

# BETWEEN UNITY AND DIVERSITY Resketching the Relation between Institutional-Affiliated Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals and the Government (1990-2001)

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**Abstract:** This article describes the relation between institutional-affiliated Muslim intellectuals and the government in Indonesia during the period of 1990-2001. By analyzing the interview data and documentary studies, it tries to resketch the historical context of social and institutional relation of Muslim intellectuals. This article finds that pluralism is a notion which can be used to sociologically describe the diversity of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals, occasionally leading them, both with and without an institutional association, to different difficulties to unite each other. It maintains that the way Muslim Intellectuals appear to be close to, or distant from, the government depends heavily on who becomes the president or who is in the centre of power. They tend to be close to the government if the president comes out of their social affiliation. The opposite goes the other way around. The fact that unity and diversity exist in Indonesian Islamic organizations and institutions, it suggests, just follows the need and the demand of their members.

**Keywords:** Muslim intellectuals, intellectual affiliation, ICMI, Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama.

## Introduction

In the history of modern Indonesia, discussion on Muslim intellectuals cannot be separated from the existence of ICMI (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia*, Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals). As Muslim intellectual association, ICMI comparatively become a remarkable sign of Indonesian Muslim intellectual movement which has a significant amount of number with all variation of their membership. Therefore, it is important to place ICMI in the foreground when discussing Indonesian Muslim intellectual movement. Discussing ICMI movement cannot be kept away from its history in 1990-2001.

ICMI emerged on 7 December 1990 in the town of Malang in East Java involving a broad cross-section of Muslims throughout Indonesia. Its head was B.J. Habibie, the Minister of Research and Technology at that time and a close confidant of President Soeharto. This organization has a closer relation with the government in the 1990s decade, since the board members of ICMI were heavily staffed and run by government bureaucrats, many of whom have been close associates of Habibie.

One of important institutional elements of Muslim intellectuals is Muhammadiyah. Founded by Ahmad Dahlan in 1912, Muhammadiyah considered as an intellectual (Islamic) movement that fosters intellectual activities in Indonesia. This can be seen from what Ahmad Dahlan has done in learning and practicing Islamic doctrine rationally. Another important element of institutional affiliation of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals is Nahdlatul Ulama. The Nahdlatul Ulama (NU; from Arabic *nahḍat al-'ulamā'*) was founded on 31 January 1926. It is one of the two largest Islamic social organizations in contemporary Indonesia. The social basis of NU has been and still, are largely the *pesantren* or traditional institution of Islamic learning, where *santri* (religious students) live and learn classic Arabic texts (*kitab kuning*) under the tutelage of a *kyai* (the head of *pesantren*, and a respectful Javanese term for a spiritual leader).<sup>1</sup> In a line with the development of education, many *santri* has transformed into an ulama-intellectual. Muslim intellectuals are not only affiliate with the above-mentioned institutions but they also affiliate with research center or educational foundations. Many of them have a choice not to affiliate with any institutions; they prefer to become independent intellectuals in giving their contributions to society.

Many studies have been done by the scholar and scientists concerning ICMI, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. Several researchers such as Robert W. Hefner, Douglas E. Ramage, and M. Syafi'i Anwar among others,<sup>2</sup> have discussed the history and the

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<sup>1</sup> Mitsuo Nakamura, "Nahdlatul Ulama," John L. Esposito (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 3 (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 217.

<sup>2</sup> See on this matter Douglas Ramage, *Religion and Politics in Indonesia* (London: Routledge, 1995), especially chapter three, 75-121; M. Syafi'i Anwar, *Pemikiran dan Aksi Islam Indonesia: Sebuah Kajian Politik tentang Cendekiawan Muslim Orde Baru* (Jakarta, Penerbit Paramadina, 1995); Robert W. Hefner, "Islam, state and Civil society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class," *Indonesia* 56 (1993), 1-35.

development of ICMI. This article, in particularly when discussing ICMI, is focused on reviewing the crucial theme of the position of ICMI in uniting Indonesian Muslim intellectuals during the period of 1990-2001.

Muhammadiyah, as organization, has also been studied especially on its development and role in Indonesian society. Ridho Al-Hamdi, for example, closely looks to the political attitudes of the elites in Muhammadiyah 1998-2010.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, Amika Wardana and Syahrul Hidayat gives their concern to the multiplicity of Muhammadiyah's political engagement in Indonesia's DPD election.<sup>4</sup> Concerning to the moderate vision of Muhammadiyah, Masdar Hilmy, examines its role by comparing with other Muslim based organization.<sup>5</sup> Different with Hilmy, Zakiyuddin Baidhawiy tries to look at the role of Muhammadiyah in coping with disaster management and mitigation.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, Hyung-Jun Kim gives a highlight concerning to the praxis and religious authority of Ahmad Dahlan, Founder of Muhammadiyah.<sup>7</sup> The typology of Muhammadiyah Sufism become the main theme of Biyanto's article by tracing its figures' thoughts and exemplary lives.<sup>8</sup> Other issues that become the topic of scientist in discussing Muhammadiyah is religious outlook on pluralism, liberalism and Islamism.<sup>9</sup> A current article about Muhammadiyah's perspective

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<sup>3</sup> Ridho Al-Hamdi, "Islam and Politics: Political Attitudes of the Elites in Muhammadiyah 1998-2010," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 3, 2 (2013), 267-290.

