The Recent Traditionalist Turn in Indonesian Islam After Conservatives: How Its Engagement to Urban Muslims

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Abstract

The recent Indonesian Islamic wave in Indonesia appears to be inclined towards a traditionalist turn. This turn specifically denotes the ascendancy of traditional Islamic teachings as the forefront in Indonesia. The resurgence of traditionalism has consequently led to a decline in the influence of conservatives, who had dominated public preferences from the 2000s to early 2014. While these new waves are likely to persist due to strong government support for religious moderation programs, they provoke both favorable and unfavorable perspectives among urban Muslims. In light of this contentious stance, this paper seeks to explore why urban Muslims display a reluctance towards the traditionalist shift. To address this inquiry, the research employs critical discourse analysis based on literature reviews. The primary finding of this discussion is that as the traditionalist movement extends its influence into urban environments, urban Muslims communities tend to align themselves with conservative ideologies. This poses a challenge for traditionalists aiming to alter religious preferences in urban areas.

Keywords: *Traditionalist Turn; Islamic Discourse; Indonesian Islam; Urban Muslims; Nahdlatul Ulama (NU); Islamic Defenders Front (FPI)*

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INTRODUCTION

The dissolution of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) on December 30, 2020, which was based on joint ministerial decree (SKB) signed by the home minister, law and human rights minister, communication and information minister, attorney general, National Police chief and the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) head that prohibited the use of symbols and attributes as well as termination of FPI Activities, has marked a significant moment in Indonesian Islamic politics, sparking debates and raising pertinent questions about the country's political landscape. This government-led action was a clear indication of its apprehensions regarding the growing influence of FPI within Indonesian society. The concern primarily revolved around the group's perceived intolerance towards certain religious beliefs, prompting the government to take measures aimed at curtailing any right-wing political ideologies that could potentially jeopardize national stability.

However, while this governmental stance aimed at controlling right-wing elements may have been seen as a necessary step, it also

posed risks and complexities (Nuraniyah 2023). The dissolution of FPI not only addressed immediate concerns regarding societal stability but also unearthed deeper implications, particularly in relation to the heightened tenor of identity politics prevalent in Indonesian political spheres. The dissolution of FPI had ripple effects, ripening the landscape for a deeper exploration of Indonesia's intricate political fabric. It drew attention to the intricate balance between safeguarding societal harmony and the inherent risks of stifling political expressions, potentially curtailing freedom of association and expression. Moreover, the dissolution resonated within the broader narrative of identity politics, which has been a salient feature of Indonesian political discourse. The removal of FPI from the equation disrupted the established dynamics, eliciting speculations about the vacuum left behind and its potential repercussions on the larger socio-political canvas.

The dissolution of FPI, while addressing immediate concerns about societal stability, brought to the fore multifaceted considerations. It raised questions about the balance between addressing intolerance and preserving freedom of expression, the complexities of managing right-wing ideologies, and the broader implications for Indonesia's intricate political landscape, particularly concerning identity politics. The influential role played by the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and its affiliates in shaping identity politics, particularly within the realm of Indonesian governance during the first term of President Jokowi's administration, stands as a pivotal chapter in the country's political narrative. From the onset of the 2014 presidential campaign through the Jakarta Gubernatorial Election in 2017 to the subsequent 2019 presidential campaign, FPI and its allies staunchly opposed Jokowi and his coalition. These series of political rallies not only highlighted but also exacerbated the existing strained political identity between Islamist factions and pluralist/nationalist

political camps in Indonesia. The confrontational stance taken by these factions reflected broader societal divisions, amplifying ideological fault lines within the political landscape.

The dissolution of FPI in December 2020 significantly altered the political landscape, creating an imbalance in the distribution of political power between the ruling coalition and the opposition in Indonesian politics. FPI had previously been widely recognized as the primary political opposition force before its formal prohibition last year. This pivotal event reshaped the political terrain, altering power dynamics and reshuffling the spheres of influence within Indonesian politics. The absence of FPI as a prominent opposition entity created a void that reverberated across the political spectrum, prompting a recalibration of forces and alliances within the political arena.

The removal of FPI from the political equation not only disrupted the established dynamics of opposition but also prompted a reconfiguration of political power, paving the way for recalibrations and revaluations within the Indonesian political landscape. This consequential shift raises questions about the evolving contours of political opposition, the recalibration of power structures, and the potential ramifications for the pluralistic fabric of Indonesian governance. The significant following of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) among the urban Muslim middle class presents an intriguing avenue for further analysis, particularly regarding the potential shifts in agendas and alliances within this demographic. Historically, this urban Muslim middle class had exhibited a strong affinity for various street demonstrations, often aligned with the ideals of jihad.

However, following the dissolution of FPI, the trajectory of this influential urban demographic remains a subject ripe for examination. The absence of FPI as a guiding force raises pertinent questions about the subsequent inclinations and actions of this segment of society (Yilmaz, Morieson and

Bachtiar 2022). Will there be a recalibration of ideologies, a shift in priorities, or the emergence of new forms of civic engagement among the urban Muslim middle class?

