Chapter 1: Islamic Resurgence in Indonesia, an Introduction

1.1 The Moral Force: Bandung in Historical Perspective

Bandung, the capital of West Java, is a city with a long association with the structures of a modern industrialised nation. When the activities of the Dutch colonial government in this area increased in the late nineteenth century, central administrative offices, post office, telegraph and railroad system were established in Bandung. Bandung became an educational center for native islanders in the colonial period with the opening of a technical institute for indigenous students. Today it is called Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), one of the most prestigious universities in Indonesia. In this university, Soekarno, the first president of Indonesia, finished his higher education, and in this university he established a study group, which became the forerunner of the Indonesian National Party (*PNI, Partai Nasional Indonesia*). In 1955 the city's importance in the Indonesian state was demonstrated symbolically, when it became a site of the Asia-Africa Conference of Non-aligned Nations.

In the Islamic history of Indonesia, Bandung was known as one of the most important places where a reformist and puritan Islamic organisation was established. In 1923, a group of merchants established an organisation called *Persatuan Islam* (*PERSIS*, Islamic Union). It was known because of its strict attitude to some Muslim customs, which were considered as superstition in contradiction with the main Islamic teachings (*aqidah*, faith), although other Muslims accepted those customs as proper Islam. It also accused the nationalist circle of wanting to establish Hindu and animism beliefs (Noer, 1987:13). The PERSIS's methods in promoting their ideas were very strong and even rough; members of the organisation often challenged and invited people to debate. Ideas of this organisation spread not only in Indonesia but also in Malaysia and Singapore. Among Indonesian intellectuals, *Persatuan Islam* ideas were spread through the writings and activities of Mohammad Natsir, a student of Ahmad Hasan, who was also the leader of *Masyumi* (*Majlis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia*, Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslim).[1]

Like Yogyakarta or Jakarta, Bandung is also known as a student city, in which two large universities ie. Bandung Institute of Technology and Padjadjaran

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[1] *Masyumi* was a national Muslim organisation established during the Japanese occupation. At a National Islamic Meeting (*Muktamar Islam Indonesia*) held between 7–8 November 1945 in Yogyakarta, this organisation changed itself into an Islamic party. Most of Islamic organisations were represented within this party, but in 1952 *Nahdlatul Ulama* (*NU*, the Rise of the Religious Scholars), a conservative Islamic organisation, withdrew and became another Islamic party. In the 1955 election, *Masyumi* proved itself as the strongest party in the outer islands and in the West Java, while NU had the strongest support in East Java province.

University are located. These two universities are regarded as two of the nine universities of excellence in Indonesia (Railon:1985:23). Besides these universities, there are more than forty other higher education institutions, including private and public academies, institutes, and universities. Not surprisingly, students and lecturers from other places came to this city, and this situation has made Bandung a cosmopolitan city where the local Sundanese traditions are gradually adapted. The activities of these intellectuals made Bandung's intellectual, cultural and art life much more prominent (*Ibid,*:24).

Bandung is also a military centre. It is a center of the Sixth Regional Military Command (*KODAM, Komando Daerah militer VI*) Siliwangi, which for a long time has been regarded as one of the most professional of the Indonesian army ground forces (*Angkatan Darat*) with the best weaponry system. In Bandung are also located various military and police schools. Two of the most important institutions are the command staff college of the army ground forces (*SESKOAD, Sekolah Staf Komando Angkatan Darat*) and the joint command staff college of the army forces (*SESKOGAB, Sekolah Staf Komando Gabungan*). Besides these military schools, Bandung has several army groups scattered throughout the Bandung area.

Geographically, Bandung is very close to the national capital, Jakarta, only three or four hours' trip by bus or train from Jakarta. Elite from Jakarta usually come to Bandung and spend their weekend looking for fresh and cool air and a quiet environment. Likewise, many Bandung residents work in Jakarta, and every weekend they return to Bandung. This close relation creates an easy and smooth exchange of people and ideas between these two cities. International and national information is disseminated in Bandung at almost the same time as in Jakarta, and what happens in Bandung can immediately be heard in Jakarta.