<sup>4</sup> Amika Wardana and Syahrul Hidayat, "The Multiplicity of Muhammadiyah's Political Engagement in Indonesia's DPD Election," *Studia Islamika* 26, 1 (2019), 75-111.

<sup>5</sup> Masdar Hilmy, "Whither Indonesia's Islamic Moderatism? A Reexamination on the Moderate Vision of Muhammadiyah and NU," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 7, 1 (2013), 24-48.

<sup>6</sup> Zakiyuddin Baidhawiy, "The Role of Faith-Based Organization in Coping with Disaster Management and Mitigation Muhammadiyah's Experience," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 9, 2 (2015), 167-193.

<sup>7</sup> Hyung-Jun Kim, "Praxis and Religious Authority in Islam: The Case of Ahmad Dahlan, Founder of Muhammadiyah," *Studia Islamika* 17, 1 (2010), 69-92.

<sup>8</sup> Biyanto, "The typology of Muhammadiyah Sufism: Tracing its Figures' Thoughts and Exemplary Lives," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 7, 2 (2017), 221-249.

<sup>9</sup> Ahmad Najib Burhani, "Pluralism, Liberalism and Islamism: Religious Outlook of Muhammadiyah," *Studia Islamika* 25, 3 (2018), 443-470.

on the guidance in using social media wrote by Niki Alma Febriana Fauzi and Ayub.<sup>10</sup>

There are many studies on the role of NU in the religious life in Indonesia interested many researchers such as the history of NU, its involvement in society, its relations with the state, and its unique education system and social structure.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, NU and the realm of intellectualism studied by Mastuki HS. He observes the resurrection of *santri-cendekia* by tracing the historical roots of intellectualism within the *santri* milieu, describing the social basis of intellectualism and mapping their spread in the interstices between numbers of institutional orders.<sup>12</sup> My article entitled with NU and the Production of Muslim Intellectuals in the Beginning of 21st Century Indonesia, also describes the historical background of the emergence of Muslim intellectual within NU.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Niki Alma Febriana Fauzi and Ayub, "Fikih Informasi: Muhammadiyah's Perspective on Guidance in Using Social Media," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 9, 2 (2019), 267-293.

<sup>11</sup> For this account see Azyumardi Azra, "NU: Islam Tradisional dan Modernitas di Indonesia, (a book review)," *Studia Islamika* 4, 4 (1997), 217-240; Ellyasa K.H. Darwis, (ed.), *Gus Dur, Nu dan Masyarakat Sipil* (Yogyakarta: LKIS and Pustaka Pelajar, 1994); Ali Haidar, "Al-Islam wa al-Pancasila fi Dawi Kifah Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)," *Studia Islamika*, 1, 3 (1994), 83-116; Laode Ida, "Pergulatan dan Identitas NU," *Ulumul Quran* 5, 6 (1996), 15-22; Laode Ida, "Kembali ke Khittah 1926," *Prisma*, 14, 5 (1995), 87-99; Sidney Jones, "The Contradiction and Expansion of the "Umat" and the Role of the Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia," *Indonesia*, 38 (1984), 1-73; AS. Laksana (ed.), *NU Pasca Gus Dur* (Jakarta: Fatma Press, 1998); Aziz K.H.A. Masyhuri, *Masalah Keagamaan, Hasil Muktamar dan Munas NU ke 1/1926 – ke 29/1994* (Surabaya: PP RMI and Dinamika Press, 1997); Arif Mudatsir, "Dari Situbondo Menuju NU Baru," *Prisma* (1984), 130-142; Ali Munhanif, "The Khittah of 1926 Reexamined: Views of the NU in Post-Cipasing Congress," *Studia Islamika* 2, 2 (1996), 85-119; Einar Martahan Sitompul, *NU dan Pancasila* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1989); Nursamad, "Mawqif Nahdat al-Ulama min Harkat al-Tabsyir al-Masihi bi Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 4, 3 (1997), 123-169; Yunahar Ilyas, M. Masyhur Amin and M. Daru Lalito (eds), *Mubammadiyah dan NU* (Yogyakarta: LPPi UMY, 1993); Hairus Salim HS and Muhammad Ridwan (eds), *Kultur Hibrida, Anak Muda NU di Jalur Kultural* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1999); Marzuki Wahid, Abdul Muqsih Ghazali and Suwendi, *Dinamika NU, Perjalanan Sosial dari Muktamar Cipasing (1994) ke Muktamar Kediri (1999)* (Jakarta: Kompas-Lakpesdam NU, 1999); Marzuki Wahid, Abdul Muqsih Ghazali and Suwendi, *Geger di Republik NU: Perebutan Wacana, Tafsir Sejarah, Tafsir Makna* (Jakarta: Kompas-Lakpesdam NU, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> Mastuki HS, *Kebangkitan Santri Cendekia Jejak Historis, Basis Sosial dan Persebarannya* (Jakarta: Pustaka Kompas, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Khoirun Niam, "Nahdlatul Ulama and the Production of Muslim Intellectuals in the Beginning of 21st Century Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 11, 2 (2017).

