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IDEALISM, PRAGMATISM, OPPORTUNISM: Explaining Islamist Movements in Contemporary Indonesia[1]

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Abstract

Since democratization, Islamists in Indonesia have had a surprisingly significant influence. While scholars once believed that Islamist movements were marginal and losing influence, the mass mobilizations of December 2016 and Islamists' centrality to the 2019 Presidential election has forced scholars to reconsider the power and place of Islamism in Indonesia. However, existing studies seemed constrained by the uncritical assumption of Islamism as an ideology directly influencing behaviors. This article suggests that one way to move the literature forward is to take Islamism as a mental model, which helps to distinguish it from Islam as a religion clinically and to understand the structure of Islamist behaviors better. This article finds three patterns of behavior among contemporary Islamist movements, i.e., vigilante idealism of FPI, multivocal pragmatism of PKS, and complacence opportunism of PBB, which are better explained by differences in their mental models rather than their religious interpretations or their commitments to Islamist agenda.

Keywords: patterns of islamist behaviors, islamist movements in indonesia, islamism as mental models, FPI, PKS, PBB

INTRODUCTION

The democratization in 1998 Indonesia opened vast opportunities for political Islam into the country's political landscape. Being one of the main targets of New Order authoritarian corporatist politics after the ban on Communism, it experienced repeated political engineering from the regime.

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When the government eventually forced it to adopt the state ideology Pancasila through a single-based policy in 1985, Islamist groups either gave up their agenda and complied with the regulation, disbanded their organizations, or went underground to operate clandestinely. However, it did not mean Islamism was gone. Islamism not only still exists but has also diversified.

After Suharto stepped down, at least five different Islamist groupings emerged during the early years of democratization. The first was the groups that previously gave up their Islamist platform to operate in the New Order and readopted it after democratic reform, such as PPP. The second was groups that sought to revive the legacy of Islamists in the previous era, such as Sarekat Islam, Masyumi, and NU. No less than ten political parties with this modus run in the 1999 general election. The third was the new type of Islamist groups modeled after transnational Islamist movements, such as Egyptian Muslim Brothers and Palestinian Hizbut Tahrir. The fourth was the vigilante groups that aspired to provide an Islamist version of social orders' enforcement, such as MMI and FPI. Lastly, the fifth was the terrorist groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah, which aspired to build an Islamic political system through arm struggles--that has its root or inspiration from arms resistance of the DI/TII.

Many scholars believed, however, that the Islamist return seemed short-lived and had limited impacts. Internal as well as external factors were at play. Internally, it was because the two most significant Islam-based associations, the NU and Muhammadiyah, preferred to confine their religious aspirations to social activisms while politically opting to form secularist-based parties. Moreover, the electoral performance of the Islamist parties was fragile; only 6 out of 15 Islamist parties managed to get seats in the national parliament during 1999 with a total of 16,45%, and only 4 out of 10 in 2004 with a total of 21,55%, and 16,1 in 2009 (Fealy 2004; Hamayotsu 2011) . Lastly, the Islamists were largely unable to contribute to the discourse on Islam and public issues, which was dominated by the new group of liberal Islam which promoted pluralist religious understandings, *Islam Berkemajuan* (Islam with Social Progress) of Muhammadiyah and *Islam Nusantara* (Culturally Contextualized Islam) of NU.

However, massive Islamist mobilizations in 2016 and their centrality in the 2019 presidential and general elections defy the conclusion. In the upcoming Jakarta gubernatorial election, where the acting governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, better known as "Ahok," a Christian Chinese, was seeking re-election, the Islamists organized large-scale rallies and demonstrations alleging him religious defamation. Meanwhile, during the 2019 presidential elections, the Islamists mobilized populist support behind Prabowo Subianto in a combative way, not only by alluding to him as representing the interest of Islam but also deemed Jokowi as representing the enemy of Islam.

Scholars were intrigued by several factors. First, the fact that the main organizer of the rally was the FPI and HTI, which are infamous for their exclusivist rhetoric and violent actions, gave impressions that hardliners were gaining ground (Jones 2016), while others are also suspicious that it indicates a metamorphosis of the hardliner becoming mainstream (Arifianto 2017). Second, the idea that the hardliners were going mainstream might be alarming, so their popularity increased, and more people supported Islamist groups with hardline agendas (Mietzner and Muhtadi 2018). Further studies indicate that there were new generations of Islamists who are better in knowledge, networks, and strategies in exploiting Islamist discourses targetting not only sympathizers of the

Islamist agenda but also socially disenfranchised groups (Mietzner, Muhtadi,, Burhanuddin, and Halida 2018) . Although others also added that the mobilization was more nuanced and not only driven by Islamist agenda (Fealy 2016). Third, the fact that the mobilization took place in the coming gubernatorial election and looming presidential elections attracted more powerful actors who were also in play. In addition to Prabowo, whose party openly supported the event, former president SBY lent his backup with the agenda of promoting his son in the election; the reigning president Jokowi seemed unwilling to take all the unpopular costs of enforcing the law and chose to play safe (Lindsey 2016) . All of these provide bleak pictures of the prospect of Indonesia's democratization.

