship.
69 Interview with Muslih Abdul Karim, Depok, 9 September 2003.
71 Interview with Nurhahmudi Ismail, Depok, 8 May 2003.
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75. Ibid.
77. See PKS Online, 1 Juni 2005.
78. See Tim Departemen Kaderisasi DPP PK Sejahtera, Manajemen Tarbiyah, 12-14.
80. See Tandjung, Tarbiyah Perjalanan dan Harapan, 12.
81. See Dawam Raharto, Islam dan Transformasi Budaya (Yogyakarta: PT Dana Bhakti Prima Yasa, 2002), 200
83. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid., 3-4
91. Ibid.
93. Ibid.
97. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
102. Ibid.
103. Mahfudz Sidiq, KAMMI dan Pergulatan Reformasi: Kiprah Politik Aktifis Dakwah Kampus dalam Perjuangan Demokratisasi di Tengah Gelombang Krisis Nasional Multidimensi (Solo:Intermedia, 2003), 84.
See Martin Kramer, ed., *The Islamism Debate* (Ramat Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1997), 51-85.

A study of the failure of political Islam by Olivier Roy is a good account of how political parties have mainly been co-opted by the system and diluted of Islamic aspirations. See Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, trans. Carol Volk (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994).

Tandjung, *Tarbiyah Perjalanan dan Harapan*, 18.

Interview with Rofi’ Munawar, Surabaya, 7 March 2003.

Cahyadi Takariawan, *Rekayasa Masa Depan Menuju Kemenangan Dakwah Islam* (Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiatuna, 2003), 65

Interview with Zulkieflimansyah, Canberra, 30 August 2004.

For further details about the application of these concepts see Greg Fealy and Greg Barton, ed., *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia* (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 1996), 35.


Discussions of this issue are elaborated in detail in *Syariahonline.com* which strictly opposes a female president. The religious consultation on the web is organized mainly by members of the Central Board of Justice Party.
