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**THE DEMISE OF EMANCIPATORY PEASANT POLITICS?
INDONESIAN FASCISM AND THE RISE OF ISLAMIC
POPULISM**

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THE DEMISE OF EMANCIPATORY PEASANT POLITICS? INDONESIAN FASCISM AND THE RISE OF ISLAMIC POPULISM

Laksmi Adriani Savitri & Devi Adriyanti¹

Abstract

This paper examines the rise of Islamic populism in Indonesia and understands it as a return of fascist ideologies and practices that use nationalism and religion as political instruments to clear a new pathway for capital accumulation. Historically, nationalism and religion have always been the subject of controversial debates in Indonesia's rhetoric of identity since colonial time. Under the military's influence, Indonesian nationalism and values have been defined, interpreted and developed into the ideology of family state, which legitimised the authoritarianism of Soeharto's "New Order" regime (1966-1998). The control of military power has become pervasive, especially after the 1965-66 massacres and persecution of leftists. The rural peasants were depoliticized through one-party domination, and incorporated fully into the market through Green Revolution. The land reform law of 1960 was labeled as leftist's agenda, and all peasant struggles were suspected as communist acts. The New Order regime's violence and persecution successfully constructed a culture of fear, politically demobilized peasants, and eliminated constraints for capital accumulation. State oligarchs, Chinese business conglomerates and military personnel controlled the logging, mining, plantation and financial companies throughout the New Order period. Such economic domination has marginalized Islamic politics and narrowed market chances for Moslem groups to become part of the Indonesian bourgeoisie. In recent years, with the wave of 'conservative turn' of Islam and inequality rising, anti-Chinese, and anti-communist sentiments were used by the military to build imaginary threats, "proxy war" doctrines and paranoid moral panic. Riding the same wave, Moslem middle class entrepreneurs launched a campaign of 'economic jihad', and formed a '212 Moslem-cooperative'. We argue that Islamic populism is mainly a vehicle for fascist ideology to gain tracts to power, while the rural and urban poor remain as 'floating mass', and entrapped in many so-called 'empowerment' projects. The suppression of class ideology has located rural emancipatory politics in Indonesia in a dilemmatic position, as it is step-by-step incorporated into the populists' agenda of accumulation. This combination of forces - right-wing militarism, conservative Islamic populism and the prevailing "dull compulsion of the market" – has become a powerful instrument for the co-optation and/or destruction of genuine emancipatory rural initiatives, as can be seen in the three local-level studies which my colleagues have prepared for the ERPI conference (Rahman 2018, Larastiti 2018, Wijaya 2018).

Keywords: fascism, Islamic populism, peasants depoliticisation

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Introduction: a conjuncture of currents and circumstances

The National Monument, located at the center of Jakarta, became a sea of white robes when seven million Moslem demonstrators gathered to protest against the alleged blasphemy of Jakarta's former Governor, a Chinese-Christian Indonesian popularly known as Ahok. Mass demonstrations occurred twice within a few weeks, on the 4th of November 2016 (popularly called the '411 movement') and 2nd of December 2016 (called the '212 movement'). Both demonstrations were considered the largest mass-gathering organized under the name of Islam in Indonesia's history. Many scholars and commentators of Indonesian politics perceived the mass demonstration as a heightening politics of right-wing Islamic populism (Juoro 2017, Lubis 2017, Supriatma 2017, Hadiz and Inayah 2017). The demonstrations preceded the Jakarta gubernatorial election and were instrumental in the right-wing candidate's election to take this powerful position. This important political maneuver owes much of its success to the leader of the radical Islamic organization Islamic Defenders' Front or FPI, Rizieq Shihab. By utilising a populist and racist rhetoric of defending Islam or *Bela Islam* and anti-Chinese sentiment, the FPI and the National Movement of Defenders of the Fatwas of Indonesia's Ulama (GNPFMUI) mobilised millions of demonstrators in the so-called Action to Defend Islam (*Aksi Bela Islam*).