This juncture offers an opportunity to delve deeper into the evolving perspectives and aspirations of this demographic. Will there be a divergence from previous protest-oriented ideologies towards alternative forms of socio-political engagement or a continuation of certain ideologies, albeit through different platforms? The transitional phase post-FPI dissolution invites scrutiny into the potential transformations in aspirations, affiliations, and modes of civic participation within the urban Muslim middle class (Barton, Yilmaz and Morieson 2021, Wilson 2022).

In this article, our focus is directed towards the trajectory of urban Indonesian Muslims in the aftermath of the Islamic Defenders Front's (FPI) dissolution and their subsequent engagement with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). The FPI wielded considerable political influence, particularly from 2014 to 2020, which led urban Muslims to be entrenched in conservative ideologies and fostered intolerant attitudes towards non-Muslims. The dissolution of the FPI left a vacuum in the realm of Islamic political expression in Indonesia. While the two major Islamic organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, continue to play pivotal roles in shaping Islamic teachings, FPI stood out as a more politically driven entity compared to these organizations. It notably succeeded in mobilizing a coalition of urban Muslims to actively participate in FPI-led movements, including the influential 212 political rallies. Therefore, these previous engagements have led us to rethink the current engagement between recent Islam teachings and Muslim middle class.

Our inquiry pivots around critical questions: What potential political trajectories might unfold for urban Muslims post-FPI? How might NU's influence impact the Islamic inclinations of urban Muslims? Additionally, we aim to explore the extent to which urban Muslims, in an unofficial capacity, could serve as a check on the government's actions. We posit that NU's initiatives toward traditionalism could significantly shape the Islamic preferences of urban Muslims, leveraging its access to state funding as a potential means to attract this demographic.

This exploration into the post-FPI landscape delves into nuanced dimensions: the evolving political inclinations of urban Muslims, the impact of influential Islamic bodies like NU, and the potential agency of urban Muslims in overseeing governance. By scrutinizing these aspects, our aim is to illuminate the changing contours of Islamic political expression within urban Indonesia and the consequential societal and governance implications.

The article's outset involves an exploration of the term "urban Muslims" across various academic discourses during the advent of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI). This examination offers insights into the contextual milieu surrounding the intersection of FPI with urban Muslims. Subsequently, our focus shifts towards delineating the decline of FPI's influence, paving the path for the ascendancy of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and its traditionalist inclinations. Specifically, we aim to dissect instances of FPI's propaganda and its confrontations with NU's adherents as illustrative case studies.

Ultimately, we aim to elucidate why conservative ideologies waned in prominence amidst NU's consolidation and the amplification of its *santriization* process following the prohibition of FPI. Through these discussions, our goal is to present compelling arguments elucidating the weakening of conservative ideologies in tandem with NU's burgeoning influence, contextualizing the intricate dynamics within Indonesian Islamic spheres post-FPI prohibition.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In general, the position of this writing in this section is to find empty space that has not

been touched by previous studies especially how urban middle class engaged with socio-religious and socio agenda. It will start with the existing theoretical frameworks that concerned with urban Muslims and then will be followed up by the previous engagement with FPI and now NU.

The term "urban Muslims" has been relatively studied in several publications. It has been established within the literatures that urban Muslims is the group of urbanites that embrace Islam is not only religion per se but also as the way of life (Jati 2017a, Jati 2017b, Jati 2023b).

This brings the urban Muslims are more committed to the extension role of Islam in public space. Compared with those Muslims who graduated from Islamic boarding schools, urban Muslims seemingly learn Islam from various popular media channels. This arguably end up them with black and white perspective rather than open-minded Muslims. In line with that extension, the consensus of the previous literature focus on the big picture of Islam's role in society after Suharto era. Some pioneering studies were carried out by Martin van Bruinessen and Jeremy Menchik and have focused on the sharia-oriented views that disturb interfaith dialogue, especially the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims (Hadiz 2014, Jati 2017b, Jati 2017c). This arguably end up them with black and white perspective rather than open-minded Muslims. In line with that extension, the consensus of the previous literature focus on the big picture of Islam's role in society after Suharto era. Some pioneering studies were carried out by Martin van Bruinessen and Jeremy Menchik and have focused on the sharia-oriented views that disturb interfaith dialogue, especially the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Bruinessen's concept conservative turn is likely to capture the rise of conservatives and fundamentalist Muslims when the liberals and progressives Muslims have been declining in Indonesia. More specifically, he mentioned two main reasons why that shift could occur. First,

the transnational Islamic movement through several Saudi-owned educational facilities has promote a process of Arabization of Indonesian Islam. Second, the public morality issues are still in place such as supported for anti-pornographic contents and campaigned for Muslims and non-Muslims segregation (van Bruinessen 2013). Third, the emergence of several number of Islamic hardliners group, which involved indirectly in political process like policymaking arena (van Bruinessen 2013).

From conservative turn, we would like to narrow it down into several parameters to define urban Muslims here. It seems that these group of people have highly educated background, and they are interested in practical Islamic views than teachings. In another word, the more educated background correspondingly means the more inegalitarian attitudes. Bruinessen himself even acknowledged that "the violence was directly with struggles for the redistribution of economic and political resources in post-Suharto Indonesia"(van Bruinessen 2013). While we are not saying that the urban Muslims could be part of far-right groups in Indonesia, the influence of pragmatic Islamic teachings shape heavily the way urban Muslims compete for economic resources. As a result, this makes social bounding within urban Muslims become internally more consolidated. This also causes the hostile view of non-Muslims.

