

Conclusion

This study has shown the emergence of Jemaah Tarbiyah as a covert religious movement in the mid 1980s that was transformed in 1998 into a political party, the Justice Party (PK), further to evolve into the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) in 2003. This study also shows how the influence of a trans-national Islamic movement, the Muslim Brothers of Egypt, has played a role in shaping the dynamics of Islam and politics in Indonesia. Jemaah Tarbiyah and PKS have entered an ideological experiment and have made a unique contribution to current Indonesian politics by testing the nature of the relationship between Islam-based politics and the secular state. In order to survive, the activists of Jemaah Tarbiyah have domesticated their ideals into the Indonesian context under the rubric of *maslahat dakwah* (Ar. *maslahah al-da'wah*, the benefit of *dakwah*).

The role of PKS as an Islam-based party in Indonesia has been determined by the need to balance Islamic aspirations with the socio-political realities of the times. The aims of PKS in politics are to achieve justice, social care and good governance for all Indonesians. Thus, Islamic symbols and slogans have been modified in order to meet the expectations of the masses. Religious and political accommodation has become a necessary choice for PKS. Its pragmatism is aimed at attracting popular support from the Indonesian people at large. PKS accommodation has been apparent in the following respects:

First, as an informal religious movement influenced by the Muslim Brothers of Egypt, Jemaah Tarbiyah has contributed to the process of Islamisation in Indonesia since the 1980s. Even though its followers have been distinguished from mainstream Islam and have displayed global inclinations (as global *santri*) they have sought to domesticate their appeal to Indonesian society. Their adoption and adaptation of the Muslim Brothers' ideas have not led them to totally distance themselves from the established traditionalist or modernist associations. They took the decision to form a political party in Indonesia when other Islamic movements, such as Hizbut Tahrir, Salafi and NII groups denounced politics. PKS has begun to develop relations with mainstream Islam in Indonesia, even though both NU and Muhammadiyah, to a certain extent, have indicated their resistance.

Second, the pattern of Islamisation carried out by members of Jemaah Tarbiyah has brought about a new phenomenon which combines two orientations: purification and accommodation. A commitment to the practice of orthodox Islam, firmly based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, and the movement's hope to be accepted by broader Indonesian society have made possible the co-existence of various orientations within Jemaah Tarbiyah. Even though Jemaah Tarbiyah has been known for strongly promoting the spirit of

return to the Qur'an and Hadith, most activists have proceeded in careful manner in order to maintain the unity of the Muslim community. They have also tried to value the traditionalist element of Indonesian Islam.

Third, in responding to the Soeharto regime's oppression in the 1980s, Jemaah Tarbiyah pursued non-violent avenues, avoiding open confrontation with the regime. This strategy enabled Jemaah Tarbiyah's rapid expansion on the university campuses. The movement was able to divert religious disillusionment among certain Muslim groups into *dakwah* activities. When the collapse of Soeharto's New Order finally came, political openness supplied the opportunity for Jemaah Tarbiyah to formally organise its activities into a political party.

Fourth, the transformation of an informal religious movement into a political party has made accommodation necessary for Jemaah Tarbiyah's activists to survive. Interestingly, this pragmatism has not only been determined by political realities but has also been guided by the writings of Hasan al-Banna, in which there is to be found a strong Sufi influence. These Sufi aspects are the most neglected areas in studies of the Muslim Brothers movement so far. Sufi practices, long familiar to traditionalist Islam in Indonesia, have meant that the movement has flexibility in responding to religious and political issues. Within PKS itself, in contrast to its "superficial modernist image", activists of Jemaah Tarbiyah in the past, and nowadays PKS, surprisingly show remarkable numbers of activists from a traditionalist background.

In addition, the presence of a great number of traditionalist *ikhwan* and former student activists has reinforced moderate attitudes in PKS. It is indisputable that the campuses of the secular universities of Indonesia have become strongholds of and the chief source of political caderasation for PKS. Experience gained in student politics has helped in directing PKS's political orientations and strategies.