Some scholars argued that the '411 and 212 movement' signifies a rise of Islamic populism in Indonesia. Such argument goes in line with Hadiz' historical analysis, which explains the inability of Islamic politics to flourish in Indonesia until a convergence between the middle class's accumulation project and political Islam emerges and forms a new oligarchic force (Hadiz 2014, 2016). Spectators of this mass demonstration event report that the majority of the demonstrators were middle class professionals armed with the latest gadgets, who didn't hesitate to enter famous global-chain coffee shops or fast food restaurants after the demonstration. The rural poor, who came from many parts of Indonesia, were also part of these demonstrators, but never took any roles in organizing, just passively watched the heroic speeches of their *ulama* leaders (Supriatna 2017). This predominance of the middle class in Indonesian Islamic politics is a rather unusual phenomenon compared to the global trend found by Choi (2017) through his survey. He found that Indonesian Moslems are more likely to be drawn into Islamic politics when their income is higher. Political Islam seems not to be attractive for the poorer part of the population, including those living in rural areas. The idea of entrenching *sharia* as a foundation of state law attracts more educated urban Moslem with higher income.

The predominance of middle-class Moslems as the motor of New Islamic Populism was also found by Hadiz (2016) in the Arab Spring phenomenon, especially in Egypt and Turkey. Hadiz' characterization of right-wing populism in the Middle East differentiates it with right-wing populism in the West, which tends to be perceived as a response to inequality with many of the poor becoming the demagogues. Referring to Dani Rodrik, a Harvard economist, Heufers (2017) perceives that American right-wing populists and Indonesian Islamists share a common trait: a sense of deprivation, the feeling of losing power and drifting into a marginalized existence. However, Heufers may not notice that the social group who felt deprivation in US is significantly different from those in Indonesia. Unlike in the US whose deprived group is the better able people who fell into poverty, suffered job and income losses due to international competition and trade, in Indonesia right-wing populism is fueled by middle class entrepreneurs who are craving for greater chances for accumulation, but feel they have always lost it to ethnic Chinese bourgeois since colonial time. As emphasized by Ian Wilson (2016) the racialised, sectarian campaign against Ahok was a way for many people to channel their frustrations with what they saw as the injustice of the supposedly Chinese-dominated economy.

Without putting too much analysis on relations between military power and Islamic populism, Duile (2016) points to the rise of "new style fascism" in Indonesia. He argues that two important features can be identified as symptom of fascism in Indonesia, i.e.: religion and militarism. According to him, militarism is a very important element, because fascism always needs to imagine the existence of the enemy, and it is a military duty to fight the enemy of the nation. He pointed to the government plan of establishing nine hundred training centers of "country defenders" to fight a latent danger of

communism that allegedly is stealthily insinuating itself back into the life of the nation. He also included the LGBT groups and narcotics smuggling in the 'dangerous threats', which all were constructed as forms of 'proxy war'. Secondly, religion can be the basis of fascism, because Duile perceives that today religion becomes a matter of group identity rather than a spiritual expression of individuals. As a construction of group identity, religion needs to draw boundaries and become exclusive. So, the exclusionary nature of religious identity can be instrumentalised by fascist ideology to construct 'the other' as the Enemy.

While Hadiz and Duile's accounts, focusing respectively on Islamic populism and New Style of Fascism, are quite compelling, their analyses seem to talk past each other. There are two important elements that are not connected within both analyses. On Duile's part: religion and militarism are not located in relation to economic inequality and the role of the Moslem middle class, while on Hadiz' part: militarism becomes the missing link in his account of Islamic populism and oligarchy. We believe in order to understand currents and circumstances under which right-wing populism enters Indonesia's political arena, Hall's (1988) explanation of authoritarian populism as a characterization of certain strategic shift in the political ideological conjuncture or changes of 'balance of forces' (Scoones et.al 2017:2), is useful to fill in the gap in Hadiz and Duile's analyses. There is a conjuncture of at least two historical forces to be considered. First is the competition between Chinese and Javanese-Moslem traders since the colonial time, combined with the suppression of Islamic politics from the post-independence period up to Suharto's authoritarian era have produced an imagined marginalisation of moslems, which perpetuate anti-Chinese sentiments throughout Indonesia's history. Second is the persistence of military force with its rhetoric of nationalism to legitimise their involvement in politics by aligning with nationalist parties.