Moving on to another similar publication by Hadiz, it seems that the conservative interpretation of Islam has turned religion as a political tool against pluralist ideas. While street-level political rallies are still relevant, the Islamist supporters are also still committed to electoral competitions. This stance surely marks differently with the conservative turn argument that advocates sharia-oriented life. Hadiz rebuked conservative turn for outdated Indonesian Islamic analysis. Instead, he seems to suggest that "the mobilization of religious sentiment from time to time to fulfill the short-term objective of key elites" (Hadiz 2018). As a

matter of fact, both elites and FPI take advantage of increasing piousness in urban Muslims recently.

Turning to theory of communal tolerance by Jeremy Menchik, it seems that he does not focus on the context of urban Muslims itself. Instead, he seems to emphasize the role of leaders of several influential Muslims organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. It is important to note here that both organizations have strong patronage in terms of shaping Islamic teachings for their followers. This means that the Muslims who belongs to Islamic organization might be different with the Urban Muslims. However, when it comes to interfaith relationship, it seems that there is similar intolerant attitude between urban Muslims and member of organizations (Fealy and Ricci 2019, Helmy, Jumadil Kubro and Ali 2021, Jati 2022, Jati 2023b, Najib and Fata 2020).

Having seen the same inegalitarian views between Muslims and non-Muslims here, Menchik narrows his theory down into several indicators such as being tolerant of non-Muslims to be an elected leader in their areas, banning non-Muslims to interpret Islam as a religion, respecting non-Muslims who follow monotheism principle, and being tolerant of non-Muslims whose their religions are officially acknowledged by the Indonesian government (Menchik 2019). Certainly, these principles aim to keep Muslims and non-Muslims do not cross the red line. These principles also could be our guidelines in defining urban Muslims, especially when FPI and HTI were still existing.

The research gap of two above-mentioned findings is they only focus on Muslims itself into given several Islamic organizations. It might be helpful to recognize their variety of allegiance to Islam. However, it also may overlook those Muslims who do not attached to any Islamic organizations. Since FPI and HTI were able to pull out of many cross-class Muslims alliance in some 212 movement rallies particularly in greater Jakarta area, we must pay more attention to Muslims who independently joined in some right-wing political rallies. Owing to their position, the level of intolerant and inegalitarian maybe greater than those are member of Muslims organizations.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Urban Muslims and its Engagement with Islam Agenda

The consensus of recent urban Muslim studies which related to FPI and HTI seems to suggest that the strained political identity between Islamists and pluralists was the main cause. Some publications have used several terms that might be relevant in understanding urban Muslims like politics of accommodation and emotive politics. We will review these three perspectives in a row. More specifically, we would like to know to what extent, these three terminologies discuss urban Muslims in their previous works.

In general, these three above-mentioned terms argue the important role of Islamic hardliner groups FPI in shaping the attitudes of Muslims. This latter action surely shows how intolerant and inegalitarian attitudes might have targeted non-Muslims. However, these three terminologies seem to give little space to elaborate on urban Muslims themselves. Regardless of that minor attention, these terminologies likely give the big picture of the prevalence of current Islamic politics in Indonesia. More specifically, we would like to narrow these three down into intolerant and inegalitarian attitudes on each terminology.

The use of emotive politics may become an entry point to understand why urban Muslims voluntarily joined in such conservatives-led political rallies. According to Nastiti and Ratri, emotive politics primarily uses anger and hate expression to intimidate those likely engaged with non-Islamic agendas. These agendas specifically refer to secular / pluralism agenda like tolerate with non-Muslims. One important finding of emotive politic that might be relevant is how religious morality, which sparked by hardliners, unites

urban Muslims to defend Islam. To be more precisely, "emotion-linked and deeply-held values prompts people to partake in mass power against government" (Nastiti and Ratri 2018). Urban Muslims felt that Islam would be under threat if non-Muslims commented mistakenly on their religion. This message basically conveyed a strong message that the religious activities could transformed into political actions.

We would like to highlight emotion-linked and deeply held values that drive urban Muslims into the political arena. It seems that these two expressions show a higher level of piousness will likely affect the higher level of political anxiety. This causal mechanism arguably shows that religious morality obliges urban Muslims by maintaining and promoting Islam as the common value, which even targets non-Muslims. The emotion-linked feeling seems to be an expression of unaccommodated interests. This subsequently leads to an imaginary ummah solidarity among urban Muslims. The latter consequences are likely to be street-level political action by groups of cross-class alliances in Indonesian recently. The urban Muslims themselves are part of that cross-class alliance. They would like to express their faith loyalties in several political rallies. This might be more resilient than relying on the political parties.

The increasing role of Islam in political affairs, which is led by FPI and its influence over society has inspired two recent publications to focus on urban Muslims. One study by Muhtadi and Mietzner showed two important points here: 1) "Muslims with high education and income were more intolerant than Muslims with low education and income" (Muhtadi & Mietzner 2018:484). 2) "the percentage of Indonesians willing to vote for FPI broadly corresponds to the level Muslims endorsing a conservative religious agenda" (Muhtadi & Mietzner 2018:484). Regarding those two findings, both authors emphasize the personal pacts between conservatives Muslims and the leading elites than fully supporting Islamist agenda. FPI itself obtained double

success as both catalyst in hardening Islam to be political values at cross-alliance class especially middle class and mediator in connecting elites and voters through Islamic banner.