The focus of this article, however, describes the relation between institutional-affiliated Indonesian Muslim intellectuals and the government during the period of 1990 until 2001. The reason behind this time frame that 1990 is the establishment of ICMI that resulted a closer relation between Muslim intellectuals and the government until the collapse of the New Order era in 1998. From this time until 2001 the political and social situation turn into the reformation era, in which the representation of Muslim intellectual in the government position turn into the hand of non ICMI members. By analyzing the collected interview data and documentary studies in 2000 this article tries to resketch the historical context of social and institutional relation of Muslim intellectuals. Although some of respondents are passed away, to be mentioned here M Dawam Rahardjo (d. 30 May 2018), BJ Habibi (d. 11 September 2019), Bahtiar Effendy (d. 21 November 2019) and A Malik Fadjar (d. 7 September 2020), but the interview data has a valuable meaning and relevance with recent disputed issues.

In sketching the relation between institutional-affiliated Muslim intellectuals, following question are asked: how is the relation between institutional-affiliated Muslim intellectuals and non-affiliated Muslim intellectuals? What is the unity and diversity of institutional-affiliated Muslim intellectuals like? How is the relation between them and the government? How is the cooperation between the institutions, that many Muslim intellectuals affiliate with?

### **Institutional-Affiliated Intellectuals and non-Affiliated Intellectuals**

Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia are divergent and located in great variety of institutional settings as well as in the interstices between numbers of institutional orders. This article, however, focuses on their institutional or organizational affiliation. It is impossible here to cover all the institutional locations of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals. Therefore, the attention will be paid only to the certain institutions.

If we would like to trace the affiliation of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) as the greatest Islamic organizations in Indonesia should be the first discussed. The question is, may Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia be classified to the NU intellectuals and Muhammadiyah intellectuals? This question was posed to several Indonesian Muslim intellectuals in interview while collecting the materials for this study. The positive answers indicate that such classification can be justified if it refers to the organizational affiliation. Masykuri Abdillah is one of the Muslim

intellectuals who acknowledges this classification. But, he does not agree with the implementation of such classifications in differing intellectual features of Indonesian Muslims.<sup>14</sup> Syafiq A. Mughni (a professor of Islamic Studies; board member of the Muhammadiyah) also justifies this classification. According to him, such classification does not always indicate the character of thought of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals. It merely indicates the organizational affiliation of Muslim intellectuals. “As a matter of fact,” he said, “there are many Muslim intellectuals who affiliated with organizations other than NU and Muhammadiyah”.<sup>15</sup>

Many of Muhammadiyah intellectuals are affiliated with higher education institutions or become government employees. The reason for this, according to Masykuri, is that to associate with or to become Muhammadiyah and *Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam* (HMI, The Islamic Students’ Association) is exceptionally beneficial from a political point of view, especially during the New Order government era.<sup>16</sup> Muhammadiyah and HMI were among those who closely related to the New Order government.<sup>17</sup> Although Muhammadiyah and HMI are independent organizations, many of their cadres and activists were associate with the New Order government system. This made both organizations closely related with the center of power. In line with the government development program, the New Order government needed more professional and educated people. Muhammadiyah and HMI had a lot of human resources in this case. In contrast many of the NU cadres and activists were eliminated from the government. One reason was the lack of human resources within NU capable of handling the economic and technological development task.<sup>18</sup> Politically, despite of NU anti-communist movement, at the beginning of the New Order government NU was under the suspicion of

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with Masykuri Abdillah, Jakarta, August 20, 2000. See also Niam, “Nahdlatul Ulama, p. 352.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Syafiq A. Mughni, Surabaya, July 26, 2000. See also Niam, “Nahdlatul Ulama.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Masykuri Abdillah, Jakarta, August 20, 2000. See also Niam, “Nahdlatul Ulama.

<sup>17</sup> See Howard M. Federspiel, *A Dictionary of Indonesian Islam* (Ohio: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1995), 81-82. See also Martin van Bruinessen, *NU, Tradisi, Relasi-relasi Kuasa dan Pencarian Wacana Baru* (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 1994), 101.

