Unraveling Political Islam in Indonesia: A Comparative Literature Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia's direct elections has increased engagement of religion in politics since the early 2000s. Moreover, some political parties have used Islam as their ideology. However, people disagree about how far does Islam engage in politics. Some believe Islam is a completed way of life including political life. Other make assertions that Muslims have to choose leaders based on their religions. Other oppose and argue that Islam has been politicized in gaining and maintaining power. Some propose separation of religion and politics. This paper aims at defining features of political Islam. Collected data was conducted by document study to texts of literature. This study reveals the features of politics and Islam are constructed within three dimensions, which are perspectives, ethics, and goals. The analysis reveals the distinction between the correct and incorrect political Islam is centered on whether its' goals are an increase in submission to God or power in the first place. For example, the correct political Islam does not change its narratives with or without general elections in Indonesia.

Keywords: Political Islam; Islam; Politics; Religion; Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

How to determine one is political Islam and another is not? Indonesian's recent political dynamics have demonstrated that everything is deemed political. Since independence, religion and politics have been intertwined in Indonesia (Menchik, 2016). Some religious organizations had been transferred into political parties during multi-system parties before 1980s. Islamic political parties emerged after reformasi era (Yulianti, 2015). Islamic decree has been enacted to support political parties and candidates in Indonesia (As'ad, 2010). Islam is way of life including political life (Hitti, 2021). There is no tradition of separation Islam and politics (Brown, 2000). On the other hand, religious resources have been politicized to gain and maintain power (Hosen, 2019). Religion and politics must be separated (Hosen, 2005). Within these two contrasting flows of argument, there have been no assessment on politics and Islam as well as its implication for this majority Muslim country.

This study fills the gap in the works by examining the political Islam in democratized Indonesia. Indonesia provided a distinctive case to examine politics and Islam due to the presence of direct elections at national and local levels since 2000s. Indonesia has more Muslim population than any other countries in the world. All these led studies to highlight intermitted politics and Islam in Indonesia.

There are a few terms in association with politics and Islam, which are political Islam, Islamism and Islamic politics. The term political Islam mainly refers to a reform of political institutions and system while Islamism is generally associated with social movement that participate in the reform. Islamic politics is generally expressed in Islamic terms such jihad (Struggling), siyasah (governance) and syura (assembly) in the political reforms. However, I use these terms interrelated and intermittently interchangeable.

Specifically, I analyzed the terms used by scholars both theoretical and practical resources. My analysis produces three dimensions of constructed political Islam, which are perspectives, ethics, and goals. The analysis suggests the distinction between political and non-political life is centered on whether it is voluntarily or involuntarily in democratized Indonesia. The categorization represents no separation of politics and Islam as well as a plurality and a dialogue of politics and Islam in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study uses an analytical review based on indexed journal articles and books. Data collection was based on the keyword "political Islam". Then the researcher narrowed the object area in Indonesia by choosing English and Indonesian that discussed political Islam. Furthermore, the articles and books are analyzed using the form of analysis: search result analysis in the articles and books. Thus the steps in this study are described in the form of data filtering; data eligibility; data include and data analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Politics and Islam

In the last two decades, Islamic politics has become a reference for a myriad range of political activities, narratives and contra movements. In Islamic democratic countries, some have opposed to political identity based on religious affiliation while other have insisted that religious believers must choose in the electoral democracy based on their beliefs. Some claim that Muslim politicians at present are using Islam for political purposes. In Europe, many Muslims advocate for accommodation of religious beliefs and practices in public places.

The scope of political Islam is very broad. This is because Islam as one of the world's major religions has existed since centuries ago. Islam has been followed by almost all regions of the world community today. Muslims live in Islamic countries and Western countries as majority and as minority communities. Within Muslim communities, the Prophet of Muhammad was a religious leader and a political leader and his early companions adopting the authority over his community. While no clear agreement is on what the ideal forms of political Islam should be, but it is consistently held that political Islam is the core of Muslim principles and values.