Taking these two historical currents as context, we attempt to fill the gap and complement the-already-overflowing analysis of Indonesia's right-wing populism, relating it to the changing political dynamics of Indonesian peasants and rural population. We argue that the rise of Islamic populism in Indonesia is not merely a form of right-wing populism with religious conservatism as the main mobiliser, but, it is also part of a creeping attempt of fascist ideologies and practices to regain a place in Indonesian politics, as it was in the era of Soeharto's authoritarian regime, but now with Islamism as a new factor in the alliance. Our analysis shows that this new fascism ,instead of belittling Islam politics, is fueled by an alignment of power between Islamic and racist politics, re-awakening of military power, and the middle class resentment on sharpening inequality. As argued by Bello (2018:54) the middle class is notoriously volatile and the pivot around which politics revolves in times of great fluidity. Despite the mainly urban roots of the middle class Islamic populism, in combination with authoritarian and paranoid military power and the "dull compulsion of the market" in the prevailing neoliberal context, it exercises powerful constraints on genuinely emancipatory movements. Most importantly, the bloody history of the genocide against the left (Robinson 2017) and continuing rural depolitization have suppressed the formation of a critical progressive mass, and leave such power alignment almost unconstrained.

The remainder of this paper will ask four questions: What are the roots of fascism in Indonesia? Under which conditions has fascism re-emerged on the Indonesian political stage and accommodated Islamic populism? How and why it shapes and constraints emancipatory peasant politics? To elaborate these questions we divide this paper into four parts. The first part provides a brief historical-contextual analysis on the roots of fascism from colonial period up to the era of Suharto's authoritarian regime. The second part is an analysis of the conditions under which fascism re-emerges, which focus into a persistence of the family state ideology that forms a paternalistic and violent government. The third part explains how this form of patrimonial state is perpetuated under the so-called New Order regime, takes a new form of alliance with right-wing populism and depoliticized peasants organisations. Lastly, we explain how and why such political convergence set a dilemmatic condition for emancipatory peasants' politics.

Excavating Indonesian Fascism: Nationalism, Racism and Islam Politics

Historically, the seed of fascism has always been a kernel in Indonesia's rhetoric of identity. In the colonial ("Netherlands Indies") time, when the imagined community of "Indonesia" was still beyond reach, ethnic identity was the only means for identification. The process of ethnic identity consolidation into nationalism took its first route through an elitist movement of western-educated Javanese and aristocrats to gather youth groups from many parts of the country and declare the existence of "one territory, one nation, and one language", called Indonesia (Shiraishi 1997). Dutch colonial Ethical Politics triggered many anti-colonial movement projects 'searching for nationalism' throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Shadowed by the history of glorious kingdoms and sultanates, especially in Java, and triggered by the flourishing of fascist governments in Italy, Germany and Japan, the inspiration of nationalism started to take fascism as its core idea. Wilson's (2008) study of the emergence of the Indonesian Fascist Party in 1930, chaired by a Javanese aristocrat, albeit not for long, evidences the attractiveness of fascism for the idea of a strong independent nation. The nationalist group most impressed to fascism was the pre-war nationalist party Parindra or Greater Indonesia Party whose membership was the largest at the time. The party's leaders expressed open admiration for 'the firmness of Hitler, the love of the German people for their leaders, party and homeland and the strength of their organisation', which they advocated as a model for the nationalists, and even encouraged the use of the German-Italian fascist salute at meetings (Bourchier 2015).

This growing attraction of fascism faced strong critiques from the Indonesia Communist Party (PKI) and Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI). However, their critiques were obscured under a broader debate between 'eastern and western values' in the attempt to formulate genuine Indonesian values of nationalism. After independence, this debate led to a long struggle over the definition of the state's ideology, starting from corporative, integralistic-collectivist, to familial state ideology, which many argued to be derived from Continental European constitutional organicist theory and the Javanese norm of the benevolent ruler: the unity between the king and the people or *manunggaling kawula gusti* (Reeve 2008, Bourchier 2015). Within this idea of 'genuine nationalism', a racist social division constructed by the Dutch colonial regime that classified Chinese and others of far eastern descent as non-Indonesian "foreign orientals", is reproduced.