<sup>18</sup> Laode Ida, *Anatomi Konflik NU, Elit Islam dan Negara* (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1996), 31.

government for its active role in the former “Guided Democracy” that was led by Soekarno.<sup>19</sup>

In comparison with NU, Muhammadiyah is more appreciated of its intellectuals. The appreciation is indicated by their recruitment as board members of organization. Most of Muhammadiyah board members are intellectuals and scholars, while the NU’s board members are *kiai* or *‘ulama*.<sup>20</sup> The affiliation of Muslim intellectuals with many Islamic organizations, or even with political parties, indicates that they are not detached from their community but they mix and unite with the community around them. Many Muslim intellectuals, for instance, are affiliated with political institutions such as M Amin Rais, Yusril Ihza Mahendra, Abdurrahman Wahid, AS Hikam, Adi Sasono, and Dewi Fortuna Anwar among others. Many others join Islamic organizations and academic institutions. However, the question remains why do they affiliate with such institutions? What is the position of unattached intellectuals?

There are two reasons why Indonesian Muslim intellectuals affiliate with such institutions. First, they do want to become solely “a man of theory” and wish to put theory or intellectual thought into practice. They realize, in fact, the consequences of being institutional-affiliated intellectuals; however, they agree that their intellectual thought should be realistically practiced. According to Rahardjo, there is no use if intellectuals using their intellectual thought only for themselves. It should also be useful for others.<sup>21</sup> Second, they want to change the conditions from “within the system”. By joining the state institutions such as education institutions and political institutions they can participate in formulating what is needed to develop the quality of Muslim communities, especially, and to develop the quality of life for Indonesian people generally.

The affiliation of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals with many institutions has resulted in some advantages. First, borrowing from

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<sup>19</sup> van Bruinessen, *NU, Tradisi, Relasi-relasi Kuasa*, 90. Between 1959 and 1966 Indonesian government was under the banner of “Guided Democracy”. It was as a result of the disintegration, overthrow, and abandonment of the constitutional democracy of the earlier years of independence. See for further information Herbert Feith, “Dynamic of Guided Democracy,” Ruth T. McVey (ed.), *Indonesia* (Yale: Southeast Asia Studies Yale University, 1963), 309-409.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Masykuri Abdillah, Jakarta, August 20, 2000.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Dawam Rahardja, Bekasi, August 24, 2000.

Arif Budiman's analysis, they can develop their personal and professional strengths in their field such as technologically, and bureaucratically become more professional. As a result, they contribute significantly to the development process. Second, they become ethical examples for others in upholding morality and professional ethic. For instance, in upholding discipline and in fighting against corruption in their own institution.

The disadvantage of affiliation can be seen in the following aspects: First, in some cases they cannot appropriately choose which is the best alternative for the public interest. They are contaminated by the interests of their group. Intellectuals who affiliated with political institutions usually face this problem. The consideration of politics—struggle for power, for example—contaminates their genuine and authentic intellectual considerations. Abdurrahman Wahid, for instance, was known as propagator of democracy, pluralism, and civil society in Indonesia. However, in actualising the intellectual vision that he has propagated, he was influenced by political, group or his own interests, especially after becoming the Indonesian fourth president (1999-2001). One has noted that his attitude endangered not only the interest of “Islam politic” but also the integration of Indonesia.<sup>22</sup> His political opponents accused him of trying to defend his presidential position at any prices. The second complication of affiliation is that their thought and energy are focused on the institutional or organizational routine activities. If they cannot manage the allocation of time for the institutional and intellectual activities, their intellectual capacity will be reduced in line with their active involvement in organizational activity. An example is M. Syafii Maarif criticism concerning the Islamic intellectual thought of Muhammadiyah intellectuals in 1985. He argued that because of the routine organizational activity, they intellectual capacities were stagnant.

Therefore, it is important to continuously criticize institutional-affiliated intellectuals. This task is done by independent intellectuals. However, there are only a small number of independent intellectuals in Indonesia. The institutional-affiliated intellectuals, who affiliate with Islamic organizations or foundation such as Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, ICMI, Yayasan Paramadina or with educational institutions are much larger in number. They are sometimes influenced

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<sup>22</sup> See Zuhairi Misrawi, “Dari Islam Liberal Menuju Post-Tradisionalisme Islam,” *Republika*, July 3, 2001.



by the interests of their institutions when making the important decisions. However, generally, in arguing universal problems, such as humanity and human rights, they are clearer than intellectuals affiliated with political institutions. Nurcholish Madjid for example, as a leading figure in Paramadina, he does not want to join a political institution. In this case he argues that Islam politic cannot be expected for the future of Indonesia. According to him the activists of Islamic political parties are too egotistical and difficult to unite. Therefore, in the euphoric political condition of contemporary Indonesia (in the late 1990s), when many Islamic parties were established, Madjid still believed his former slogan (released in the 1970s): “Islam Yes, Islamic party no”. Because of his distance from political institutions he can neutrally and independently criticise not only politic matters, but also social and cultural issues.

The existence of “non-affiliated” intellectuals is in need in Indonesia. They have a significant role especially in telling the truth, in upholding justice and in criticizing the power. Emha Ainun Najib,<sup>23</sup> for instance, is needed although such intellectuals are decreasing in number. “Non-affiliated” intellectuals are respected by the people for their critical ideas and rational analysis. “Non-affiliated” intellectuals are not contaminated by “practical” political interests. They can argue liberally and sharply their mind without worrying of the government’s control over them.