Scholars have defined political Islam as formulations of Islam for state and society (Esposito, 1998; Fuller & Kurpershoek, 2004; Mumtaz, 1986). These scholars however focus on various sides of the political Islam for state and society. Some scholars have concerned with political Islam as implementation of Islamic values in the Western states and societies (Schirrmacher, 2016; Warner, 2018). Tibi (2014) argues that Muslims are struggling to implement Islamic values in the Western countries while Warner insists that the implementation of Islamic law in the Western countries must be rejected when the Islamic law contradicts the Western values (Warner, 2018). Schirrmacher (2016) shows certain Islamic movements are endorsing activities in European countries to promote the implementation of Islamic values in communities.

Other scholars have focused on political Islam as implementation of Islamic values in Islamic states and societies. Denoeux (2002) argues that political Islam is a form of instrumentalization of religion for political objectives by individuals, groups and organizations using concepts from the Islamic tradition. Fuller & Kurpershoek (2004) defines political Islam as how contemporary Muslim world should be ordered politically and implementation of some fashion based on Islam in the society. Knudsen (2003) sees political Islam as a legitimate political expression and powerful tool of harnessing aspirations of both the poorer sections of society and of the middle class. Soage (2009) argues that political Islam is the natural implementation of Islam as a form of government as it is a reaction to the challenge of Westernization in Islamic world. Meijer (2009) shows the emergence of political movement organizations in Islamic world in attempting to change political institutions. Armajani (2011) shows political ideology behind Islamic

movements in Islamic countries. Rohac (1996) argues that political Islam as an Islamic movement who run social services for communities and pay off in gaining support in political activities. These scholars show political Islam in Islamic countries as movements against governments, ideological reasons behind the movements and mutual relationships between Islamic movement and society.

The implementation of political Islam in Islamic world has been criticized by many scholars. Mumtaz (1986) argues that political Islam is at many stages not being implemented in Islamic countries as he shows that syuro (assembly) with people as the main principle of political Islamic ethics is abandoned in electing leaderships. Likewise, Ayi (2012) argues that political Islam is about its ethics rather than its pragmatism in gaining and maintaining power as it is practiced in Islamic countries. Situmorang (2016) proposes goal and principles of political Islam which is to obtain common goals through fairness and social justice. Furthermore, Roy (1996) argues that political Islam have failed in Islamic countries.

The failure then has shifted political Islam from violence to non-violence political movement in Islamic countries. Tibi (2014) shows the changes of form of political movement of Islamic groups from violence to participation in political institutions. Schirrmacher (2016) argues that the establishment of the first institutionalized form of political Islam, the Muslim Brotherhood as a non-violence Islamic movement trying to apply political and societal influence around the world peacefully.

These practices of political Islam have benefited Muslims in Islamic world. Kholil (2009) shows non-religious political parties' engagements with Islamic groups by involving Muslim leaders in party committees, enforcing Muslims to accept national ideology instead of Islamic ideology, and proposing substantial Islam instead of formalistic Islam within the state. Munir (2009) argues that the common goals of political Islam are to benefit all human beings including non-Muslims and atheists. Salim (2015) shows manifestation of political Islam through government regulation and how it affects the government. He further shows the discourse behind implementation of Islamic laws by political parties which benefits them.

All in all, scholars have shown plurality of political Islam. Esposito (1998) argues that it is impossible to argue there is one single theory of political Islam as he studies formulations of Islam for state and society in many Islamic countries. He found out the political Islam both real and ideal ranging from its revelation, law, present political situation, and its ideological framework and history. Suntana (2010) shows the various forms of political Islam from theoretical frameworks to political thoughts among Muslim thinkers. Mandaville (2020) argues that political Islam as multiple manifestations of Islam for state and society by Islamic movements which are complex and diverse on behalf of Islam. These scholars go with the flow of the argument this paper takes.

This paper aims at clarifying distinguishing factors of political Islam in Indonesia. Hence after reviewing a number of resources of political Islam, there is no agreement on definition of political Islam. The way to determine the scope of political Islam is to make a definition of the discipline. Therefore, the initial part of the discussion of this paper is about definition of politics.

This paper seeks to develop an analytical framework in studying political Islam. It focusses on political Islam conceptually and theoretically. It represents an effort to continuing search to find an improved model of process capturing a multifaceted relationships of multitude factors on politics and Islam. It provides an analysis of the wider approaches to studying political Islam and catalogues of the individuals, organizations, and tools which are involved in political Islam.