Before the establishment of the New Order (*Orde Baru*) in 1965–66, Bandung became a place where the anti-Soekarno forces had wide support not only from the strictly Islamic groups, but also from student movements and military groups. Various events in early 1966 demonstrated Bandung students' important roles. They were always much braver and more radical than their colleagues in Jakarta. Although various important events took place in Jakarta , the role of Bandung's students was significant in decision making in Jakarta. Rahman Tolleng, the ex-chief editor of *Mahasiswa Indonesia,*[2] remarked "In Jakarta there might be a revolution, but Bandung is always the trigger".[3] Moreover, many political, social and art ideas are created or tested in Bandung before they are applied in Jakarta.

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[2] *Mahasiswa Indonesia* (Indonesian Student), was a weekly student tabloid which played an important role in the establishment of the New Order. Through this publication student movements in Bandung spread their vision and analyses about the current situation of society. Besides, it became a means through which they expressed and unified opinion among those students organisations included in Indonesian Student United Action (*KAMI, Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia*).
[3] Interview with an Economic Lecturer at the Indonesian University (UI) Jakarta, 3 November 1994.

Arief Budiman, as cited by Raillon (*Ibid*,:26), points out, "There is a tradition in Jakarta, that if we are dissappointed with the students' behaviour in Jakarta, we always turn to Bandung". Bandung became a city that complemented the national capital, Jakarta as "the political force" and Bandung as the "moral force". Budiman further says:

> With 'moral', it should be understood that they struggled based on right and wrong, just and unjust principles without considering political power. Whereas 'political force' means that student movements based their struggle on fertilising power, so that they were forced to political opportunism… Bandung ['s students] also have a peculiarity in their struggle, ie. their originality, and this is a manifestation of their creativity (*Ibid*,:26).

In the 1970s, Bandung became a center of attention not only at the national but also at the international level,[4] when student Islamic activities at Salman Mosque of ITB developed rapidly and provided a model of Islamic activities in university campuses throughout Indonesia.

1.2 Islamic Resurgence and Tajdid (Renewal) Tradition

In November 1979 Muslims throughout the world celebrated the beginning of the 15th century of Islamic calender (*hijriah*), which was expected as 'the century of Islamic Resurgence' (*Abad Kebangkitan Islam*). It was expected that by entering the new century, "Muslims would return to Islam, a religion and a way of life which is believed would increase Muslims' prestige and humanity" (Hamka and Saimima, 1980:1). In the 1970s in Muslim countries throughout the world, various social and political events occurred. These events included the application of Islamic law in Pakistan and Libya, the Islamic opposition movements in Egypt and Turkey, Muslim rebellions against Marxist government and Soviet invasion in Afganistan, and the Islamic separatist movement in Mindanao Island in the Philippines. Similar phenomena also occurred in Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, Morocco, Malaysia and other countries where Muslims constituted the majority of the population. One of the most important events was the Iranian Revolution in 1979, which has influenced Islamic activists throughout the world.

Besides this political activism, there is a growing consciousness of Muslims toward Islam both in social and individual lives. In social life, this can be seen in the establishment of various Islamic institutions such as Islamic banks, organisations, laws, social welfare services and educational institutions. Likewise, in individual life, this can be seen in the increasing attention to religious observances such as mosque attendance, prayer, and Islamic dress, and from the

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[4] Various reports on students Islamic activities at Salman can be found for instance in *New York Times*, 3 June 1979 page 3., Naipaul's travel diary *Among the Believers*, and in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, "An Islamic Revival threatens government moves to secularise the state," 24 January 1985.

increasing Islamic proselytization (*dakwah*). These political, social and individual manifestations of the Islamic resurgence can be seen throughout the Muslim world, in a variety of political, social and cultural settings.

In Indonesia such phenomena could also be seen in the mid-1970s when Islamic resurgence among young Muslim generations emerged. This was marked by the involvement of young people in various religious activities. Many young people went to the mosque where they learnt and discussed Islam. Such activities not only could be seen in various public mosques but also in school and university campuses. Moreover, many female students, both in senior high schools and universities started to wear the veil (*kerudung*).[5] This was followed by the emergence of various *Ikatan Remaja Masjid* (Youth Mosque Associations) in public mosques and Islamic preaching institutions in university campuses (Lembaga Dakwah Kampus). In every large public mosque (*Majid Jami* or *Masjid Raya*) there was always a youth sector, which organised Islamic activities for youth. *Istiqamah* Mosque in Bandung, *Sunda Kalapa* and *Al-Azhar* Mosques in Jakarta figured prominently in these activities. In almost every university there was an institution which organised Islamic activities. From these universities the *da'wah* movement spread gradually to other surounding universities. The spread of the movement took place through mutual campus visitation, Islamic preaching institutions, and coordinated joint activities.