From Muhtadi and Mietzner, we can see that the increasing influence of Islamic agenda and intolerant attitudes among Urban Muslims in not driven by pure Islamic purification. This means urban Muslims would be intolerant and inegalitarian if some hardliners affect them. It is important to look into the role of Islamic organization in patronizing Islamic values in society. The urban Muslims could be a free rider, which can get attached with Islam when it comes to political agenda. More importantly, the increasing of piousness is the way Islam can silently mobilise political preferences.

One main method to ignite religious sentiment through putting Islamic stamp into their efforts to affect urban Muslims. Like Mietzner and Muhtadi above, Hadiz also pays more attention to the role FPI who brokered two issues namely inequality and morality in attracting urban Muslims (Hadiz 2018). These two issues sound vibrant recently due to uneven economic and political opportunities. Buoyed these two issues, FPI successfully promote "a self-narrative about ummah" that impressed both elites and urban Muslims. In fact, the latter group seems to careless with agenda beyond ummah itself.

The summary of urban Muslims in several academic discourses might have resulted in some hints. These includes attitudes (both inegalitarian and intolerant manners), close relationship with influential Islamic mass organization, and symbolic religion understanding. These characteristics give nuance of emotive urban Muslims in recent Indonesia. This condition, however, needs to have more detailed explanation. Since the dissolution of FPI on 20 December 2020, the emotive urban Muslim might be powerless. It could be an entry point to understand what next "turn" on Indonesian Islamic studies would be.

RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology employed in this article revolves around an analytical review. Specifically, this approach allows us to sift through information, constructing a narrative based on our interpretations. Information is gleaned from two key sources: contingency and conjuncture (Mahoney 2000). Contingency refers to our logical narration synthesis after thorough data compilation, while conjuncture highlights how other relevant events contribute to the core analysis. Furthermore, we delve into existing theoretical frameworks within Indonesian Islamic studies, enriching our understanding of the traditionalist turn.

This method enables us to pick up certain information in order to make story based on own interpretation. The analytical review also enables to understand the true meaning of each finding from previous studies. The analytical tool itself required coding to find out the information sequences and then attempted to find the gaps. The processes itself began with gathering information from the previous and existing studies and then code it into relevant keywords to show the gap. After that, it written down into the draft.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Traditionalist Turn in Indonesia After FPI

The consensus of recent literatures on Indonesian Islamic politics emphasizes the way Islam can be able to mingle with democracy and how Islam can re-acknowledge the diversity rather than encouraging Islamization. These two topics particularly focus on the next chapter of Islamization after FPI. As NU gets along with the current government, this might steer Indonesian Islam in moderate way (Pektas 2021). It also encourages that Muslims should follow the democracy system as the consensus among founding fathers. These two movements basically commence the traditionalist turn in Indonesia. this turn aims of persuading urban Muslims to be good and open-minded Muslims in Indonesia.

The complex characteristic of Indonesian urban middle class basically shows the unguided Islamization wave in Indonesia. Generally, the whole picture of Muslims in Indonesia is moderate, but in recent reality the Muslims itself tend to dominate public sphere rather than acknowledging the diversity (Farchan and Rosharlianti 2021). As previously mentioned, the conservative turn, which led by FPI, made almost Muslims to hold intolerant attitudes and pro-Islam agenda. Since the ban on FPI, this ultimately results in the end of conservative turn for urban Muslim middle class. This chance encourages the biggest Islamic mass organization, Nahdlatul Ulama taking over the FPI dan then starting the new turn. The traditionalist turn basically represents for NU's Islamic sect that support Islamic traditionalist school. Although, traditionalist school is the biggest Islamic sect in Indonesia, it seems unpopular within urban Muslims, which most of them is Indonesian middle class. One point to mention behind this unpopular background is the traditionalist school emphasizes the classical Islamic teachings for their followers. This makes the urban Muslims reluctantly adhere the traditionalist teachings because they would like to learn Islam in practical rather than ideological way. However, this unwilling welcome does not decrease NU itself to promote traditionalist turn. One main factor to attract urban Muslims itself is by embracing traditionalist turn will make Indonesian Muslims back to be moderate and inclusive as they did before.

The turn itself mainly refers to the power shift from conservative hardliners to traditionalist group. This shift particularly attached to Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) that replaced FPI in steering Islamic discourse in Indonesia. Traditionalists turn generally can also a meant to consolidate Muslims after being scattered due to series of 212 movement (Feillard 1997, Jati, Halimatusa'diah,

Syamsurijal et al. 2022). This shows the way NU to soften hardening tones of Islam during FPI era. This also means NU would like to "convert" conservative teachings into traditionalist style. To put it simply, traditionalist turn would like to reach out more Muslims, which includes urban Muslims to be under traditionalist banner. This has aimed to make NU to be the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia. NU itself had been deprived when FPI gained its prominence particularly middle-lower class and poor people.