Informative and enlightening about recent developments, discussions on Islamism seem constrained by a rather simplistic and uncritical notion of Islamism as an ideology that directly dictates behaviors. The first part of the assumption implies that ideology is a product of religious interpretation which, again, uncritically assumed as spanning between two opposing ends: radical vs. moderate (Noor 2015; Muhtadi 2012; Burhani 2012; Collins 2004) , or three: radical, conservative, moderate (van Bruinessen 2013) . The second assumption implies that religious interpretation directly structures behaviors: radical interpretation leads to extreme behaviors and moderate interpretation into moderate behaviors (Bayat 2013; van Bruinessen 2013). The problem with such assumptions is that they conceptually conflate interpretations with attitudes, as the radical-moderate spectrum refers to strategy rather than ideology (Wickham 2013). while empirically, there are differences in behaviors among Islamists that cannot be referred to as differences in religious interpretations or programmatic commitments, such as FPI's willingness to use violence, PKS's desire to engage in pragmatic politics by declaring itself as a non-confessional party (*partai terbuka*), and PBB engagement in opportunistic behavior to recruiting ex-HTI but then supporting Jokowi in presidential elections. Closer inspection shows that the groups adopt a similar interpretation of Islam as the solution to political problems (Rabasa and Haseman 2002; Woodward 2011) , and they often change their behaviors because of the changing political situations rather than revisions to their religious interpretations (Permata 2008; Munajat 2012; Menchik 2019). So why these groups with similar Islamist interpretations embark on behaviors distinctly different from each other?

The present article suggests taking Islamism as a mental model to move the literature forward, following the concept developed by American Nobel laureate of Economics Douglass C. North (1920-2015). The term refers to cognitive representation by which people use their beliefs to appropriate environments they are less familiar with before making decisions toward or engaging with it (Danzau and North, D. C. 1994) . Mental models are a product of a learning process by which individuals adjust and align their information about the environment to their belief system. A group of individuals who went through a similar process of learning will acquire a shared-mental model that will enable them to interpret the environment in similar ways, to communicate and cooperate more effectively, and eventually make them a distinct group (Mantzavinos, North, D., and Shariq 2004). Rather than the belief system, this learning process gives a distinctive character to the group's mental models and structures its behaviors.

In the following paragraph, the article will elaborate on the conceptualization of Islamism as a mental model following North's formulation. It then follows by elaborating on three variants of

mental models found among contemporary Islamist groups in Indonesia, uncovering the learning processes that mark their differences and showing how it affects the groups' behavior patterns: The FPI vigilante idealism, the PKS multivocal pragmatism, and the PBB complacence opportunism. Such a conceptual framework gives scholars several advantages in reading Islamism.

Firstly, it will tidy up the epistemological foundation as the concept is derived from empirically more informed cognitive institutionalism rather than the abstract and encompassing notion of ideology. In this way, Islamism is seen as a political derivative of, and not identical with, Islam; hence Islamists differ only politically from other Muslims--i.e., even the most extreme Islamists would still be considered Muslims.

Secondly, it will give scholars a more measured explanation of the impacts of religion on Islamist political behaviors, for instance, that cognitive constraint will be more consequential, especially during uncertainty, and less so during stability.

From Ideology to Mental Model: Conceptualizing Islamism

Modern usage of Islamism came from French scholarship in the late 1970s when researchers tried to capture a new type of Islamic activism spreading widely in the Middle East. This religious activism was distinctly political. On the one hand, Islam had become the central source of political struggles, yet on the other hand, politics has become a central path for Islamic da'wah. The term Islamism is not new but rather a reuse. The philosopher Voltaire coined the term as an alternative to *Mahometisme* to name the religion of the Arabs. The contribution of modern French scholars was to make sure that the word would not refer to Islam in general but rather to its political interpretation. The term entered the English lexicon in the early 1980s and gradually replaced synonyms such as Islamic fundamentalism or Islamic extremism that both academia and Muslim writers had criticized (Kramer 2003).

Scholars have provided a different formula for what Islamism is. Graham Fuller defines Islamists are those "who believe that Islam as a body of faith has something important to say about how politics and society should be ordered in the contemporary Muslim World and who seek to implement this idea in some fashion (Fuller 2003). Similarly, James Piscatori proposes that Islamists are "Muslims who are committed to public action to implement what they regard as an Islamic agenda" (Piscatori 2000). These definitions are rather broad and normative. Almost all Muslims would be qualified as Islamists, including political and non-political activism, such as wearing hijabs or opening Islamic banking. At a point, such definitions miss what the term originally tries to achieve, namely, the overt political interpretation of Islam. Thus came Oliver Roy, who proposed Islamism as a "political and religious ideology that aims to establish an Islamic state under Shari'a law and to reunify Muslim Umma (Roy, Sfeir, and King 2007). Following the 9/11/2001 terror attacks, it became clear that Islamism is never merely Muslim domestic affairs but inherently related to their relations with international politics. Thus 'Islamism' is defined as "a religious ideology with a holistic interpretation of Islam" and "whose final aim is the conquest of the world by all means"--including violence. It is incredibly hostile toward the West, which is perceived as the dominant international power (Mozaffari 2007).