### **The Variety and the Unity**

The establishment of Islamic organizations and institutions in Indonesia, which many Muslim intellectuals affiliate with, is part of Indonesian ‘ulama’s as well as Muslim intellectuals’ responses to their social and religious problems. Muhammadiyah and NU are among the Indonesian’s oldest Islamic organizations established in such a way. These two organizations have resulted in an historical dynamic of Indonesian Islam. This dynamic has been reflected in the intention to unite Indonesian Muslim *ummah*, and by the fact that Indonesian Muslims are plural in nature, have many variations and tendencies that are difficult to unite.

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<sup>23</sup> He is considered by many as a leading figure of “non-affiliated” intellectuals, although he has ever joined with ICMI --Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals-- where he became chairman of the Department of Cultural Dialogue of the ICMI. He left his post at the Central Board of the ICMI in August 1991 because he was not satisfied with the political line taken by the organization

Unity and diversity are a pair of words that alternately prevail in Indonesian Islamic organization. When contradictions within the *ummah* become more and more critical, which results in a tense relationship, social disharmony, organisational inefficiency and ineffectiveness in contributing to social and religious development, the need for unity becomes increasingly clear. Nevertheless, even when unity among Muslim *ummah* can be realized, a difference of opinion, perception and even disagreement in practical matters emerges after a short time. The differences between the *ummah* be natural and as something positive; however, it is also possible to negatively sharpen and increase the conflict between them. The split of an organization can be a further consequence of these differences.

The establishment of ICMI in 1990, for example, was intended to unite Muslim *ummah* in Indonesia, especially the Indonesian Muslim intellectuals' potentiality which was separated in different Islamic organizations. More realistically they were dichotomically accommodated in "modernist-traditionalist" organizations—borrowing from Daliar Noer's distinction, —"Muhammadiyah-NU". Such distinctions have coloured the historical development of Indonesian Islam. Many Islamic organizations were, in fact, united in an institution called MIAI (*Majlis al-Islām al-a'la' Indonesia*, The Supreme Indonesian Council of Islam) established in 1937 as a federation of Islamic organizations initiated by Indonesian Muslims. This organization was dissolved in October 1943 by the Japanese and replaced with the *Mashumi*/Masyumi (*Majlis Shūra Muslimin Indonesia*, Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims)<sup>24</sup>. However, as seen in Mashumi's history, there was tension and a split among its organizational elements. NU decided to withdraw from Mashumi in April 1952 for political reasons and because 'ulama, according to NU, had only a peripheral position in Mashumi. Thus, there was no more unity among the Islamic organization in Indonesia. ICMI was established according to some of its founders, "to unify the Indonesian Islamic movement and to break away from historic splits (for example, "modernist" Muhammadiyah versus "traditionalist" NU).

ICMI's goal to unite the Indonesian Muslims intellectuals, in the end, cannot be realized. This is because only a small number of NU intellectuals are, in reality, represented in ICMI or want to join with

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<sup>24</sup> See BJ. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhof, 1971), 10-11.

ICMI. Therefore, the purpose of uniting the Indonesian Muslim intellectuals is idealistic rather than realistic. Nevertheless, the government has supported the establishment of ICMI in such a way that many government officials are actively engaged in ICMI.

Pointing out that there are only a small number of NU intellectuals who joined ICMI, AS Hikam argued that ICMI, as a matter of fact, is a political organization. It is used as political vehicle by some of the modernist Muslims in order to have access to the state. "It is a big mistake if you talk about ICMI, without saying that ICMI is a political organization. ICMI is not only an intellectual organization, it is also a political organization. Well, its name is Association of Muslim Intellectuals, but its goal is power," Hikam suggests.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, Malik Fadjar argues that ideally ICMI should be an open organization. It should accommodate all kind of Islamic groups, ideologies, and aspirations of Muslim intellectuals. In reality, however, ICMI is dominated by the HMI or Muhammadiyah intellectuals. NU is represented by limited number of its intellectuals in ICMI due to political reasons. Abdurrahman Wahid, as chairman of NU at that time, did not want to joint with ICMI. He accused ICMI of being an exclusive organization, while he would like to have what he called an inclusive attitude and views within Indonesian's plural society. He has a different perception in this matter. Recently, in the 2000s, according to Malik Fadjar, the situation is different and the relationship between those different Islamic groups has become closer. There was an interesting new political development in the late of 1990s. Many Islamic parties were established by many Muslim intellectuals.<sup>26</sup> Amin Rais, for instance, along with other intellectuals established *Partai Amanat Nasional* (PAN, National Trusteeship Party); Yuslir Ihza Mahendra founded *Partai Bulan Bintang* (PBB, The Crescent and Star Party. The Crescent and Star become a symbol of this party in order to politically indicate its relation with former Masyumi Party banned by Soekarno during the Old Order government); and Abdurrahman Wahid founded *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* (PKB, The Renaissance of the Nation Party). This new phenomenon has resulted in the new thought and vision of Muslim intellectuals in developing the future of Indonesia.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Muhammad AS Hikam, Berlin, May 21, 2000.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Malik Fadjar, Jakarta, July 19, 2000.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