The examination of the approaches to studying political Islam was complemented by insights from observation. The author's subjectivity was an important element in the participant observation. He has involved in Islamic missionary since early days of his schools and was a student of social and political science at a few Western universities.

Features of Political Islam

This paper aims at clarifying framework to determine political and non-political domains of Islamic life. What are characteristics of political Islam as an activity and non-activity? What it is that makes anything related to Islam political or non-political? These clarifications will help us to understand definition of political Islam. Before doing that, the paper will define what politics and religion are.

Defining Politics

Literally, politics comes from the Greek, which is polis, which means a state-city (Curran, 1989). From this word came the concept of polites which means citizens and the concept of politikos which means citizenship. From this language, politics means an attempt to regulate the state-city and its citizens. Politics can also be taken from English, which means clever and wise in governing (Syafiie, 2010) and from Arabic, siyasah, which means regulating, controlling, managing or making decisions (Abdullah, 2012) and doing something for goodness (Samuddin, 2013). From these languages, politics generally means an effort to make, change and implement rules.

Beyond the literal definition above, politics is defined as power, decision making, art of state or government, public policy, welfare allocation and distribution (Heywood, 2016). Politics as power means capacity or capability to change behavior of others or events. Politics includes an attempt to influence content of decisions, to limit agenda and influence others to follow decisions through compromise and consensus. As art of state or government, politics is an effort to show control in communities through making and implementation of

political decisions. Politics is about a way to influences others, individuals and groups, in public places. Politics as welfare allocation and distribution means how to allocate funds across different services needed by people. Therefore, main parts of the politics are efforts to determine the system and ways to obtain and maintain power, lobbying and voting in decision making, making rules that bind citizens in public places, funding the development of infrastructure and services as well as distribute welfare to communities.

The aforementioned definition of politics is not without problems. The situation is what makes politics often understood and viewed negative because politics is associated with all the ways politicians do in achieving and maintaining power and fulfilling their personal and group interests . Political leaders who are elected through direct elections often share power within their supporting groups afterward. The practices worry other groups so that each group does everything they can to gain and maintain power. For this reason, Budiardjo (2003) states that politics must include good goals in their political objectives . Politics is strongly shaped by cultural values and community ideology at different times and places; however, the best politics is an effort putting interests of all community members above personal and group interests.

Limiting politics to regulating public affairs also makes policy makers in governments difficult in formulating rules in family, social organizations and private life of citizens. This is what makes rules on the same sex marriages, social organizations with contradicting state ideology, and dresses that are not in accordance with social norms are problematic. The politics as an art of the state overlooks politics conducted by non-state or non-government institutions. At present national and international social institutions such as labor organizations and the World Bank have made, changed and implemented rules to achieve their institutional goals for their members and those related to their institutions. Moreover, everyone has done politics in their families and in small groups with their friends.

By understanding the problems, the definition of politics used in this paper is all activities carried out by everyone either individually or in groups in influencing and or involving others about affairs of others or together in public or private life by giving opinion, influencing attitudes and actions through a process of interaction that results in agreement or conflict in building communities such as states, cities, organizations, families and religions.

Defining Religion

Literally, religion in Indonesian comes from Sanskrit, namely *āgama* which means tradition, a means no and *gama* means to go. In this term, religion means not going away, still in place, inherited from generation to generation or tradition (Bakhtiar, 1997). The same term also means not chaotic because a means no and *gama* also means chaotic (Nasution, 1985). From Latin, religion derived from the word *religio* rooted in the verb *re-ligare* means to bind back, which is to bind

themselves to God. From English, religion informally means activities that are done enthusiastically and routinely ("Religion," n.d.). Whereas from Arabic *ad-Dien* means power, submission to power, rules, and rewards (Bugi, 2008) as well as debt and habits (Nasution, 1985).

Terminologically, religion is explained in different ways. Religion was originally understood as a belief in supernatural beings such as gods and animating soul in every creature lively or not (Tylor, 1871). Religion is then considered as a social system of beliefs and practices connected to supranatural things and integrated in a single moral community (Durkheim, 2021). Religion is further understood as a symbol system that gives ideas, creates strong feelings and motivations, causes ritual performance, attaches concepts of world view and ethos to factuality, and ultimately is seen as special reality (Geertz, 2013). And, religion is a system that governs the belief and worship to the God and the rules that relate to other human beings and environment.