Even though these more advanced conceptualization provides better ideas of political ideology concerning the study of Islamism, there is an issue left--a big one: How or in what way ideology affects behaviors? At this point, altering the perspective of Islamism from ideology to a mental model can overcome the problems. First, rooted in the tradition of neo-institutionalism, mental models are a more empirical and descriptive concept that provides more explicit and coherent epistemology. On the other hand, it has its root in cognitive science. This interdisciplinary study seeks to understand the information processing that leads to decision-making and will provide a richer multifaceted perspective. More specifically, this article will follow the formulation developed by American Nobel laureate of economics Douglas Cecil North (1920-2015). For him, mental models are "the internal representations that individual cognitive systems create to interpret the environment" (Danzau and North, D. C. 1994), which refers to a process when a person evaluates whether the environment is friendly or profitable before deciding to engage or disengage.

North starts his conceptual framework with an assumption that the world is too complex and risky for individuals to learn directly through empirical processes. An easier and safer way to get to know the environment is by learning from the knowledge and experiences of others--with their successes and failures. This collective knowledge is stored in collective memory in the form of culture, tradition, myth, and religion. Especially when it comes to severe issues, people will go through an intense learning process to master relevant conceptual and practical knowledge according to specific topics at hand, especially when it comes to serious matters. This process will create a mental model, or internal representation, to interpret the environment. A group of people going through the same learning process will acquire a shared-mental model, which enables them to communicate and cooperate more efficiently. In the long run, make the term a distinct group with a specific perspective. In sum, the shared-mental model structures a group's behavior and learning process, giving them a particular way of thinking (Ambrosino and Fiori 2918; Danzau and North, D. C. 1994; Fiori 2002; Aoki 2010; Mantzavinos, North, D., and Shariq 2004; North, D. C. 1988, 1990, 2005, 2006; North, D. C. et al. 2012; North, D. C., Wallis, and Weingast 2009).

Applying the framework to Islamism in Indonesia, the scheme will work as follows: Islam is a belief system, an idealized collective storage of theoretical and practical knowledge for Muslims. Islamism is a mental model by which groups of Muslims conceive Islam as the political solution for their joint issues. The learning process is the initial event in which an Islamist group internalizes its identity and roles in actualizing Islam as a political solution. Islamist behaviors are. Hence, the actualization of the political solutions of Islam follows the group's distinct internalized self-identity and perceived roles. Thus, rather than telling about their differences in religious interpretations or degrees of commitment toward particular political agendas, varieties of Islamist behaviors are traceable to the different learning processes each group had gone through. The following pages will elaborate on how different learning processes devise FPI, PKS, and PBB with different self-identities that lead to various mental models and different patterns of behaviors.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

FPI Vigilante Idealism

The first case is the FPI, a hardline group infamous for its violent actions in promoting Islam. It has taken part in almost all kinds of violent activities, from protesting TV serials where the antagonist's name was similar to the beloved daughter of Prophet Muhammad, persecuting religious minorities, inter-religious conflicts, protesting foreign embassies, to sending fighters to war-torn countries such as Palestine and Iraq. It was started as a vigilante organization that took the initiative in eradicating what it perceived as moral vices in society, such as gambling, prostitution, and selling alcoholic beverages. By increasingly disciplined organization and backdoor channels to prominent politicians, military, and police high ranking officers in the police and military, it managed to advance nationwide networks (Abuza 2007). Observers commonly portray FPI as a thuggish, hardliner group with rampant behaviors driven by violent motives. While it is true that violence differentiates FPI from many other Islamist groups, it seems to confuse behaviors with its motivation. A deeper inquiry will show that FPI is an idealist vigilante group whose primary motive is getting done with *da'wa* (proselytization of Islam) while believing that violence is a legitimate tool. More importantly, the vigilante-idealism mental models were a product of FPI's organizational and political experiences during its formative period. It refined its religious interpretations about using violence for dawah only after that.

FPI was founded on August 17, 1998, by several Jakarta-based clerics, led by Muhammad Rizieq Syihab, any descendent with a lineage to the prophet Muhammad. FPI follows the traditional scholastic interpretation of Islam that venerates the ulema and especially the prophet's descendants. Networks of Habib (plural of Habib, descendants of prophet Muhammad) played important roles during the early years of the FPI in providing funding and organizing events. It claims three factors as the raison d'etre of its formation—first, the widespread social vices/immorality, such as prostitution, gambling, and alcoholism. Second is political events and incidents that victimized Muslims, such as serial killings of accused men who practiced black magic in East Java, communal conflicts, and government statements regarding the Priok incident in 1984. Third, the need to institutionalize data through legal means in the form of promotion of implementation of Sharia law (Munajat 2012; Widianto 2017).