On the membership of NU intellectuals in ICMI, Masdar Farid Mas'udi said that most of ICMI's activists have Muhammadiyah or HMI backgrounds, those categorized as modernist people. NU has only a small number of intellectuals characterized as "modernist" by ICMI's activists. What is large in number in the NU is ulama or *kiai*. It is also influenced by Abdurrahman Wahid's (Gus Dur) views on ICMI. In fact, at first, Gus Dur was not too antipathetic toward ICMI, he recommended a number of NU intellectuals to join with ICMI such as Sahal Mahfudz, and Fahmi among others.<sup>28</sup>

Concerning the polarization of Muslim intellectuals in many political parties, Malik Fadjar asserted that it does not indicate a crisis of togetherness within ICMI, but there is a shift of orientation. The political consideration interested many Muslim intellectuals to engaged themselves in this arena. The shift of orientation does not mean the emergence of the crisis in the ICMI. Its dynamic is indicated in responding to the new situation. What is important is that the ICMI members are conscious that ICMI should be oriented to the open organization in developing a new Indonesia.<sup>29</sup> After the collapse of the New Order government in 1998, Malik Fadjar argued that a new Indonesia should be built by upholding the supremacy of law, democracy, and human rights. Until today, ICMI has not yet found an appropriate format for the above universal issues, but it is still in the process of seeking (modelling) them.

The practical political considerations and interests may disturb the commitment of ICMI members to developing a new Indonesia. What Malik Fadjar saw as a positive in this situation is the fact that Muhammadiyah has always been committed to educational activity. It is reflected by its numerous numbers of educational institutions, from the basic schools to the university level. Therefore, Malik Fadjar is optimistic that Muhammadiyah has the stamina to develop intellectual tradition. Many NU's *pesantrens*, according to him, have also "openly" contributed to the process of developing human resources by considering the development of Muslim human resources as an important sector of its institutional activity. Malik Fadjar supposes that if this activity can be organized in a simultaneous and wide-scope

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with Masdar Farid Mas'udi, Jakarta, July 18, 2000.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Malik Fadjar, Jakarta, July 19, 2000.

network, by neglecting the interest of the group (Muhammadiyah, NU etc.), it could result in a new Indonesia in the next 5-10 years.<sup>30</sup>

How is the dynamic of ICMI after its leadership was no longer on the hands of BJ Habibie? According to Komaruddin Hidayat (Head of the Paramadina in Jakarta; Lecturer at IAIN Jakarta (now UIN) and the Universitas Indonesia; Board member of ICMI), ICMI was too dependent on the Habibie's power and on the state bureaucracy. Therefore, if Habibie's power decreases ICMI is so. Habibie cannot choose proportionally his assistance when he became a leader. As an airplane specialist, he knows more about the sky than the world. He does not know the historical anatomy of the Indonesian intellectuals. Because of this, when he became a president or become a leader of certain institution, he chose assistant with no social and intellectual roots. Komaruddin argued that it is difficult to awaken the spirit of ICMI and to create it for a second time as a potential organization.<sup>31</sup>

According to Komaruddin, from the beginning ICMI has had a lack of cohesion. It was designed as an open organization, nonetheless there was a group of people who use ICMI as a political vehicle. Only this group of people were disappointed with ICMI when its role and influence within the government declined. Other elements of ICMI, those whose orientation was genuinely on the intellectual and moral activities, had not much hope for the political achievement of ICMI. They did not care about the decreasing political influence of ICMI. "The 'natural mother' of ICMI was not intellectualism. ICMI became subordinate to its board members. There were many 'free riders' or 'stowaways' in ICMI. There were many people who politicised ICMI and Habibie", Komarudin said.<sup>32</sup> However Rahardjo argued that Habibie was used by ICMI, he did not politicise ICMI.<sup>33</sup> He explained that without Habibie, ICMI faced many difficulties.

Habibie had a close relation with Soeharto, the Indonesian second president. Because of Habibie's close relation with the president, he was used by ICMI. He has helped the initiators of ICMI to realized its goal. Rahardjo rejected the allegation that Habibie used ICMI as his political vehicle.<sup>34</sup> What is important for Rahardjo is the commitment and

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Malik Fadjar, Jakarta, July 19, 2000.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Komaruddin Hidayat, Jakarta, August 25, 2000.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Dawam Rahardjo, Bekasi, August 24, 2000.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

participation of the Indonesian Muslim intellectuals in developing the *ummah*. There is no use for intellectuals, if their intellectual capacity is not used for the sake of public interest. According to Rahardjo, the motivation of the establishment of ICMI was to mobilize the potentiality of the Indonesian Muslim intellectuals.<sup>35</sup>

The “unity” of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals in ICMI has become non-existent, especially after the collapse of the New Order government. It was split when Habibie, the person who had made significant contributions to the establishment and development of ICMI, founded a new institution called The Habibie Centre in 1999 together with his colleagues who were and, in some cases, still were board members of ICMI.