These above-mentioned facts give us many ideas to talk about traditionalist turn in In Indonesia. First, the turn itself would affect the whole picture of Indonesian Islam. This seems to reverse what Martin van Bruinessen said that sharia-oriented life and pious lifestyle. By introduce a traditional way into Islamic teaching, it seems that it will introduce more tolerant dan egalitarian Islam than the previous ones, which sounds tough on pluralism and non-Muslims. Second, the turn also affects the vast majority of Indonesian Muslims, particularly urban Muslims. As stated before, the urban Muslims had been attached with the hardliners. This would give us a question, to what degree, NU can win heart and mind the urban Muslims. Surely, they would embrace traditionalist Islamic style in attempt to suppress conservative urban Muslims. Third, the turn also signals that NU would like to promote the harmonious relationship between Islam dan democracy. For these latter reasons, it seems NU responds to the global terrorism after the Arab Spring in most Middle Eastern countries. These three reasons basically give an opportunity to NU to perform as the moderate Islamic organization. In another word, it has intention to show that Indonesian version of Islam can mingle with democracy.

Why Traditionalist Turn Affects Urban Muslims

The reason behind the possibility of traditional turn can affect urban Muslim might be intention of good Muslims. This particularly relates to deradicalization program by the government to clear out the conservative thought. It is also aligning with the NU's policy to promote moderate and inclusive Muslims by supporting democracy system. However, it is important to note that the relationship between traditionalist turn and urban Muslims sometimes faces unstable condition. While NU would like to persuade urban Muslims with compelling strategies, this does not mean urban Muslims would divert their loyalties to NU. Regarding that, three above-mentioned reasons and its influences on urban Muslims. In general NU-led Islamic teachings may sound unfamiliar since NU does not has a strong basis among urban Muslims. It is important to note here that a few of conservatives are still remaining. Regardless of their presence, its influence might be not greater as FPI was existing. This condition surely gives opportunities for NU to retake its position being a leading Indonesian Islamic organization.

Many recent scholarly works have tried to capture how traditionalist affects urban Muslims in Indonesia. Those findings generally found out that ideology is the main obstacle between NU as patron of traditionalist Islam and urban Muslims. However, this condition could be reversed since urban Muslims seem to be less ideological people. These, therefore, enables NU to approach urban Muslims itself. In the next section, we will elaborate relevant recently those scholarly works one by one.

One scholarly work that might be relevant to frame this traditionalist turn is civic Islam. According to Brown, civic Islam means the way Islamic organization to fill the mediating space between civil society and government, engaging with the policy advocacy without deep ideology commitment and being autonomous from state authority. This also means that, NU itself as the biggest Islamic organization could be able to functionally persuade policymaking process. More specifically, when it comes to morality issues, the mediator NU can cover both sides – conservatives and progressives.

Brown on his articles draws analytical framework from two comparative cases like pornography and Ahmadiyah. Both cases have been pulling out many attention from both sides hardliners and pluralists (Brown 2019). The civic Islam emerges from the NU and Muhammadiyah to find the common ground. Certainly, these action does not represent their ideological Sunni Islam root. Instead, moving on to the centric position enables NU to promote traditional Islam teaching toward urban Muslims. In another word, civil Islam tries to put traditionalist values replaces conservative values as the main public preferences (Barton et al. 2021).

The framework civic Islam by using NU is relevant to explain urban Muslims. More importantly, these three contributing factors such as the increasing need of pious lifestyle, the highly religious observances in public sphere, and commitment to pluralism values shape the Islamic preference of urbanites (Jati 2023b). These three factors seem to unify the conservatives and progressives' aspiration into same vein. Surely, this condition would give such a tricky condition for NU itself. This relates to NU traditionally represents the traditionalist Islamic faction. Certainly, how NU can manage its image to be centric organization will be the next investigation.

As mentioned earlier, the civil Islam gives a tricky condition regarding traditional turn in Indonesia. First, civil Islam could give a platform for traditionalist Islam to back their roles as moral guardian. It means that before hardliner groups come into prominence, NU traditionally promote traditionalist teaching in line with the pluralism values. Second, civil Islam itself makes NU turning away from ideological commitment. Instead, this makes NU pragmatically abandons its traditionalist teaching style to embrace more followers. Being as centric organization surely enables NU to recruit more members. Having said that, when it comes to urban Muslims, it seems do not mingle each other between civil Islam, traditionalist turn, and urban itself.

From above-mentioned critical view, the civil Islam perspective does not bring up traditionalist turn and urban Muslims into fruitful discussion. More importantly, the civil Islam merely focuses on the elitist issues. This means these perspective looks at the way NU can take advantage of being moderator between progressives and conservatives. Another critical point is the civic Islam only focuses on issue-based morality than capturing real aspiration of urban Muslims. These two issues finally put civil Islam does not entangle with traditionalist turn, especially urban Muslims. Regardless of having unmatched relationship, the civil Islam perspective gives us an insight that urban Muslims would like to be under traditionalist banner if their aspiration of morality and pious lifestyle can be fulfilled (Jati 2023a).