However, studies found that the Ketapang riots of November 22-23, 1998 brought the FPI into national media attention, crystallized its self-identity, and acquired its idealist vigilante-mental model. The incident was triggered by a fight between residents against bodyguards of a gambling house who happened to be Christians from eastern Indonesia. When the conflict widened into the neighborhood, ransacking houses, including a mosque, rumors spread widely that Christian gangsters burned down a mosque and stabbed the imam to death. FPI organized an Islamic day celebration the previous night and was the first to respond by mobilizing people from outside areas. The mob ransacked and burned down the gambling house, hunted down the attackers, and killed more than a dozen. When the police failed to negotiate with the mob, riots spread to the surrounding areas, burning churches, Christian schools, and many stores and offices (Jahroni 2004; Munajat 2012).

The appreciation and condemnations FPI received for its involvement in the incident pushed the organization to find normative appropriation. FPI leader Rizieq Syihab recognizes that violent actions are unpopular and are not in line with the idea of Islam as a religion of peace and that dawah should be pursued peacefully. However, he seems unlikely to denounce violence as it will jeopardize FPI's selling point. He then explains why violence is still being used in da'wa. There are two types of violence; one represents cruelty the other represents resoluteness. The first one is contrary to the Islamic principle of peace and tenderness; thus, it is forbidden, while the second one is not contrary to the Islamic principle as it represents a follow-up, a continuation, of da'wa when peaceful means do not work (Syihab 2008a).

Another argument FPI leaders put forward to validate the use of violence is that da'wa is a collective obligation that someone must do (*fardhu kifayah*). Da'wa consists of two complementary principles, i.e. enjoining good (*amar ma'ruf*) and forbidding evil (*nahi munkar*). Unfortunately, for FPI, Muslims tend to take lighter first-half tasks but avoid the hard and sometimes nasty ones of the second half. Had other Muslim groups done it, FPI would never have been needed (Jahroni 2004; Syihab 2008b). The tendency toward heroism and the willingness to take violence, structures FPI's actions. A study shows that almost half of recorded FPI actions consist of "sweepings" to what they see as social vices such as gambling, prostitution, and alcoholic beverage selling and consumption . Because these activities are the easiest for the public to recognize as immoralism, and thus taking decisive actions is the easiest way to show FPI heroism (Munajat 2012).

Similarly, FPI also engaged in violent actions toward religious minorities. In 2002-2005, it actively participated in the forced closing down of dozens of churches in the West Java area and other areas such as Jakarta and West Sumatra and boldened by the MUI (Indonesian Ulama Council) fatwa that Ahmadiyah, secularism, pluralism, liberalism as un-islamic (Majelis Ulama Indonesia 2005). In June 2008, FPI members raided a peaceful rally organized by National Alliance for the Freedom of Faith and Religion (AKKBB), demanding the government pay more attention to the freedom of civic associations. FPI argued that the rally was against the MUI fatwa, which charged pluralism and Ahmadiyah. The incident led to the arrest of FPI leader Rizieq Syihab who was then jailed for eighteen months for provoking violence. In February 2011, FPI was involved in a mob attack against the Ahmadiyah community in Pandeglang, Banten province, that caused three casualties (CNN Indonesia, September 08, 2021).

Another vigilante activity FPI frequently engaged in was mobilizing protests toward foreign embassies to show solidarity in response to the country's policies they perceived as against Islam and Muslims. It mobilized protests toward the US embassy in 2001 and 2003, protesting military invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in 2006 protesting the US government installation of the prophet Muhammad statue in the country's Supreme Court building. In the same year, FPI also protested the Danish embassy regarding the duplication of cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad. Previously it also rallied protests at the Singaporean embassy in 2002 after former prime minister Lee Kwan Yew's statement that terrorist groups are at large in Indonesia and at the Philippine embassy after the country's security arrested Indonesians charged with illegally carrying explosives. Recently on the last of December 2019, it organized a demonstration at the Chinese embassy in protest of the Uyghur

issue amid the much-talked report that the PRC has silenced mainstream Muslim groups (Emont, December 11, 2019).-

During recent Islamist mobilization, FPI played even more significant roles when it became the main organizer and the liaison group coordinating different Islamist groups commonly bickering among themselves. In 2016 FPI took the initiative to mobilize protest against then Jakarta governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama; it started with an allegation of defaming Muslims' holy scripture; it then extended the charge into political demand to fire the governor for other different reasons unrelated to the case, such as the fact that he is a Christian Chinese that was not representative of Muslim majority and his policies to displace poor neighborhoods. This resenting rhetoric attracted wide support, including mainstream groups, culminating in a massive rally in Jakarta in December 2016, known as 212. Meanwhile, during the 2019 presidential election, FPI hosted a series of popular, albeit symbolic, events named Ulama Consensus (Ijtima Ulama) in supporting Prabowo's candidacy.

In all of these instances, a vigilante idealism mental model has driven FPI behaviors that combine da'wa idealism with the willingness to engage in violence for the interest of Islam and Muslims, especially when someone has to do something. All look consistent with the features of its mental model. FPI was involved in several other violent incidents. Nevertheless, as it did not provide opportunities to play heroic roles, it did not pursue them seriously, for example, in the Muslim-Christian conflict in Maluku 2000-2002, where FPI sent only dozens of its members to participate, and only in a limited period. The following year Indonesian police even invited FPI leader Syihab to help promote a counter-narrative against active terrorist groups in the Central Sulawesi district of Poso (Karnavian 2008). Another example was sending volunteers to Palestine, to which FPI often pledged its willingness but never seriously followed up. Such issues seem too complicated and political for FPI to extract a heroic role.