In the 1980s there was another phenomenon, namely the emergence and development of various Islamic movements, known as *Harakah* (an Arabic, 'movement'). Different from conventional and formal Islamic movements, such as Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama or Persatuan Islam (Persis), these Islamic movements were not formal Islamic organisations, and some of them were even called underground movements. Moreover, unlike those formal Islamic movements founded by great ulama, the experts in traditional Islamic knowledge, these new Islamic movements were founded and pioneered by young *mubaligh* (preachers), most of them not trained in the traditional Islamic education system, *pesantren*, but in public schools and universities. The main base of these movements was usually the various campus Islamic preaching institutions (*LDK, Lembaga Dakwah Kampus*) and the public mosques.

Like Islamic movements in other parts of the world, there are three main themes of this new Islamic phenomenon, namely: the application of Islamic law (*shariah*), making Islam a way of life, and the freedom from non-Muslim political and cultural domination. Politically and sociologically, these themes derived from the awareness that the Islamic community (*Umat Islam*), even when in a majority, was internally politically, economically and religiously weak. Religiously, these

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[5] They knew that they were not allowed by their schools and universities to do so. As a result, some of them moved to Islamic private schools. This is because Department of Education's acts forbade students to wear something on the head.

themes derived from a belief that Muslims have departed from true Islamic values due to the infiltration and assimilation of both local indigenous and foreign un-Islamic beliefs and practicies. The political and economic life of the Islamic community, in their view, has for a long time been controlled by other religious and ethnic minority groups. Moreover, they also assert that Islam, as the religion of the majority, has not been able to inspire the social and cultural life of the Indonesian community. Two intellectual Muslims explained:

> The development of communication technology has been controlled by 'other people', who forced us to neglect religion (Islam) in our lives. Every night television programs, which entered our bed rooms, tempted us to leave Islamic values. Moreover, reading sources in our homes, such as books, magazines and newspapers are almost all provided by those who ruin our faith and belief (*Iman* and *Aqidah*). As a result of this, areas formerly regarded as Islamic regions, such as the 'Mecca veranda' (*Serambi Mekkah*)[6] and other places, are now penetrated by "modern" culture with its all lousiness (*kebrengsekannya*), prostitution, gambling and other wickednesses, which are regarded as proper things…

> It is clear that politically from the old order till the new order, the Islamic community, although they are a majority in this country, has always been cornered (*terpojok*) (Hamka and Saimima 1979:3).

Through religious legitimation, these new Islamic movements tried to transform their present societies into the ideal society exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad. To achieve this, like many previous Islamic revival movements, they encouraged Muslims to return to the Qur'an and the Sunnah (model and example) of the Prophet. Based on these prime sources, they believed that Islam is the only solution of those problems faced by Muslims. For them, Islam is a total way of life which is applicable to all times and places. There is no separation between the religious and worldly life, and between state and religion. The main goal of these movements is the government of a community based on the God's revealed law (*Sharia*). Within this ideal community, God is sovereign over all people, and individual freedom is guaranteed. Those who resist this goal, either Muslims or non-Muslims, are regarded as enemies of God.

This research is concerned with these phenomena of the Islamic resurgence movement among young people in Bandung, focusing on its emergence, development and routinisation, which took place between the 1970s and the early 1990s. The subject I have studied, borrowing Nakamura's[7] term, is an "on going [process] of Islamisation … in which a substantial number of Muslims regard prevailing religious situations (often including themselves) as

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[6] *Serambi Mekah* is another name of Aceh, it refers to a place which has strong Islamic bases.
[7] Mitsuo Nakamura is a professor of Anthropology at Chiba University Japan. He has written book and papers on Islam in Indonesia including *The Crescent Arises over the Banyan Tree*.

unsatisfactory and, as a corrective measure, strive to live up to what they conceived as the standard of the orthodox teaching of Islam'' (1983:2). Such a process, Nakamura further said, is a ''self-conscious re-Islamisation of Muslims by themselves… [which] emphasized not only the necessity to conform to the ritual orthodoxy of Islam but also the genuine devotion to fulfilling the moral and ethical teaching of Islam'' (*Ibid*).