Fifth, in responding to the issue of *shariah* in Indonesia, PKS has tried to position itself among moderate Islamic groups. The idea of the Medina Charter proposed by PKS representatives in the national parliament in 2000 is an example of how PKS sought to rein in its Islamic aspirations in order to gain wider sympathy from the public. Rather than aggressively campaigning for the application of *shariah*, PKS has preferred to reformulate the concept of *shariah* through a campaign for justice and public welfare. At the grassroots level, PKS activists, through *dakwah* activities, have started to educate Indonesian Muslims about the essence of *shariah*. By doing so, PKS hopes that the demand for the application of *shariah* will come of itself from the grassroots and not need to be imposed by the state. In fact, this strategy has resulted in a dual policy towards *shariah* in order to maintain relations with both secular factions and Islamist groups in Indonesia.

However, the ambiguity on the part of PKS in responding to the issue of the implementation of *shariah* in Indonesia is due to the following factors: first, the

significant influence of mainstream Islam in Indonesia has made PKS calculate with care its impact on society in general. Since NU and Muhammadiyah do not support the implementation of *shariah* at the national level, PKS does not try to isolate itself from the mainstream. As a new party that has not yet put down strong roots in society, PKS has tried to build rapprochement with Muhammadiyah and NU. PKS will not sacrifice its popularity among a particular section of Indonesian Muslims by following radical approaches that will jeopardise its image. By following democratic means, PKS has focussed on attracting popular support. This is only to be achieved by offering programs that meet the interests of constituents. However, not all PKS's activists support this pragmatic approach; there is still a small stream among Jemaah Tarbiyah members that prefers the immediate application of *shariah*.

Second, the pragmatic-realist approach of PKS is also determined by jurisprudential precepts that stress the unity of the Muslim *ummah* and the benefit of *dakwah* (*maslahah al-da'wah*). Other the jurisprudential principles adopted by PKS in justifying its political decisions, such as *akhaffud durarain* (choosing the lesser of two evils), *ma la yudraku kulluh laa yutraku kulluh* (something that cannot be wholly attained does not mean it can be entirely left out) permit a spectrum of moderate approaches. Marginal influence and success is valued over nothing gained. These considerations have made PKS appear to blur its position on the pros and cons of introducing *shariah*.

Third, the dominant political role of secular groups Indonesia has narrowed the domain for the Islamic parties, including PKS, to win public sympathy. To rule Indonesia, a single majority power is unlikely. Coalition and co-operation must be developed, particularly with the nationalist parties. In order to be involved within the system PKS has entered coalitions with nationalists and Christian parties to form government. This coalition has required considerable political accommodation and negotiation by PKS and has forced PKS to compromise its Islamic aspirations, including not spelling out its demands for *shariah*.

The religious and political manoeuvres by PKS mentioned above have posed more of a dilemma for members of Jemaah Tarbiyah who hold to the principle of *al-jama'ah hiya al-hizb wa al-hizb huwa al-jama'ah*, "the movement is the party and the party is the movement." The unity of Jemaah Tarbiyah and PKS has become an obstacle for the party in expanding its influence and maintaining the solidity of the cadres at same time. In addition, their concept of "to interact but not to dilute" (*yakhtalituna walakinna yatamayyazun*) is too abstract to be consistent with political accommodation. The result is that the performance of PKS in politics has never satisfied all of its constituents.

This study of the development of PKS has also revealed the fact of the solidity of PKS cadres compared to those of other Islamic parties. So far, PKS has been known by its discipline in running organizational activities. Most cadres are

highly committed to supporting the party during elections. They often have had to spend their own money to support the party in its campaigns. Tarbiyah training has been able to create solid cadres with a strong loyalty to the party and a high standard of personal morality to strengthen PKS.