PKS Multivocal Pragmatism

The second case is the Justice Prosperous Party (PKS), the largest Islamist party with 8,1% of votes. Its participation in democratic politics earned a reputation as a dilemma for democracy because of its agenda to establish an Islamist political system: letting it participate in democracy will jeopardize democracy considering its real agenda of Islamizing the political system, yet thwarting it from participation will also be undemocratic. Scholars commonly agree on PKS's ambivalence about its Islamist agenda and democratic participation. Some argue that this was related to the changing environmental institutions that forced the party to adapt to survive (Permata 2008); others point to divisions between the idealists and the pragmatists inside the party (Munandar 2011). Still, others argue it is outright political hypocrisy (Hilmy 2010).

Digging deeper into the literature of religious politics, such ambiguous behaviors are known as multivocal politics, or a tendency to use language and symbols that can convey different messages to different audiences, commonly by sending specific messages using common languages that will appeal to members of an ingroup. At the same time, leave outgroup unaware of it (Albertson 2019). What is interesting is the fact that PKS did not embark on such ambiguous behaviors before the 1999 elections. Closer inspection will show that the multivocal pragmatist mental model resulted from

the collective learning process when PKS activists tried to synchronize the democratizing political environment and its gradual Islamization agenda.

The history of the PKS starts from an underground association called *Jamaah Tarbiyah* (Arabic: Association of Education), established in the late 1970s by many Middle Eastern alumni and popular among students of secular universities, especially in major cities the country (Damanik 2002). On August 5, 1998, a political party was declared under the name of Partai Keadilan (Justice Party). In the 1999 election, it gained merely 1,3% of national votes, though it got seven seats in parliament, thus failing to pass 2,5% of the electoral threshold. In 2002 it was re-registered under a new name of Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS, Prosperous Justice Party). It gained 7,3% of votes and 45 seats in 2004, 6,8% of votes and 57 seats in 2009, and in the last 2019 elections, it caught 8,2% of votes and 50 seats and became the biggest Islamist party.

Organizationally it is modeled after Egyptian Muslim brothers by adopting cell-like grouping, in which members are grouped under the supervision of a mentor. Mentor-pupils relations and hierarchy last for their entire life, making the group solid and efficient. PKS also adopts the Brotherhood doctrine of evolutionary Islamization (Damanik 2002; Munandar 2011; Machmudi 2008; Muhtadi 2012).

Scholars have noted ambiguity in PKS political behaviors. On the one hand, it seemed increasingly more pragmatic and pluralist. In 2002, it amended its statute (*Anggaran Dasar*) to switch the highest authority in making decisions from the National Congress into the Deliberative Council (*Majelis Syura*), which enabled the party to be more rational and adaptive to the dynamics of political situations. Subsequently, PKS is increasingly giving priority to political gains over normative objectives. During the 2004 presidential election, it was divided between supporting Amin Rais, who was ideologically close to them but with less chance of winning, and Wiranto, with whom the party shares neither religious nor political platforms but with a bigger chance of winning. In 2007 it supported retired police general Adang Darajatun--who has neither an Islamist record nor vision--for Jakarta gubernatorial election. In 2008 PKS declared itself as a non-confessional party (*partai terbuka*) open to non-Muslims 2008 while holding a national congress on Hindus dominated the island of Bali.

On the other hand, however, PKS also retains its staunch Islamism. For instance, it actively participated in various rallies and protests with Islamist themes, such as protesting Israel's occupation in Palestine and the US-led invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. It demanded implementing Islamist policies in close collaboration with other Islamist groups such as FPI and HTI. PKS members host websites and social media accounts that promote conservative and exclusivist views.

Interestingly, closer scrutiny shows that the ambiguity only developed after the 1999 elections. Previously, PKS activists seemed to think that political achievements were consequences of dawah activities. For instance, a statement from the party's central office before the 1999 election appeals to its activists to take election campaigns as dawah activities, persuading people to better moral and spiritual. It also named Didin Hafiduddin, an Islamic scholar from Bogor West Java, as its presidential candidate purely on religious grounds. The poor outcome of the election gave them a moment to

ponder. Under strong enthusiasm to both actualize the Islamist agenda and do their best to get a political share in democratizing competitions, it developed three different discourses.

First, the normative discourse of the senior leadership, especially among Middle Eastern graduates, portrayed the moment as a spiritual test and emphasized the need for the group to intensify exercises to gain higher piety. For this purpose, they devised the party structure with religious mechanisms, first, by extending the presence of the highly authoritative Shariah Council at all levels of party organizational units. The council is responsible for formulating religious interpretations and issuing fatwas for various issues--from international politics to marriage disputes--from Islamic perspectives. Second, establishing a disciplinary body (*Badan Penegak Disiplin Organisasi*, BPDO) responsible for auspices the implementation of party rules and regulations and always refers to the fatwa of the Sharia Council. These units are powerful and effective. In 2006 it fired then the party's vice president Syamsul Balda for improper personal conduct. In 2009 it also fired one of the party's founders and most senior leader Yusuf Supendi over disputes with other senior leaders.