The definition of religion is not simple as well. As a belief, religions are understood easier if the reality offered by religion is accepted without questions such as existence of supernatural creatures, supernatural powers and the like. In religious people's mind, everything takes place because of supernatural determination, prayers are very important and blessing is necessary. A problem emerges, how far religious people differentiate a reality taking place because of determination of supernatural power or of human power.

Religions work as a platform for clarifying complex and irrational problems, fighting mental depression, and explaining death. Miracle is frequently uttered by religious people. Therapists utilize religious experience as medicine for those in mental illness and religions offer how to face death. Moreover, religious behaviors are found in all living things because each animal has their own rituals. Rituals motivate and move them to build communities. Rituals are expressed in joy and sorrow and more importantly they create and sustain communal identity. In this context, religious behavior is understood from process of what religious people do and why it is done by them (Stark & Finke, 2000). Religious studies have focused on significance of religion for a person or a group rather than on its definition. This condition does not make us overlooking definition of Islam as it is as follow.

Definition of Islam

Islam literally means peace, total surrender to God, clean, peace and safety. These meanings are taken from Qur'anic verses containing the word of Islam. The meaning of Islam as peaceful can be seen from the Al-Quran sura Al-Anfal (8) verse 61. The meaning of total surrender to God is found in the sura An-Nisa (4) verse 125, Al-Anam (6) 162, Ali Imran (3) 83, and As-Saffat (37) 26. The meaning of clean comes from the sura Asy-Syuara (26) verse 89, As-Saffat (37) 84. The meaning of peace and safety comes from the sura Maryam (19) verse 47.

Terminologically, Islamic literature defines Islam as a religion revealed by God to human beings through the Prophet of Muhammad containing rules and instructions as the guiding principle of human life for salvation of the world and the hereafter. However, meaning of Islam used in this paper is the definition explained by Esposito (2005). According to him, Islam is the diversed beliefs, attitudes, rituals, laws and social values derived from the Holy Book of Al-Qur'an and messages of the Prophet . This definition illustrates the diversity of beliefs, behaviors, rituals and social values found in Muslim societies as it is in political Islam.

Distinguishing Factors of Political Islam

After elaboration of definition of politics and religion, the paper demonstrates the differential factors of political Islam are perspective, principles, and goals.

Political Islam as perspective

Political Islam derives from Islamic teachings such as the Al-Quran, Hadith, *ijma* , *fatwas* or *ijtihad* of the Muslim leaders individually or institutionally. Many verses of the Al-Quran and prophetic messages and decrees of Islamic leaders that illustrate how Muslims should behave in political matters. For example, verse 256 sura Al-Baqarah literally mentions the prohibition on imposing religious beliefs on others. The Hadith narrated by Abdurrahman Ibnu Samurah mentions prohibition for Muslims to ask for power (Ayi, 2012) so that Muslims are to be appointed as a leader rather than to promote themselves as a leader.

Islamic scholars have their own perspective on political behaviours. They individually or institutionally can interpret verses of the Al-Qur'an for contextual or operational meanings. The second Caliph Umar Ibn Khattab did not distribute spoils of war to one recipient written literally in the Al-Qur'an (Izzi Dien, 2004). Scholars can make an inference or interpretation from what is not written in the Al-Qur'an and the Hadith. The interference or interpretation is shaped in Ijma' or ijtihad. Ijma, consensus or agreement of the Muslim scholars, is held every year institutionally in Islamic countries in determining the first day of the fasting month (Ramadhan). Ijtihad, independent or original interpretation, of Abu Hanifah about taxation and customs were implemented during Umayyad period (Thabrani, 2015).