Moving on to the second perspective moderation-inclusion, the consensus of these perspective seems to suggest that the hardliners could accept the democracy values if their demands are fulfilled. Buehler argued that the moderation-inclusion thesis primarily focuses on behavioral moderation (Buehler 2012). These needs an institutional role to manage change of behavioral attitude. Similar to Buehler, Schwedler argued that managing behavioral should cover ideological moderation of the groups and the ideological moderation of individuals (Schwedler 2011). These means that once the institution is able to moderate the conservative attitudes, it subsequently affects the individual. Schwendlers specifically points out Islamists who willingly work within democracy system, should be named as a moderate (Schwedler 2011). Certainly, this stigma has consequences for those Islamists who refused to work together under the legitimate system will be regarded as conservatives.

With regards to brief moderation-inclusion thesis above, it seems that this terminology is likely applicable to urban Muslims since they formerly close with FPI. While the level of tough Islamic stance does not vibrant as FPI's active member did, they seem to be open-minded people in certain issues.

One important question here is what kind of accommodation NU offer to urban Muslims? This type of question relates to the role of institutional patron that NU does for urban Muslims. This question also refers to what extent traditionalist turn promulgated by NU will change conservative idea? These two questions will directly engage with the relationship between NU and urban Muslims itself.

The demand of piousness expressions and great access to public policy making process are the best offer to urban Muslims itself. These two demands represent the greater Islamic sense within society. Given traditionalist turn could embrace urban Muslims after FPI's era, this requires material aids to attract more urban Muslims. This strategy basically similar to what FPI did to recruit more loyalists. Another method to make traditionalist turn coming true is promoting democracy, which twisted together

with Islamic values (Menchik 2015). Since the current government harms any radical and hardliner activities, traditionalist turn could serve as the haven for those Islamists. From above-mentioned perspectives, we would like to sum up theories and its relationship with the urban Muslims in Indonesia. It will help us to understand different kind of views in shaping relationship between urban Muslims and previous perspectives. The detailed information we put within the Table 1.

These intentions, therefore, should be the focus of rest of this paper. This also relates with the traditionalist turn that promotes traditional Islam to be main Islamic discourse in Indonesia. With regards to these two strong demands of both sides NU and urban Muslims, it might need to find common ground between two parties. In regard to above-mentioned perspective, it seems to us that the politics of accommodation might be reasonable in shaping the relationship between urban

Table 1. Summary of Literatures on Indonesian Islamic Theory.

No	Name of Perspectives	The relationship with urban Muslims	Consequences with Islam Politics in general
1	Politics of Accommodation	This perspective elaborates material than religious aspects. Urban Muslims are viewed as an interest group who seek for power sharing.	The orientation of Islam Politics has been changed from Islamic state to be power-sharing commitment with democratically elected government.
2	Emotive Politics	This perspective focuses on emotional aspect of believers. Urban Muslims are viewed as a pressure group who seek for political recognitions.	The focus of Islamic politics will be interested in street-level politics like populism movement. This paves the way to achieve their goals without constitutional ways.
3	Civil Islam	This perspective focuses on the harmonious relationship between Islam and democracy. Urban Muslims are viewed as part of civil society	Islamic politics will follow democratic rule. It means they will be part of contestants in regular elections.
4	Moderation-Inclusion	This perspective highly respects for democracy and win-win solution for those challengers. Urban Muslims are viewed as a resistant group.	Islamic Politic will continuously existing but it will use soft tone to achieve their politics goal. They will not use any violent action that regularly

Source: elaborated by authors from various sources

Muslims and traditionalist turn. To put it simply, we use *santriization* as the main term to frame the way traditionalist turn reach out the urban Muslims. This term certainly has strength and weakness for sure. In the next section, we will begin why urban Muslims should be called as a new *santri*?

Urban Muslims as New *Santri*?

The brief definition *santri* itself is the student or group of people who learn Islam thoroughly at Islamic boarding schools. This definition expands rapidly when it comes to the current Islamization wave in Indonesia. In this meantime, *santri* exclusively relates to those who support school of Islamic traditionalists in Indonesia (Wichelen and Sonia 2016). As the NU has great accommodation from the government to promote peaceful dan moderate Muslims, *santri* becomes the main discourse to attract urban Muslims. This might be successful in persuading urban Muslims to be *new santri* because many economic and political accommodations from the government. This basically similar strategy the FPI used to attract urban Muslims becoming followers.

The current traditionalist turn seems to bring over "new santri" into urban Muslims. This political label basically is the way NU fulfills the demands of urban Muslims. As I stated before - the morality issue, public piousness expressions, and greater access to policymaking arena are the basic demands (Pribadi, Saat and Burhani 2020). These three things point out the greater role of Islam in everyday life. Regarding abovementioned these three reasons, it is likely that urban Muslims as the new *santri* closely engaged with political agenda than Islamic ideologies itself. The legacy of FPI who take Islam out from theological root into political affairs seems to affect urban Muslims. This movement, therefore, changes the definition of *santri* is not a student who study Islam but also as an interest group. This position enables urban Muslims to use Islam as a political tool (Nasir and Jinan 2018).

Before going further, it might be relevant to briefly review the definition of new *santri* itself. In general, the definition of new *santri* itself "encompasses both ulama and religious preachers *(da'i)* in Indonesian setting, or even individuals who portray a pious image and have a wide following though not necessarily in religious sciences (Saat and Burhani 2020)."