Second, pragmatist discourse developed by younger leaders with secular educational backgrounds portrays the moment as an opportunity to learn the real political game and convince outsiders to see the party from such a perspective. In line with the massive promotions of democracy by various domestic and international agencies, this younger generation extrapolates that PKS represents a new generation of Muslim politics, which are better educated and well-first with modern politics. They are no longer bound by the demand to implement controversial Islamic political or legal systems. Instead, they focus on universal values of Islamic teachings such as human rights, social harmony, clean government, or economic welfare (Machmudi 2008).

The next example was the idea of justice, which is fundamental for modern democracy. It is, in fact, rather intriguing that the word "justice" has been used ubiquitously by Islamist groups in various countries, which Egyptian Muslim Brothers inspire: The name "Justice and Development" is used at the same time by Islamists in Turkey, Libya, Morocco, Syria, and Algeria; while the Egyptian Brotherhood party is named the "Justice and Freedom Party." A closer analysis reveals that the word "justice" not only refers to "fairness" but also to "retaliation." They share a cliche sentiment of being victimized by authoritarian powers, Muslims or non-Muslims. Thus for Mahfudz Siddiq, PKS MP and former chairman of the Defense and Foreign Affairs Commission in the House of Representatives, in addition to a normative prescription to develop a fair political system, justice also implies the right to retaliate against those who have done wrong to Muslims (Sidiq 2003). This makes the party members sometimes join the hardliner's combative narratives.

The previous examples show how PKS ambiguous behaviors represent multivocal pragmatic mental models, in which, on the one hand, it exhibits increasingly pragmatic, rational, and even transactional behaviors. Nevertheless, on the other hand, it also displays normative orientation, even combative and anti-pluralist behaviors. PKS does this using multivocal political communication, in which it uses common political terminologies such as democracy, nation-state, constitution, or political justice but has imbued the terms with specific meanings that will convey different meanings to insiders than outsiders. Moreover, more importantly, such multivocal pragmatism is not derivative of the party's religious interpretations of the political platform but rather from the historical process

of collective learning when it tries to adapt to the changing political environments while maintaining its collective identity.

PBB Complacence Opportunism

The third case is *Partai Bulan Bintang* (PBB, or Crescent Star Party) which claims itself as the reincarnation of the Masyumi party of the Sukarno era. As if carrying on Masyumi's truncated political agenda, PBB persistently demanded the implementation of the Jakarta Charter of 1945, which stipulates an obligation for all Muslims to follow Sharia laws. Instead of becoming political leverage, however, the status as the bearer of a grandeur history turned out to be political dead weight. The pride of being the crown prince has made PBB leaders complacent, uncritically taking Masyumi legacies almost as infallible dogma that is still very relevant to the contemporary political context, without any need for cumbersome adaptations and innovations. This has led the party to poor political performances, culminating in its failure to pass 2,5% electoral threshold in the last two elections. Desperate to stay in the game, PBB embarked on opportunistic and contradictory behaviors. On the one hand, it tried to boost its Islamic credentials while simultaneously engaging in a pragmatic and transactional alliance with any actors--including secular ones. Similar to what happened to FPI and PKS, the fundamental characteristic of PBB's political behaviors stemmed neither from its religious interpretation nor its political agenda but rather from self-perception and internal representation, formed during a collective learning process of its founders.

The history of PBB started with the formation of a forum named Islamic Brethren Forum (*Forum Ukhuwah Islamiyah,* FUI) on August 1, 1989, by some veteran Muslim politicians such as former Indonesian Prime Minister, former Chairman, and the icon of the Masyumi party M. Natsir, former minister of religious affairs and chairman of NU Masykur, former minister of religious affairs Mohammad Rasyidi, and the like. The forum held monthly meetings to find ways to unify Islam-based groups anticipating regime change. Succeeded in garnering support from several Islam-based organizations such as ICMI, PERSIS, PERTI, Al-Irsyad, KISDI, PII, and HMI, a political party was declared on July 17, 1998, named Crescent Star Party (PBB) alluding to the memory of great Masyumi. However, several Masyumi loyalists decided to create their parties: such as Masyumi Indonesian Islamic Political Party (*Partai Politik Islam Indonesia Masyumi*) by Abdullah Hehamahua, New Masyumi Party (*Partai Masyumi Baru*) by Ridwan Saidi, and Islamic Ummah Party (*Partai Ummat Islam*) by Deliar Noer (Salim, Fauzan, and Sholeh 1999).