Dutch colonial racism both restricted and also privileged Foreign Orientals, especially Chinese, by granting them many monopoly rights on commodity trade, tax collection, land ownership, and credit loans that oppressed many rural peasants, who were categorized as the lowest class. When the colonial Ethical Policy (post-1900) unexpectedly boosted critical awareness among educated Indonesian aristocrats, a challenge to the Chinese monopoly rights came from an Islamic organization, namely Islamic Union or *Sarekat Islam* (SI), which was formed to promote Moslem's welfare, particularly of Moslem traders and small businesses (Shiraishi 1997). This organization, also named Islamic Traders Union or *Sarekat Dagang Islam* (SDI), had as its main function to protect shops and business places of Moslem traders from ethnic-Chinese disruptions, because market competition became violent, involving street fights with Chinese traders (Shiraishi 1997). Interestingly, using Islam as an identity marker against (Dutch and Chinese) 'enemies', SI grew into a more politically oriented anti-colonial movement, which also hosted leftist activists in the organization. However, when SI's leftist leaders became more radical, mobilizing workers and farmers' strikes, and triggered the formation of various labour unions, SI expelled them. Afterward, SI was torn into two factions, with Red SI continuing to unite Islamism and Socialism (Shiraishi 1997, Soedjono 2006, Wilson 2008). Along with the increasing number of middle-east educated Islamic leaders, Islamic organisations became more conservative and focused more on religious matters. However, this turn to conservatism did not (and does not today) dilute their sentiment against Chinese-Indonesians and communists.

The Chinese-Indonesians' economic privileges and rights were discontinued after Indonesian independence (1945), and racist policy has been applied toward Indonesian Chinese throughout post-independence period, with political, intellectual and bureaucracy positions becoming 'non-Chinese zones'. Yet, this ethnic minority group has grown into a strong bourgeoisie, precisely because their socio-cultural freedom is curtailed to economic activities only. In addition, during the so-called New

Order period, old business ties between military generals and Chinese entrepreneurs in black market operations, which supposedly financed military affairs in the state formation era (Crouch 1975, Sundhaussen 1986, Kingsburry 2003) were expanded into a conglomeration of President's family businesses (Robinson and Hadiz, 2004). Given a monopoly in import-export commodity trading, logging concessions, banking and real estate business, which turned certain Chinese-Indonesian families into wealthy conglomerates, the New Order regime redefined Chinese minority marginalization by depicting the entire ethnic group as economically rich group. The stigma of Chinese as wealthy expropriators placed them as a scapegoat to obscure economic domination by the New Order's President and his family (Chua 2004, Robinson and Hadiz 2004). This position implicates into an easy mobilisation of narratives of 'ethnic-Chinese economic looters' to ignite anti-Chinese riots in various parts of Indonesia in subsequent years.

The formation of military control and rural depoliticization

The military gained a formal role in politics when the first President, Soekarno, announced martial law in 1957 due to many upheavals across the country. The encompassing power of the military was manifested by army officers' placement in the supervision of all nationalised former Dutch enterprises, and their continued position in the management of state-owned corporations that control plantations, mining, banking and trade (Crouch 1978). This domination, however, was still unable to penetrate party politics under a parliamentary system, which pushed the military to take over the idea of corporatist organization from Soekarno and form various occupation-based "functional groups", called as Cooperation Bodies or *Badan Kerja Sama (BKS)* (Bourchier 2015, Reeve 2008, Setiyono 2011). The Cooperation Bodies included cooperation between women, press, Islamic scholars, workers, youth, and farmers, with the latter considered as the largest group (Setiyono 2011:12). This was the military's attempt to gain control to various mass organisations which otherwise would be incorporated into political parties, and became their power base. The plan here was to detach the mass organisations from the parties and to restructure them into functional groups (Reeve 2008).