These definition means that "*santri*" does not relate with any Islamic thoughts, instead it relates engages with the political Islam agenda. Concerning on political agenda, the new *santri* itself seems to bring over the traditionalist and modernist agenda in order to shape their own view. These activities result in thoughts that discuss Indonesian and Islamic issues in broad context (Machmudi 2008). In sum, the new *santri* is likely connected politically to both global and domestic issues. Furthermore, it seems that Islam becomes the preference in shaping their views.

These above-mentioned definition of new *santri* bring us to understand that the less homegrown Islamic thought would lead to more internationally agenda. This also implies urban Muslims. As part of new *santri*, many urban Muslims are concerned with global issues like Palestinian humanitarian crisis, anti-Shiite movement, and global jihadism (Facal 2019). Specifically, when FPI was existed, urban Muslims often voice hardening tone of Islamic purifications. These demands are likely ingrained even though FPI was dissolved in the end of 2020. This condition certainly gives the complex situation for NU to promote traditionalist turn within urban Muslims.

These situations above certainly give challenging situations for NU to approach urban Muslims. While the current new *santri* seems to build access to policymaking process, the early generation of new *santri* seeks to build public recognition and representation in line with the new democratization wave after the collapse of authoritarian regime in 1998. Regarding these two trends, NU should give more spaces to urban Muslims in expressing their thoughts and affiliations. However, it

could be an easy job for NU to embrace more urban Muslims if they can provide good incentives to them. It is important to note that, urban Muslims still need an organization that guide them in the right path.

The Politics of Accommodation between Traditionalist Turn and Urban Muslims

The organizational need of urban Muslims basically indicates that the patronage to drive the Islamization wave in Indonesia. These will cover up the demands of urban Muslims like public piousness expressions, morality issue, and greater access to policymaking arena can be achievable through NU. These three above-mentioned demands like public piousness expressions, morality issue, and greater access to policymaking arena are the recent demands of urban Muslims after the dissolution of FPI. This can be political driven than religious factors. As urban Muslims easily get politicized with certain issues, these give more complex situations to NU to make best accommodation deal to the urban Muslims.

The use of politics of accommodation definition here to find out the common ground between NU's traditionalist turn and urban Muslims. More importantly, how NU reach out the urban Muslims and urban Muslims accept the traditionalist turn will be the main theme here. Regarding both responses, it seems that there would some negotiations ahead between two parties. Due to their different characteristic background, the political motivation will overweight than religious factors. This condition, therefore, makes the traditionalist turn is not going to be a new wave of religious movement in Indonesia. Instead, this will be going to be moderate movement that backs up the government.

As we mentioned early, the urban Muslims do not have strong Islamic teachings as traditional *santri*. This could be a window of opportunity for NU to promote *santriization* to the urban Muslims. Although urban Muslims does not have strong *pesantren* background,

the new wave of *santriization* still committed to promote public piousness expressions (Cesur and Mocan 2018). More importantly, the new wave of *santriization* at least could curb any conservative ideas that FPI made before. Also, the urban Muslims could be more tolerant and egalitarian, especially towards non-Muslim people.

The politics of accommodation means the way NU can promote traditionalist turn while embracing more urban Muslims. More specifically, the *santriization* is the key point to understand traditionalist turn here. we would like to elaborate these three types of accommodation into the table below.

This table above basically explains the way political accommodation could satisfy the demands of urban Muslims. For the first method, the public piousness expressions like wearing a hijab already take place in Indonesia (Aryanti 2015, Butler and Tavits 2017, Utomo, Reimondos, McDonald et al. 2018). But it may the style would be different. Meanwhile for the second and third reasons, it seems to be political driven factor. And these two might serve to be a determinant factor whether *santriization* or traditionalist turn would successful.

The Traditionalist Turn and *Santriization*

The term santrinization come from various literatures in both previous and present studies. It has been established within the previous literatures that santriization means the prevalence of Islamic symbolic use in public space in order to express their identities as Muslims (Abuza 2006, Desker 2010, Fealy 2003). Basically, this wave depended on the leading role of Islamic organization to be main driver (Jati 2023a). The current Islamization seems to show how the previous conservative has turned out to be traditionalist Islam (Mujani 2020).

The traditionalist turns officially get started by distributing much state donation to many NU's boarding schools. This the way the government to ensure NU is still government's

Table 2. Type of political accommodation.

No	Types of accommodations	Expected Results	Relationship between urban Muslims and NU
1	Public piousness expressions	Traditionalist turn would convert piousness style from "middle eastern style" to "local Islam style"	Muslims urbans begin to adopt NU's cultural style as long as it follows religious preferences.
2	Morality issues	Traditionalists turn still continuously nurture Islam to be main preference	It might be challenging demand for NU to embrace more urban Muslims. Some urban Muslims would strictly stick with Islamic principles when it comes to non-Muslims issues like banning alcohol drinks.
3	Greater access to policymaking arena	Traditionalist turn give more space to urban Muslims to access policymaking arena	This would be the most significant factor to tighten relationship between NU and urban Muslims. The politically engaged urban Muslims will get benefits since NU gets closer with the current government.