PBB was designed following the memory of Masyumi, which combined a modernist interpretation of Islam and constitutional political democracy. According to Yusril Ihza Mahendra, who chaired the party in 1998-2004, 2015-2020, Masyumi political platform is the best formula both from Islamic and democratic perspectives. For the former, Masyumi's political platform was a combination of universal Islamic values such as human dignity, progress, and constitutional democracy, highlighting the importance of political consensus and the rules of law. It is more advanced than integralist political Islam from Egyptian Muslim Brothers [pointing to PKS] or Pakistani Jemaat-e-Islami. From a democratic perspective, on the other hand, it is the most suitable as it represents the political aspirations of Muslims as the majority of Indonesian citizens. In addition,

the veteran politicians repeatedly put forward a narrative of Masyumi as a victim of Sukarno and Suharto authoritarian regimes (Fealy and Platzdasch 2005; Platzdasch 2005). Mahendra seems to strongly believe that the superiority of Masyumi had been proven by the fact that the party succeeded in nurturing high-caliber politicians such as Natsir or Hamka--and not the other way around!

Such interpretations of Masyumi's history led PBB leadership into pride and uncritical attitudes. Less than two years after its formation, during the first congress in May 2000, the party suffered internal conflict when a group of veteran politicians accused Mahendra, whom they called a late-comer, for neglecting the party's political principles for supporting controversial government plans to open diplomatic ties with Israel and to abolish regulations that ban communist ideology--in addition to mishandling party funds. On his part, Mahendra and his younger loyalists argued that they followed the political adeptness of Masyumi and that the older group was merely not well-read to the current politics. He then expelled them. It looked like they held on different sides of the same Masyumi coin. By expelling the veterans, Mahendra was devoid of Masyumi's flavor as they were the tangible reminder of the old Islamist glory. (Platzdasch 2005). With the veterans leaving the party, the younger leaders had lost the resources to elaborate Masyumi's legacy, as none of them were old enough to see Masyumi's history. The only thing they knew was the most spectacular part of the story, namely the struggle to establish an Islamic democracy through the inclusion of the Jakarta Charter into the constitution.

Thus Jakarta Charter has become the one and only PBB political commodity ever since. During constitutional amendment sessions 2000-2002, when PBB, together with PPP and other minor parties joined in the PDU fraction, had the opportunity to demand the inclusion of the Jakarta charter and its controversial seven words that contain the 'obligation for all Muslims to observe sharia'--amid clear opposition from the majority. Assuming it was voicing the interest of Islam and Muslims, they put forward every argument that came to mind: first, the theological argument that Islam is not just a set of rituals but a complete civilization and Muslims should observe their religion in private and public lives. The second constitutional argument is that the implementation of Sharia is exclusive to Muslims and will not affect followers of other religions. The third is the historical argument that the Jakarta charter was part of the original constitutions referred to by the Sukarno decree when dissolving the deadlock constituent in July 1955. The fourth legal argument is that the installment of Sharia in the constitution is inevitable for Muslims to be able to observe their religious obligations, such as marriage and inheritance. The fifth is a conspiracy theory argument that the abolition of the Jakarta charter was a hidden work of secular and anti-Islam political groups. Thus, the resistance to its reinstatement shows that anti-Islam motives were still in place. However, when unable to usher support from other Islamist parties, PBB refused to face a defeat by refusing to vote to decide the demand, arguing that it would jeopardize those who disagree as anti-sharia and anti-Islam. This move indicates PBB's unwavering, uncritical belief that Masyumi's political agenda is impeccable. What they need is just another opportunity (Indrayana 2005; Platzdasch 2005; Elson 2013).

Unfortunately, such an opportunity has never returned. With poor electoral performance--1,9% in 1999, 2,6% in 2004, 1,8% in 2009, 1,5% in 2015, and 0,8% in 2019--the only thing PBB could do was rely on Mahendra's reputation and networks as a former member of Suharto's inner

circle as well as ICMI functionary and a renowned Muslim scholar. Using Mahendra's capital--and not Masyumi's legacy--PBB acquired ministerial posts in different administrations, from Wahid, Megawati, to Yudhoyono when Mahendra assumed as Minister of Law and Constitution, Judiciary and Human Rights, and State Secretary, respectively. Meanwhile, MS Kaban, the next PBB chairman, assumed a post as the forestry minister during the same SBY period. When Yudhoyono omitted PBB in his second term of government, the party stuck. No longer possessing political access, it failed to earn seats in the national parliament in the last two general elections--though it maintained its achievement in a few regions.

PBB never attempted to evaluate the Masyumi legacy pertaining to political agenda and organizational structures. Mahendra openly acknowledged his failure, that his party is weakening due to a lack of human resources and funding sources (Ansor 2005). However, he did not develop any innovation but reaffirmed his commitment to old-style Masyumi political normativism (Firmansyah, April 24, 2015). Every time elections are upcoming, PBB immediately declares Mahendra as its presidential candidate and reiterates the Islamization agenda through implementing the Jakarta Charter--the only thing it can do and the only thing the public knows about (kompas.com, April 07, 2022). PBB continues to be trapped in a spiral of complacency, stagnancy, desperation, and opportunism.