The unity and diversity, as seen in ICMI, also exists in other Islamic organizations. In NU, for instance, difference of opinion and interest among its board members resulted in the intention to separate from NU and to form a new institution. The establishment of a new institution was also caused by the lack of accommodative policy of the NU to the aspiration of its members. LKiS (*Lembaga Kajian Islam dan sosial*, Institute for Islamic and Social Studies), for example was founded to accommodate intellectual aspirations of young NU members who had graduated from their study and could not find an appropriate position in NU. Such initiative does not cause conflict within NU, rather enriches the organizational potentiality of NU. Thus, the unity within Islamic organizations in Indonesia is something ideal, but it does not sound better if it simply results in uniformity.

### **Muslim Intellectual Institutions and the Government**

In comparison with NU, Muhammadiyah and ICMI are institutions which had a closer relationship with the New Order government (1966-1998 was New Order era in Indonesian history). In fact, Muhammadiyah, ICMI, and NU are structurally independent organizations with no organizational unit with the government. However, because of the historical background and human resources reasons Muhammadiyah had a close relationship with the government. Besides its record in the Indonesian Islamic movement, many Muhammadiyah members participated in the creation of the New Order regime. In addition, Muhammadiyah has many qualified members who met the demands of the New Order development

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

programs and they could occupy certain bureaucratic positions. The New Order government was more likely to cooperate with Muhammadiyah than NU. The reluctance of the New Order government to cooperate with NU was caused by the close relationship of NU with the former Old Order government (1945-1965), although in fact, NU was taking part in disbanding the Communist movement in 1965. In addition, it was judged that human resources within NU did not meet the demand of the New Order government. Muhammadiyah human resources were more accommodated by the government in bureaucratic system, legislative institutions, and in political institutions (Golkar, *Golongan Karya*, Functional groups, political machinery of the New Order). Although NU affiliated politically with PPP (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, United Development Party), especially from 1973-1984, but its leaders could not have strategic positions within the party. This of course frustrated members, considering that the majority of the PPP's supporters and constituents came from NU. Another factor that indicates the distance between NU and the New Order government was the Ministerial post for the Department of Religious Affairs. During the New Order government, it was given to Muhammadiyah or others. This differed from the situation during the Old Order government's when the Ministerial post for Department of Religious Affairs was entrusted to NU's cadres.

ICMI also had a close relationship with the New Order government. This was the case from the establishment of ICMI in 1990 until the collapse of the New Order (in the 1998) and followed by Habibies presidential terms (1998-1999). The close relationship was indicated by the support of the New Order government, materially, personally, and politically, to ICMI. There were at least three ministerial posts occupied by ICMI background minister during Habibies presidential terms. Muladi as the Minister of Justice; Adi Sasono as the Minister of Cooperation Micro and Middle Economic Entrepreneur; Malik Fadjar as the Minister of Religious Affairs. After Habibie was no longer as the Indonesian president (he was replaced by Abdurrahman Wahid, 28 October 1999-23 July 2001) there was a distance between ICMI and the government. This distance was caused by Abdurrahman Wahid's attitude toward ICMI, which was indicated by his reluctance to support ICMI since its establishment. NU, however, certainly became the substitute of Muhammadiyah and ICMI

in maintaining a closer relationship with the government. At Abdurrahman Wahid presidential term, he was accompanied by five ministers coming from NU background. Alwi Shihab as the Minister of Foreign Affairs; Muhammad Tolchah Hasan as the Minister of Religious Affairs; Hikam as the Minister of Research and Technology; Rozi Munir as the Minister of Investment and State Enterprises; and Khofifah Indar Parawansa as the Minister of Women Empowerment. Thus, it can be said that the closeness or distance of an Islamic institution in which Muslim intellectuals affiliated with, with the government depends on who becomes the president or who is in the centre of power.

Meanwhile Paramadina indicates its independency. It is different from Muhammadiyah and NU. Although these last two organizations are not political organizations, they have sponsored the establishment of political parties. Muhammadiyah backed the establishment of PAN (*Partai Amanat Nasional*, National Trusteeship Party) and NU backed up the establishment of PKB (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa*, The Renaissance of the Nation Party)—just to mention one of the political party established by NU. Paramadina has never formally participated in the backing of a certain party (although some of its member are connected to certain parties, and Paramadina's chairman, Madjid himself became a member of the National Verification Team of the Political Party before general election of the 1999).

Meanwhile, Censis (Central for the Study of Islam and Society), an institution that is affiliated with the governmental education institutions (in this case IAIN, *Institut Agama Islam Negeri*, State Institute of Islamic Studies, now UIN, *Universitas Islam Negeri*, State Islamic University at Jakarta), has managed on orientation which is purely scientific. Although financially dependent on the government, Censis has maintained its position as an institution that purely undertakes studies and research activities.