Contemporary Islamic resurgence in Indonesia, like Islamic movements in other parts of the Islamic world is deeply rooted in the Muslim medieval and modern historical experience. Muslim historical heritage provides bases, symbols and concepts for the current Islamic resurgence. Contemporary Islamic resurgence, like previous Islamic movements, is a reflection of longstanding tradition and continuation of a renewal (*tajdid*) tradition in Islamic history (Voll, 1983:32–47 and Ahmad, 1983:222). It is an expression of the revitalization of Islamic faith and practices as an attempt to bring Muslim individual and communal life into the right path based on the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Besides this notion of *tajdid*, there is also the Islamic idea of *dakwa* (to call people, especially Muslims to obey the divine command and to model the life of the Prophet Muhammad) and of *al-amru bi al-makruf wa al-nahy an al-munkar* (to command the good and forbid the evil) which obliges every Muslim individual to correct any kind of impurity and corruption within society.

The notion of *tajdid* (renewal) in the Islamic tradition can be traced back to the Prophet Muhammad, who said that ''At the turn of each century there will arise in this *ummah* (the Muslim community) these who will call for a religious renewal (revival)''.[8] Such people (*mujaddid*),[9] are believed to always come in the time when Muslim community departs from the true path defined by the Qur'an and *sunnah* (example of the Prophet). The task of the *mujaddid*, therefore, is to return Muslims to their basic sources (the Qur'an and *sunnah*), to clean Islam from all un-Godly elements, to present Islam and make it flourish more or less in its original pure form and spirit (Maududi, 1981:34–5 and Voll, 1983:).

The source of validity of this Islamic renewal (*tajdid*) is the perfect model available in the revelation, Qur'an (*wahyu*, words of God) and the traditions and customs of the Prophet (*sunnah*). The era of the Prophet is an ideal model of a society in which revelation is applied in human life. The purpose of the *tajdid* is to implement this ideal model in Muslims' lives, wherever and whenever Muslim society exists. This purpose implies that *tajdid* is a continuous effort by Muslims always to explain Islam and make it applicable in continually changing situations without violating its principles. Contemporary Islamic resurgence, therefore, is inspired by the example of past experience, not by a hope for a future utopia

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[8] This quotation related by Abu Huraira in *Sunan* (a collection of *Hadits*, traditions of the Prophet) of Abu Dawud (Cairo 1348 Hijri)
[9] The activity of renewal is *tajdid*, and the person who brings it about is called a *mujaddid*.

like messianic or millenarian movements, which depend on the notion of the future when a saviour or Messiah will appear. Nevertheless, the *tajdid* tradition in Islam cannot be seen as conservatism[10] because of its past orientation. This is because, as history has shown,*tajdid* movements often criticise the established institutions and traditions, and even by revolution challenge the existing system. Moreover, the progressive ideas of the *tajdid* tradition and current Islamic resurgence are demonstrated in their basic acceptance and accommodation to modernity[11] (Cantory 1990:183–94). The notion of the ideal era of the past here should be understood as a perennial model and not as antiquated custom.

The difference between contemporary *tajdid* (renewal) and the previous ones is that the contemporary *tajdid* movement occurs in an era of globalisation in which the electronic revolution in mass communication has broken down boundaries between countries. Satellites, transmitters and television networks make the citizens of the world a global community. In such a situation the insistence on Muslim unity in a single Islamic international community (*Ummah*) becomes a reality. The growth of global systems of communication, according to Bryan S. Turner (1994:90), "[reinforced] the concept of Islam as a global system." Such a situation also influenced the way *tajdid* ideas and movements have emerged and spread. Through global communication systems *tajdid* ideas and movements in one Muslim country can rapidly spread to other Muslim countries. This makes it possible for one movement in a Muslim country to have branches in other Muslim countries, a phenomenon that never existed before.