The major threat to the army's power was the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), which had grown strong in membership, performed well in the 1955 and 1957 elections, and became the most powerful party. The largest number of its membership came from Indonesia Peasant Front or BTI and Plantation Workers Union (SARBUPRI) that attracted almost 8 million members in 1963 (Mortimer 1974). The transformation of PKI from proletariat into a peasant-base political party occurred in 1953, when PKI decided to concentrate on the peasants in its search for a militant base of strength (Mortimer 1974:153). The PKI's united front policy had lead into a merge of RTI, a peasant mass organization created by PKI, with BTI and assumed formal control of 200,000 members of BTI in 1953 (Huizer 1972:16).

When BTI was formed in 1945 after the First Indonesia Peasant Conference in Yogyakarta, it was not yet affiliated to PKI. It took up the issue of land lease obligation to the estates with low price that was imposed by the colonial government, but not yet abolished after independence (Huizer, 1972:12-13). According to Huizer, the BTI spread rapidly in those areas where peasants were dissatisfied with the system imposed by the colonial government in which the use of their land alternated between estate crops and food crops.

Later on, the growing influence of Marxist ideas within the organization made some of its Muslim leaders leave it in 1947 and join the BTI's rival, the Indonesian Islamic Peasant League or STII sponsored by the Masjumi party, and other moderate leaders moved to the Union of Indonesian National Peasants or *Petani* under the Indonesia Nationalist Party. Nonetheless, among many other peasant organisations BTI was the only one with activities at village level, and consistently struggled for estate land redistribution in Java and Sumatra (Huizer 1972: 12-14). Even, after BTI's affiliation with PKI, under the PKI leader's guidance (DN Aidit), BTI provided a wide range of assistance and advocacy, which included agricultural extension, access to inputs, promoted mass campaigns to exterminate plagues of rats, and also undertook three rounds of pioneering 'participatory action

research' in order to understand class differentiation in the countryside (White 2015:3). Furthermore, one of the BTI's leaders, Jagus, pioneered the invention of high yielding rice variety, especially adapted to dry land area, to address the problem of rice shortage in 1963 (Leksana 2016).; at that time Indonesia was importing rice up to 800 thousand tons yearly (Mortimer 1974).

The demand for land redistribution in the plantation areas that used to be controlled by foreign capitals became stronger after the All Indonesia Peasants Conference, organised jointly by the BTI, STII and Petani on 22-23 November 1949. Under the agreement signed by the Dutch and Indonesian government as a result of Roundtable Conference in The Hague on 23 August to 2 November 1949, Indonesia had to return all of confiscated Dutch assets, including former concessions given to foreign companies and issued new concessions as needed. At the end of 1952 in Java and Sumatra 70 percent of the estates had been restored, and this created many peasants' struggles, especially in Sumatra, organized by BTI and Plantation Workers Union or SARBRUPRI, affiliated with PKI. Massive strikes, up to 726 strikes in 1956, from 1952-1962 was organized, not only by SARBRUPRI, but also many other plantation workers unions (Stoler 2005: 252). The Martial Law 1951 and 1957 worsened the situation by allowing military take-over of plantation management, which also means control over workers unions by establishing a Cooperative Body between the army and workers unions (Stoler 2005:256).

The anti-communist sentiment heightened after the land reform law was passed in 1960. The PKI in fact disliked the 'anti-communist' model of land reform –redistribution of land into many forms of private property rights with minimum and maximum limits of holding, including conversion of tenancy into ownership rights, which had been successfully applied in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan backed by the US (White 2015). But after the 1960 law was passed they pressed for its implementation, and also pushed the 'land to the tiller' principle and mobilised the BTI to engage in unilateral land-occupying actions (*Aksi Sepihak*). This threatened many landed rural elites, including rural Islamic leaders and offended Nahdhatul Ulama (NU), the biggest Islamic party of the time. When the (later) so-called 30 September Movement (G30S) occurred and was framed by military propaganda as a PKI coup attempt (Roosa 2008), the army encouraged and carried out the mass violence by mobilizing Islamic militia groups and other death squads, and encouraging them to identify, detain and kill members of the PKI and their allies (Robinson 2017: 468).