Within this perspective category, political Islam is based on Muslim performances both individually and in a group on political activities. Many Muslim scholars give speech every day on ways to practice Islam righteously. Similarly, Muslim women groups try to influence content of Islamic family laws in their countries about the head of a household especially for singel mothers. More precisely, international Islamic organizations such as 'Wahabism, Muslim Brotherhood, Hizbut Tahrir and Tablighi Jamaat' spread their understanding of Islam on politics. For example, the Saudi-based Wahabi movement encourages the formation of religious police in several Muslim countries including in province of

Aceh, Indonesia. Starting from Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood inspires the emergence of Islamic political parties in various Muslim countries such as Turkey, Malaysia and Indonesia. Coming from Jordan, Hizbut Tahrir always voice the political system of khilafah, Pan Islamism for all Islamic world. Tablighi Jamaat from India want to instill that it is obligation for each Muslim to preach religion individually to their surroundings. Historically, Prophet Muhammad once agreed to the Medina Charter with the Jews and all groups in Medina as it becomes one of the basic foundations for religious tolerance today. Also, the political instability during succession in the period of Umayyad and Abbasid have worried Islamic scholars on re-emergence of the political system of khilafah at present Islamic countries.

How to manage the present Islamic communities is another way to look at political Islam from outside perspectivity. With growing numbers of Muslims in Western countries, the countries have different approaches to deal with them. France prohibit the use of certain dress for Muslim women in public places. Almost all Western countries prohibit polygamy, having more than one wife, because it is considered not in accordance with values of European people. However, many European countries have allowed establisment of the Hizb ut-Tahrir in promoting a political system of caliphate.

Secular governments in Muslim countries have long regulated certain issues on religion and made ally with religious leaders. Islamic dress was prohibited during period of Suharto in Indonesia, Ataturk in Turkey and Pahlavi in Iran. Suharto cooperated successfully with Islamic scholars in implementation of family planning program in Indonesia in 1980s and he managed to establish an intellectual Muslim organization in the last period of his government to gain support from Muslim communities.

The last description of political Islam as perspective is about Islamic political thought. Implementation of Islamic politics in Islamic countries over fourteen centuries has been criticized by Islamic scholars. Within perspective of Islamic political thinking, Al-Farabi (872-950) explained his illustration of the head of government as the heart in the body that coordinates all body movements in Islamic communities. He saw the failure of governments in Islamic communities in his era in coordinating governments in all over Islamic communities. Ibn Taimiyyah (1263-1328) was very concerned with fairness of government officials towards all citizens (Ayi, 2012). Ibn Rusyd (1126-98) described the need for the enforcement of people's sovereignty in politics. Contemporarily, Jamaluddin Al-Afghani (1838-97) promoted establishment of people's political institution in Islamic communities (Iqbal, 2015). Mohammad Natsir (2000) suggested Islamic democratic state instead of theocracy while Nurcholish Madjid (1939-2005) in Assyaukanie (2009) argued secularization of political life in Indonesia.

Political Islam politics as ethics

Political Islamic ethics are universal, like political principles, or political morality, or public ethics. The ethics goes beyond considerations of regulations, referring to how politics should be conducted externally imposed regulations. The conducts affect other individuals or larger communities.

The ethics is necessary because politics involves a high level of responsibility and obligation from people and governments. Ethics makes people trust in politics and politicians. Trusted and respected politicians is necessary for living together in communities.

Political Islamic ethics are about interpersonal and personal codes of conducts. The interpersonal codes of conducts are principles that are required by person to person while personal codes of conducts are principles that must be acquired by a person.

As interpersonal code of conducts, there is a term of al-shura in Islamic politics. It is consultation between people and those in governments on public affairs. It is a take and give relationships between citizens and government with respect to their various interests. Another code of conduct is the equality by the law. It endorses fairly treatment to every citizen by officials and governments. It is a legal framework protecting the rights of individuals and advancing equality of opportunity for all. Then, toleration is an act or practice of tolerating something like different forms of religious beliefs and practices. Next, fairness is impartial and just treatment or behaviours without favouritism or discrimination. Last but not the least it is pluralism as a condition or system in which two or more groups, principles, source of authority, or law, coexist.

As personal code of conducts, officials in Islam must be honest (siddiq), trusted (amanah), smart (fathonah), to be responsible (mas'ulah), and communicative (tabligh), live modestly, speak honestly, do what is said, do not take gratification and not make friends with criminals.

Political Islam as its goals

The third category in determining the definition of political Islam is its purpose, namely da'wah or proselytizing and politicization of religion. Political Islam as da'wah aims to help Muslims in understanding and implementing their religious teachings as well as in inviting other people to join Islamic communities voluntarily. The Qur'an says 'Invite (all) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious. For your Lord knows best who have strayed from His path, and who receive guidance' (16:25).