1.3 Islamic Resurgence: a Definition

Different observers have named these new phenomena Islamic revivalism, revitalisation, upsurge, reassertion, renewal, awakening. Others have called these phenomena Islamic fundamentalism, neo-fundamentalism, militant Islam, and political Islam. All these names are useful to analyse the new wave of Islamic movements, but they cover only certain aspects of the phenomena and neglect others.

[10] According to Charlotte Seymour-Smith (1986:53), conservatism is "the preference and maintenance of traditional ways of acting, forms of social institutions and cultural patterns."

[11] Their acceptance of modernity can be seen in their adoption of modern institutions and technology. Many of the leaders of Islamic movements are graduates of major universities from faculties of medicine, science and engineering: some of them are even graduates from Western universities.*Ulama* and Muslim activists harnessed modern technology to organise and mobilise mass support as well as disseminate their religious messages and their socio-political activism. The wide-spread use of mass communication technology such as radio, television and video-cassettes, computers and fax machines established effective communication among these activists. What they reject from the modernity is that, as Esposito (1992:11) points out, "secularisation is a sine qua non for modernisation." Moreover, since the notion of modernisation -often equated with the idea of development- was Western in its origin and form, when it is applied in the Muslim world it inevitably leads to"occidentalisation" or "Westernisation" (cf. Sardar 1977:39). They selectively accept some aspects of modernity and reject what they believed is non-Islamic.

'Islamic reassertion', the term used by Mohammed Ayoob (1981), for example, captures the idea of regaining power and position by the Islamic movements, but it does not reflect the notion of threat and challenge to the *status quo* and the dominant paradigms (Muzaffar 1987). Moreover, it merely conveys the political aspects of the Islamic movement, but neglects other aspects of the movements, such as social and ritual aspects, which are the main characteristics of these movements as religious movements.

Similarly, the 'Islamic revivalism' concept does capture the idea of idealising the era of the Prophet and his companions. It suggests the notion of reviving practices and ideas and the notion of renaissance and renewal of thought. This is a true description of certain segments of the Islamic movements, but it does not explain their whole outlook. The notion of back to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* (the example and tradition of the Prophet) and idealising the period of the Prophet and his companions, does not mean going back 1500 years to antiquated traditions and practices. 'Back to Qur'an and *Sunnah*' means reinforcing Muslims' loyalty to 'perennial and eternal values' (Muzaffar, 1987:3).

Likewise 'Islamic Fundamentalism', the most common term used by Western press and even academics, merely explains minor aspects of the current Islamic phenomena. To quote Esposito (1992:7) the term 'Islamic Fundamentalism' ''tells us everything and yet, at the same time, nothing''. It is true that Islamic movements call Muslims to return to their basic fundamental faith and beliefs (*Aqidah*). However, the word 'fundamentalism', which derives from a unique phenomenon in a certain period of American Protestanism, is not appropriate to the current phenomena in Islam (cf. Khurshid Ahmad, 1987:226). 'Fundamentalist' in Christian traditions refers to those ''who advocate a literalist biblical position and is thus regarded as static, retrogressive and extremist… and wish to return to and replicate the past'' (Esposito 1992:7). In fact leaders and founders of the so-called 'Islamic Fundamentalist movement', are Western educated people,[12] and are fond of modern technology. In addition, the image of 'Islamic Fundamentalism' as ''political activism, extremism, terrorism, fanatism and anti-Americanism'' might be true to refer to some radical religiopolitical activism, especially in the Middle East. Many Islamic movements, however, are involved within the existing system. Furthermore, as Gregory F. Rose, an Assistant Professor at the University of North Texas observes (1990:219–28), the main problem with the term 'fundamentalism' is a not semantic one, but a 'misconceptualization' as a result of misleading cross-cultural analogies.[13]

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[12] Many of them even are Western educated, or at least they studied Western knowledge. Sayyid Qutb, an important thinker of *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* (Muslim Brotherhood) movement in Egypt, Imam Khomeini, the Iranian spiritual leader, studied and lived respectively in the United States and France

[13] Rose (1990:220) argues that although the notion of fundamentalism was first applied to nineteenth-century American religious movements, the term was later colored by Talcott Parson, in his study of the 'fundamentalism reaction' (his analyses of the rise of European Fascist movements. Rose recognises that Parson regarded fundamentalist reaction as a ''pathological, authoritarian reconstruction

'Fundamentalism', he argues, is an "ethnocentric, militantly secularist sociological categorization", which in turn makes it difficult to analyse comprehensively the current Islamic resurgence.