After the mass massacre of the left, the army resurrected an already constructed common sense: traditional values, family ideology, conservatism, patrimonial state (Crouch 1979), and justified militarism of the state by deploying the "dual-function" (*dwifungsi*) doctrine giving the military a formal role in the political structure. Guidance, hierarchy, harmony, structure, formality, paternalism and patriarchy were all key themes in the new regime, in attempts to 'order' Indonesia's social and political life (Bourchier 2015). All of these 'Indonesian values' justified the formulation of family state ideology and its manifestation in Pancasila Democracy, the state system under authoritarian regime of Suharto.

Regardless of any critiques, the military ideologues successfully established the concept of Pancasila Democracy as culturally authentic to Indonesia, since it is anti-Marxist, anti-liberal, anti-party, anti-mass mobilisation, anti-revolution and anti-class struggle (Bourchier 2015). The Pancasila Democracy justified the formation of military-made "functional groups" namely Golkar. The ex-army Lieutenant-Colonel, who became Indonesia's second President: (General) Suharto, utilized Golkar as his election supporter in the presidential election of 1971. His victory was unsurprising, since all government employees were forced to become Golkar members and cast their votes for Golkar (Reeve 2008). Though armed forces members were not allowed to campaign or vote, the military made no efforts to hide the fact that an active duty general headed Golkar provincial branch and campaign openly. Moreover, the State Intelligence Coordinating Body (Bakin), was also established with responsibility for intelligence assessments and action aimed at the non-military population, such as political parties, dissidents, the Chinese community and especially those thought to be planning a communist revival (Kingsburry 2003:60).

Under Suharto's "New Order" regime rural peasants, who used to be the strongest political base before 1960s, were not allowed party membership or to form various mass-organisations. The Cooperation Body of the army and the peasant (BKS Tani-militer) took control of all peasant-based mass organizations in 1973 and formed a committee with a task to merge 15 organizations into one monolithic, corporate organisation called HKTI.² This organization elected Martono, one of Golkar's leaders, as their first Chairman, who remained in the position for two decades. In the hands of Martono, who later on became Minister of Transmigration in Suharto's cabinet, HKTI formed international networks with various wealthy farmers' organization and corporations, such as the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), International Federation of Plantation Agriculture and Allied Workers (IFPAAW), AIRD and CENDDHRA, including Nambo Corporation (Setiyono 2011:15-16). The HKTI became a vehicle for Suharto to support his agriculture development program, especially the Green Revolution package, such as: farmers bank loans, fast-growing and high yielding rice seeds, fertilizer and pesticide distribution, etc. After Suharto's regime, HKTI became a political vote getter for politicians rather than peasants or farmers organisations. This unification of peasant organization and disconnection of peasant groups from political parties is part of the so-called 'floating mass' strategy, adopted in order 'to distract the peoples' attention' from political problems, resembled the colonial bureaucratic state's concept of *rust en orde* or safeguarding security and social order.

In the economic sector, military entrepreneurs controlled huge state enterprises, such as: the state oil company (Pertamina), national rice trading agency (Bulog), and many others, supposedly without attracting public attention. Most of these military-sponsored or -controlled enterprises were operated by Chinese businessmen, while the military partners ensured that the necessary licenses and facilities were available and provided protection when illegal activities were involved. This strategy laid the foundation for Suharto's financial patronage to hold his grip on military power as evidenced by the emergence of "financial generals" (Kingsburry 2003). When such operations became a matter of public awareness and a subject of student demonstrations, these events were utilized by Suharto to further depoliticize students' organisations and disallow any political activities within campuses through the policy of "campus normalization". The government rhetoric of 'political stability to ensure economic growth' became a buzz-word to justify any violent measures to detain, kidnap, and kill activists, including accusing peasant organization activists as communists. The New Order's violence successfully constructed a culture of fear (Heryanto 2006), politically demobilized peasants, and eliminated constraints for capital accumulation (Farid 2005).