Concerning to the question on how is the relation among institutional-affiliated Muslim intellectuals, it was found that there is no formal cooperation between Islamic institutions in Indonesia, but informally many Muslim intellectuals are engaged in the process of human resources development. What does exist, however, is the competition between the institutions. On this matter Mughni, for example, suggested that as long as each institution can operationally navigate the development of its own institution in an inclusive,



effective, and competitive way, the cooperation among the institutions will not be necessary. The informal cooperation has happened especially in the case that there are many NU intellectuals who have become lecturers in Muhammadiyah universities and vice versa. A formal cooperation is limited only in the form of joint seminars conducted in different institutions. Muhammadiyah and NU, for example, conducted a joint seminar on the theme “Muhammadiyah and NU: Reorientation of Islamic Perspective”, which was held in Yogyakarta on 30 and 31 January 1993. The Seminar was organized by the Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta in co-operation with the *Lembaga Pengkajian dan Pengamalan Islam* (LPPI, Institute for Islamic Studies and Implementation), the Yogyakarta branch of the *Lembaga Kajian Pengembangan Sumberdaya Manusia Nahdlatul Ulama* (LKPSM-NU, Institute for Human Resources Development Studies of the Nahdlatul Ulama) and the *Pesantren Aji Mahasiswa al-Muhsin* of Krapyak, Yogyakarta.<sup>36</sup>

In fact, many Islamic organizational leaders and intellectuals were aware that the organizational or formal cooperation between institutions is positive, however, it cannot be realized until today. They are too busy managing their own organizational duties. The political interests also hindered them from formal cooperation. K.H. Azhar Basyir, the chairman of the Central Board of the Muhammadiyah (1990-1995), reminded members during a seminar on Muhammadiyah and NU that the Muhammadiyah and NU had a will continue to have a large responsibility in the improvement of the welfare of the Muslim population in Indonesia. Therefore, it would be a great advantage to the Muslim community in particular and to the Indonesian nation in general if the two organizations could cooperate without abandoning their respective identities.<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless, as acknowledged by Maarif, the chairman of the Central Board of the Muhammadiyah (2000-2005), during my interview with him there still had not been—in 2000—any formal or organizational cooperation between Muhammadiyah and NU.<sup>38</sup> Earlier, at that seminar, Abdurrahman Wahid, the chairman of the

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<sup>36</sup> See Darul Aqsha, Dick van der Meij and Johan Hendrik Meuleman (eds), *Islam in Indonesia: A survey of Event and Developments from 1988 to March 1993* (Jakarta: INIS, 1995), 365-367.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with M. Syafii Maarif, Yogyakarta, August 5, 2000.

Central Board of NU (1984-1999) launched a warning that the ambition of Islamic movements to monopolize all social and political functions in the country would have a boomerang effect.<sup>39</sup> The day after the seminar, when attending a meeting with NU businessmen in Waru, East Java, Abdurrahman Wahid declared that he saw a possibility for cooperation between Muhammadiyah and NU in the economic sector. However, to realize such cooperation would require time because both organizations were just pioneering in this field.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the cooperation between the institutions, which many Muslim intellectuals are affiliated with, could not be formally realized.

### Conclusion

From the previous description, it can be concluded that the intention to unite Indonesian Muslim, and the fact that Indonesian Muslims are plural in nature lead to the tendency of difficulty to unite. Unity and diversity are a pair of words that alternately prevail in Indonesian Islamic organization. When contradictions within the members of organization and institution become more and more critical, the need for unity becomes increasingly clear. Nevertheless, even when unity can be realized, a difference of opinion, perception and even disagreement in practical matters emerges after a short time. The differences can be seen as natural and as something positive; however, it is also possible to negatively sharpen and increase the conflict between them. The split of an organization can be a further consequence of these differences. ICMI's goal to unite the Indonesian Muslims intellectuals, in the end, cannot be realized. This is because, in reality, only a small number of NU intellectuals are represented in ICMI or want to join with ICMI. Therefore, the purpose of uniting Indonesian Muslim intellectuals is idealistic rather than realistic.

Muhammadiyah and ICMI are institutions which had a closer relationship with the New Order government. Although Muhammadiyah, ICMI and NU are structurally independent organizations with no organizational unit with the government. However, because of the historical background and human resources reasons, Muhammadiyah had a close relationship with the government. The New Order government was more likely to cooperate with Muhammadiyah than NU. ICMI also had a close relationship with the New Order

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<sup>39</sup> Aqsha, van der Meij and Meuleman (eds.), *Islam in Indonesia*, 366.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

government. This was the case from the establishment of ICMI in 1990 until the collapse of the New Order in 1998 and followed by Habibies presidential terms in 1998-1999. The close relationship was indicated by the support of the New Order government, materially, personally, and politically, to ICMI. NU, however, certainly became substitute of Muhammadiyah and ICMI in maintaining a closer relationship with the government during Abdurrahman Wahid presidential term in 1999-2001. Thus, it can be said that the closeness or distance of an Islamic institution in which Muslim intellectuals affiliated with, with the government depends on who becomes the president or who is in the centre of power. []

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