Like many recent observers, such as Hillal Dessouki, Chandra Muzaffar, John Esposito and Daniel Regan,[14] I will use term the 'Islamic resurgence'. Borrowing Muzaffar's (1987) idea, the word resurgence, meaning "reappearance and growth of a particular attitude or activity among a group of people, especially one which has been forgotten for some time" (Collin Cobuild Dictionary 1992) perfectly explains the current emergence of new Islamic movements. In Muslims' view, Islam has been for a long time forgotten by Muslims themselves, and now they are increasingly aware of their Islamic identity. Through their attachment to Islam they regain their self esteem and dignity, and this indicates clearly that Islam has become important again in Muslims' lives. Another point is that the word "reappearance" explains the relation between the recent development of Islamic movements and the past glory of Islam and the ideal society in the era of Prophet and his companions. As Muzaffar (1987:2) puts it, the term resurgence represents the idea of challenge and threat. Many Muslims believe that Islam as an alternative way of life challenges the dominant social systems. On the other hand, the dominant groups and those who are being challenged, view their position as being threatened by these Islamic movements.

Two good definitions of Islamic resurgence have been offered by Khurshid Ahmad, Chandra Muzaffar and Hillal Dessouki. A combination of these definitions, I believe, are representative enough to explain current Islamic development throughout the world. According to Ahmad (1987:226), Islamic resurgence is a "future-oriented movement" concerned with the problems of modernity and the challenges of technology and offering solutions based on the original sources of Islam, the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. It is a movement that on the bases of these sources tries flexibly and capably to innovate what have been neglected by conservatives who stick to a particular school of *fiqh* (law).

Another definition offered by Muzaffar (1987:2) says that:

> Islamic resurgence is a description of the endeavour to re-establish Islamic values, Islamic practices, Islamic institutions, Islamic laws, indeed Islam in its entirety, in the lives of Muslims everywhere. It is an attempt to

of an idealized social *status quo ante* in response to increasingly high levels of dysfunction in the existing social *status quo*." In Parson's view, regardless of source, every challenge to the established social order is regarded as deviant, residual and marginal. Therefore, Rose concludes, treating religion as residual and marginal shows the uncritical acceptance of Parsonian functionalism and its assumptions, and the insistent belief that despite social disruption, a Western model of economic and political development could be applied comprehensively in non-Western settings.

[14] See respectively their books *Islamic Resurgence in The Arab World, Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia, Voices of Resugent Islam* and "Islamic Resurgence: Characteristics, Causes, Consequences and Implications", in *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 21. No 2. Winter 1993.

re-create an Islamic ethos, an Islamic social order, at the vortex of which is the Islamic human being, guided by the Qur'an and the Sunnah."

Dessouki (1982:4) defines 'Islamic resurgence' as referring to

"an increasing political activism in the name of Islam by governments and opposition groups alike. It designates a politicized, activist form of Islam and the growing use of Islamic symbolism and legitimation at the level of political action... We are not dealing with calls for or attempts to provide a new interpretation of the Qur'an but, rather, with social and political movements that are engaged in mobilization, organization and possibly the seizure of political authority. Thus [it] refers to the increasing prominence and politicization of Islamic ideologies and symbols in Muslim societies and in the public life of Muslim individuals"

When these definitions are attached to the word 'movement' they refer to a "worldwide, open and diffuse system in which individual Muslims or Muslims organised in groups are consciously working towards the reconsolidation of the Ummah into a behavioural, operational and goal seeking system" (Siddiqui, 1980:9). Based on these definitions the resurgent Islamic youth movement in Bandung Indonesia is a part of the worldwide Islamic movement which endeavours to establish Islamic values, practices, institutions, laws, politics and its entirety in Muslims' lives everywhere.