Nonetheless, this condition changed when PKS grew into a party large enough to give political incentives to its cadres by awarding positions in parliament and the government bureaucracy. However, cadres from lower socio-economic levels with a lack of education and of a lower social status who have received no opportunities for political mobilisation have become critical of the party. For this reason, when PKS cadres in parliament or in government are not able to live up to their ideals and tend to be co-opted by power, cadre solidity faces a great challenge. The support given by PKS for the increase in oil prices in 2004 drew tremendous criticism from its constituents.

In addition, some cadres of Jemaah Tarbiyah, even though only small in number, who have been critical of the party and have disagreed with the concept of integration between the movement and the party (*al-hizb huwa and al-jama'ah hiya al-hizb*) have begun to consolidate.¹ They criticise the performance of PKS and any lack of commitment to the movement's ideals through a website called "PKS Watch." A loss of trust among cadres towards their representatives in the legislative and executive bodies will also influence the affectiveness of the party to direct its members to follow party decisions. If this happens, PKS will not only lose support from its own cadres but also on the popular front.

Since most Islamist groups in Indonesia have not been tested in holding power, the case of PKS has provided a good example of how a political party based upon an Islamic religious movement has faced the dilemma of keeping faith with its ideology after forming a coalition with nationalist and secular parties. PKS has placed its three cadres as ministers: Minister of Youth and Sport, Minister of People's Housing and Minister of Agriculture. Many Indonesians have been dissatisfied with the performance of the government. A current survey conducted by the Institute of Indonesian Survey, Lembaga Survei Indonesia (LSI) in December 2005, asking Indonesians which political party they would choose if a general election was held today, indicated the drastic decline of PKS from 10.1% in January 2005 to 2.7% in December 2005.² The decline of PKS in this survey was the result of the inability of the party to voice the people's interests and to bring about prosperity.³

Observing the performance of PKS in the 2004 general elections as a interesting phenomenon, it is also important to consider its success by analysing the ability of its activists in relating Islam to the basic and popular needs of the people. The party can come closer to the grassroots, especially those who live in marginalised urban areas, by promising a better life, prosperity and justice. PKS has consistently shown care for the less fortunate and for those who have suffered

from natural disasters by providing free medications, shelter, food and social services. PKS has also campaigned for clean government and against corruption. PKS activists and particularly its representatives in DPR RI and at the district level have the image of clean figures.

Thus the social, economic and political realities of Indonesia have influenced PKS's political orientation, keeping its ideology and promising betterment for the Indonesia people. The General Secretary of PKS (2004-2009) Anis Matta stated as much in order to win political legitimacy and to attract support for the party.⁴ However, according to Matta, the ability to manage the state is also important and PKS must be able to develop the economy and manage resources, not merely to spend money for social care.⁵ General elections are the only means to test the party's ability in power and gives the opportunity for people to vote it out of power.⁶ The struggle for Islam through the democratic system has entailed the sacrifice of some Islamic aspirations because those aspirations need to be negotiated by the party in order to survive in the longer term. Within PKS itself, this strategy comes under jurisprudential precepts and the concept of *masalah al-dakwah*.

ENDNOTES

¹ The more critical attitudes by anonymous cadres who have created *PKS Watch* to criticise the party (<http://pkswatch.blogspot.com>). See an interesting article regarding their disagreement with the concept of integration between the movement and the party entitled "Partai Jamaah, Jamaah Partai," <http://pkswatch.blogspot.com/>, 26 October 2005.

² See Andrew Steele, "The Decline of Political Islam in Indonesia," *Asia Times Online*, 28 March 2006.

³ See Graham E. Fuller, "Islamism(s) in the Next Century," in *The Islamism Debate* (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1997), 143.

⁴ See Anis Matta, *Menikmati Demokrasi: Strategi Dakwah dan Meraih Kemenangan* (Jakarta: Pustaka Saksi, 2002), 269-173.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Fuller, "Islamism(s) in the Next Century," 155.