In da'wah, Muslims believe that destiny of every person is in Allah's power. The purpose of da'wah is merely to invite other persons towards an increasing

understanding of the faith. Then, people make their own choice as there is no compulsion in religion. Da'wah is carried out by doing calls, invitations, or appeals to others as well as acting as a model in practicing religious teachings. For Muslims in Islamic political parties, da'wa means introducing regulations associated with Islam so that Muslims have to practice them. These regulations are at crossroad. If the regulations are created to help Muslim in practicing their beliefs without compulsion they are within category of da'wa. If they are enforced they could go from da'wa to politization of religion.

Politicization of religion aims to gain and maintain power. It is carried out in several ways. First, it is identity politics, where religious identity is considered the most effective weapon in defeating political opponents from different religious affiliations. Ahok versus Anies Baswedan in Indonesian governor election of Jakarta 2017 was the example. Second, it is the use of verses, hadiths, ijtihad, fatwas and thoughts of Islamic leaders to support or to reject political opponents. A unit of the Indonesian Ulama Council who supported Prabowo Subianto as the candidate of Indonesian president 2019 with an Islamic decree is within this category. Third, the use of nice discourse, terms, and words such as blessing of God for liked politicians and of negative such as kafir, hypocrite, bid'ah, heresy, God punishment, for disliked politicians. Finally, taking advantage of Islamic leaders in gaining and maintaining power is another form of politization of religion. Appointing

Implication for Islam and Politics in Indonesia

The multifaceted nature of Islamic political activity is in line with the nature of religion including Islam. Religion is originally and conceptually as a submission to God. The central purpose of religion is to apply the principles on which human society should submit to God voluntarily. Since the late eighteenth century, however, religion has gradually expanded its movement into politics. Human society should endorse each other and communities into God. In Islam, the emergence of Wahabi's movement in Saudi Arabia, founded by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahab in the late eighteenth century has introduced political Islam in Islamic communities around the world. The movement has introduced the Islamic concept of tawhid, which refers to the oneness of God. The movement believe that falling short of tawhid could lead to chaos, immorality, greed and injustice while compliance to the concept could lead to the establishment of morally upstanding, righteous and stable societies (Armajani, 2011). To reach the stable societies, politics must enforce the tawhid. Since then, a renewed recognition of the enduring importance of political Islam has increased thorough Islamic world.

The main studies on political Islam have focused on the study of institutions. However, politics and religion have become central issues in democratic political activities in Indonesia in the last two decades. The form of political activities in electoral democracy associated with religion ranges from giving recommendations directly to one of candidates, interpreting the sources of religious teachings for the benefit of one candidate, promoting candidate's religious identity, demeaning religious status of other candidates.

There are differences of opinion about the interrelationship between religion and politics in Indonesia. Some argue that the use of religion for political interests, which is obtaining and maintaining power and called politicization of religion is avoided. There are those who argue that religion and politics cannot be separated. For them, religions must inspire the on-going democratic politics and this model is allowed. There are also those who argue that religion must be separated from politics. This politics is considered liberal thinking in Indonesia.

This diverse of opinions about politics and religion makes association of politics and religion absurd. Politization of religion is justified and religious politics were banned. This paper shows that what politization of religion is and religious politics is. This paper shows that motivations and reasons are necessary in defining what politization of religion is and religious politics is. This paper shall be used to make policy recommendations and to increase public knowledge to prevent politicization of religion and encourage religious politics in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Political Islam is the activity associated with Islam where general rules are created, preserved, and amended to be applied to Muslim. Political Islam is better seen as two mutually influenced things. Religions influence politics and politics likewise. Political Islam has been defined differently by many thinkers and within many traditions. Political Islam has been considered as its perspective; or as it is from its Islamic sources, from Muslims, and toward Muslims; as its ethics; and as its goals. There is no agreement on the realm of political Islam. Generally, political Islam at present has been seen as promoting religious values in political activities. However, when religions are taken advantage in gaining and maintaining power by those who have never been interested in the core of religion, submission to God, it may be seen as incorrect political religion. The correct political Islam, this paper argues, is endorsing religious values in communities and societies to increase people's submission to God, not personal and communal power as the activities' main priorities. The correct political Islam run their activities regardless general elections take place or not.

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