During the 2016 mobilization, PBB participated through its sister organization Indonesian Islamic Da'wa Council (Dewan Da'wa Islam Indonesia, DDII). Interestingly, Mahendra initially sided with the Jakarta governor Purnama by persuading his followers to forgive him and forget the incident, apparently out of sentiments as persons from a similar province of Belitung (Kurnia, November 28, 2016). He also declared to bid a run for the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, which was unusual for someone who always declared himself a presidential hopeful in every election. Nevertheless, with his party in pitiful condition, running for Jakarta's strategic and highly competitive public could attract support from potential coalition partners interested in his stature as a seasoned politician. When unable to get sufficient political support, he joined in supporting Yudhoyono's son, Agus. When Agus lost the first round, Mahendra switched the alliance to the Gerindra-PKS coalition and won Baswedan-Uno (Auton, February 17, 2017).

The same cycle repeated during the 2019 election. Dire with a deficit of members and funding, PBB engaged in desperate political maneuvers. It recruited FPI and HTI members as party legislatures nominees (DZA, July 18, 2018). Mahendra took further action by joining Joko Widodo's attorney and proposing an unsuccessful controversial policy to release Abu Bakar Baashir, the convicted leader of the terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah in order to get credit for helping Jokowi gain popularity from Muslim voters, as the Islamists had portrayed him as impious and unfriendly toward Islam (Yandwiputra, January 19, 2019). Initially, PBB supported Prabowo but felt disappointed with an unfair deal. Mahendra switched sides by supporting Joko Widodo, hoping for a better deal. This move triggered strong reactions from internal PBB, especially among FPI background recruits who called Mahendra to resign as PBB chairman as he betrayed his party and Muslim interests (CNN Indonesia, January 02, 2019). The sense of complacency has dragged PBB into costly opportunistic political maneuvers.

CONCLUSION

Once many believed it had ended, Islamism has proven to be a latent force amid the uncertain course of Indonesia's democratization. Its simplistic logic combined with a high dosage of religious rhetoric is a very effective tool to incite public sentiments. Its long history of regime discrimination made it an easy way to find scapegoats for political resentment. 2016 mobilization caught many by surprise, that populist protests that commonly fade away in weeks turned out to be a massive wave of mobilization that attracted not only hardliner fringes but also mainstream groups. Massive and quick surges also created dynamics of power constellations that will be so tantalizing for pragmatic political players to exploit for their partisan interests. Furthermore, the government often opted for easier handling by riding or crushing the stream immediately.

Scholars have debated on the nature of the mobilization, with some arguing that it indicated increasing Islamist popularity. In contrast, others maintain that it contains different agendas from different groups, which are not entirely in line with the other. Others also debated the possible causes of such a movement, with some pointing to the long-run projects of Middle Eastern, others to the pragmatism of the country's political elites and the government reluctant to enforce rules of law. Still, others show that the emergence of new generations of Islamist activists are better educated, better organized, better first with the political constellation, and more skillful in mobilizations.

Exciting and enlightening as they are, research on Islamism in Indonesia seemed always been restrained by the assumption of Islamism as an ideology. Not only does the term rarely being defined, but more importantly, there is almost no explanation of how and in what way it influences Islamist behaviors. As a result, researchers follow suit one after the other to classify Islamism and Islamist behaviors into obscure categories: the radicals who reject secular democracy and the moderates who do somewhat not so. An uncritical and assumptive understanding of Islamism led to the superficial reading of the structure of phenomena. Differences among Islamists are rooted in their different understanding of Islam, their commitment to Islam doctrines, or their willingness to use violence. Closer inspection will show that Islamist groups have a similar understanding of Islam as political solutions for Muslim problems and equal commitment to Islamic doctrine. Closer inspection also shows that their behaviors among the Islamists are unfit to be radical - the moderate spectra, such as FPI's staunch rejection of secular democracy, PKS's willingness to accept secular democracy despite its commitment to the Islamist agenda, and PBB's political paradox maneuvers of promoting Islamist politics while lending support to its competitor.

This article proposes to take Islamism as a mental model or cognitive representation by which individuals use their belief system to make sense of the unfamiliar environment. Different Islamist groups have distinct mental models and imprints of learning processes they had gone through in aligning information about the environment and their understanding of Islam as a belief system, which will crystallize the group's self-identity. It is this identity that ultimately structures the group's behaviors.

Following the framework, the differences in behaviors between FPI, PKS, and PBB are rooted not in their differences in understanding or commitment to Islamist normativity but rather in the

learning process by which they acquire self-identity and the roles they need to play in solving problems they are facing. FPI emerged amid political instability that opened up communal conflicts and wild opportunities for immoral practices such as prostitution, gambling, and alcoholism. The hesitant government authorities to tackle the problem has polished the group identity as an alternative to the indecisive and corrupt apparatus of the secular state, which subsequently dictates FPI behaviors to always be in opposition to immorality and the secular system. Meanwhile, PKS's formative history in learning gradual Islamization has enabled them to differentiate normative commitment from political realism, pursue them simultaneously and in different ways, and make them experts in multivocal pragmatism. Finally, winning the title of the heir of Masyumi's great past trapped PBB founders in political complacency, discouraged them from embarking on innovations, and dragged them into desperate opportunistic political maneuvers.

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