Source: elaborated from various sources.

ally than opposing the regime. NU get benefited by aligning themselves to the government in promoting tolerance to fund their suborganizations such as schools and hospitals. The current vice president is also one of charismatic ulama from NU. Here we use term *santriization* to show how NU excessively shows his attitude to dominate main Indonesian Islamic discourse (Jati et al. 2022). The term "*santri*" belongs to students who live and study Islamic studies in NU-affiliated Islamic boarding schools (Machmudi 2008, Pribadi 2013, Saat and Burhani 2020).

The current *santriization* seems to copy and paste what was FPI carried out in shaping Islamic discourse in Indonesia. Most importantly, this policy presumably is a revised version of "Islam Nusantara", which is an ideational framework. Through channeling itself to state budget scheme, *santriization* wish to curb the remaining FPI's followers by offering them jobs, bank loan, and other social assistances. NU seems to realize that current Islamic teaching should be pragmatic than idealistic ways such as giving direct social aid.

Regardless of what ongoing efforts have done, many challenging situations would become about, especially in some Indonesian regions, which already labelled as conservative regions such as DKI Jakarta, Banten, some part of West Java, some part of Sulawesi and Sumatera provinces. Those regions previously attached with the strong conservative agenda like supporting Islamic law.

The Problem behind *Santriization*

The *santriization* arguably is another seductive attempt to pull out of former FPI's cross-class alliance in some Indonesian regions. This notably refers to the urban muslims. It is important to note that FPI's loyalists do not openly challenge NU's followers. This subsequently causes the mixed membership of NU and FPI members. This condition, consequently, would make the idea of conservatives and intolerant attitudes still grow up, though *santriization* does not allow it. The conservatives would like to put on NU's banner to get state funding. Obviously, this problem shows the negative side of

santriization to become big umbrella of Islamic discourse in Indonesia.

Another problem of the *santriization* is it seems to lack of supervision in shaping Islamic discourse. Although NU has a long-established tradition of traditionalist teachings, it seems that the current *santriization* equally means with the monetization scheme. On behalf of Islam and NU as an umbrella, *santriisation* merely focuses on aid and development, which prevent Muslims not to get engaged in any ideas of conservatives and intolerant attitudes. This surely gives doubtful comment that *santriization* may be less effective in curbing intolerant attitudes and promoting religious traditions.

Furthermore, the *santriization* itself seems to be NU's self-ambition to be the sole and largest Islamic organization in promoting Islamic teaching in Indonesia. Muhtadi and Mietzner argue that the followers of NU reacted significantly against organizations like FPI and HTI that question NU's hegemony over its Indonesian Islamic discourse (Mietzner and Muhtadi 2020). This tough stance subsequently leads to stigmatization of "anti-pluralist attitude" for those rival organizations. Furthermore it also causes strong objection to harm the reputation of FPI and HTI itself. (Mietzner and Muhtadi 2020). In another word, the *santriization* subject to any intolerant and inegalitarian attitudes.

Similar to Muhtadi and Mietzner, another way to describe NU's self-ambition is anti-Wahhabism. The perception of "foreign" Islamic discourse is being used to preserve NU's values. This perception the leads to "a binary opposition between local Indonesian Islam and foreign Wahhabi Islam and between good and bad Muslims. Moreover, this binary view seems to clash between Wahhabi as an intruder against *santri* that represents local culture schmi(Schmidt 2021). Without neglecting the role of another large organization Muhammadiyah, NU recently has engaged in politically motivated projects by the government such as anti-radicalization, pluralism campaign, and acceptance of

national ideology "Pancasila". And of course, with no hardliners such as FPI and HTI, NU would be the chief interpreter of Islamic teachings in Indonesia.

However, the *santriization* would get challenges, especially for those regions who have large conservatives. As I mentioned earlier in those regions, there are fewer of the remnant of FPI who still committed to far-right agendas. More importantly, they already transformed themselves from pragmatic to loyalists. This condition would get exacerbated if clashes between NU and conservatives take place. With regards to the *santriization* and traditionalist turn, the urban Muslims can be either to be new NU's follower or independent *umma*. This depends on the common ground, which NU and urban Muslims achieved through traditionalist turn.

CONCLUSION

The emergence of traditionalist turn in Indonesia should be a new wave of moderate Islamization in Indonesia. Particularly urban Muslims, these group of people still need a guidance from authoritative Islamic organization. After FPI was dissolved by the government, urban Muslims seems to ask for guidance without allegedly involving in any radical or conservative movement. At the same time, NU would like to strengthen its position to be main leading Islamic organization in Indonesia. This self-ambition gets stronger after NU and the current government on the same page in terms of anti-radicalization campaign movement. These honeymoon relationship, therefore, makes NU get more access to state funding scheme.

The politics of accommodation seems to be baseline of traditionalist turn. These covers up several mechanisms that may attract attention of urban Muslims. Piousness expressions, morality issues, and access to state funding are those demands. These certainly are likely political rather than religious reasons. Consequently, the traditionalist turn would be a new way lobbying

on behalf religion than Islamization. These becomes the minor side of current traditionalist turn in Indonesia. These research needs some improvements particularly methodological issues and data. It can be a gap for those interested to develop traditionalist turn on Indonesian Islamic studies.

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