The convergence of Islamic populism & military power

As part of Suharto's effort to gain complete control over any critical forces, he also tried to limit Islamic politics. The fear of political Islam due to its roots in Indonesia's majority Muslim population, and awareness of its power to mobilise the people, haunted the so-called New Order regime throughout the early period of authoritarian government. Production of many regulations and political maneuvers to ban Islamic parties and detain Islamic activists based on accusations of terrorism were strategies to weaken political Islam. As cited by Bouchier (2015) from Aditjondro (1994), the corporatist format was as much about de-Islamising the political arena as it was about creating the preconditions for development.

On the other hand, the army began to divide into two factions with the Red-and-White Faction against Soeharto and led by non-Islamist officers, who tried to reform and professionalise the military organisation and detach it from Soeharto's patronage, and the Green Faction comprised of officers who allied with conservative Islam intellectuals and supported Soeharto. This division was also part of Soeharto's strategy to approach and use Moslem intellectuals in his state administration structure, allow them to establish a Moslem Intellectuals Association (ICMI), and distribute high rank positions to reduce the military power in his government, which successfully demonstrated his new

² HKTI: *Himpunan Kerukunan Tani Indonesia*, the "Indonesian Farmers' Harmony Association"

openness to Islam, as an element in his new base of power. However, this shifting strategy created a huge chaotic situation after Soeharto was forced to resign as president in May 1998. The Green Faction formed paramilitary groups, namely Pamswakarsa, and allied with the radical Islamic organization Islamic Defenders' Front (FPI) to create a defensive move against popular demands to strip off the whole regime, including Habibie the Vice president, from the state power. Although such kind of alliance was not successful to 'save' the regime's position and a wave of democratisation was unstoppable, twenty years after the downfall of Soeharto this type of authoritarian and paternalistic government has not completely vanished.

Many scholars claim that *Reformasi* is just a political continuation rather than discontinuation of the authoritarian regime, only without brutal suppression. The supremacy of authoritarian legacies is evidenced by the persistent power of politicians who now occupy prominent positions in post-New Order Indonesia but either started their political careers under the New Order or rose to political power by drawing on the political or economic connections that they had established under the New Order (Poczter 2016:77). Prabowo Subianto was one of these political mavericks, emerged from the oligarchic populism, characterised by Aspinall (2015:2) as: "although he condemned the political elite, he had quintessentially elite origins himself, and had risen to a position of political prominence through the very oligarchic power relations he critiqued". As the former son-in-law of Suharto, former military general who were a commander of the elite Special Forces squad, and the Chairman of HKTI, Prabowo had run for president twice and failed. His effort to build an impression as a populist leader started by seizing a position as the Chairman of HKTI through a controversial congress in Bali at 2010, which implicated into dual leadership and two version of HKTI with none of members are truly peasants. It was perceived by his opponents in HKTI that his move to take over chairmanship in HKTI was a maneuver to put HKTI under his political party, Gerindra, and use it as a vehicle of vote getting in the 2014 presidential election.

Despite his 'populist' rhetorics, style and political moves, Prabowo lost the 2014 presidential election and failed to gain sufficient votes from rural and poor population who were claimed to be his constituents. He gained more votes from the younger, urban voters who appeared to prefer, by a slight margin, Prabowo to Joko Widodo (popularly known as Jokowi), his opponent who is now the President of Indonesia. Rural voters preferred Jokowi by a margin of 56% to 44%, but Prabowo narrowly won the urban vote by a margin of 51% to 49%. The data also showed that 'white-collar' voters supported Prabowo by 55% to 45%, while 'blue-collar' voters backed Jokowi by 54% to 46% (Lees 2014). The election result seems to place Joko Widodo, not Prabowo, as the 'populist' one. Ironically, one of the strongest signs of the return of military intervention in politics, which is the inclusion of many former generals in ministerial positions, was shown in the cabinet of the present President, who many people perceive as a 'populist president'.

Two years into his presidency, after making many campaign pledges of social reforms and resolution of human rights violation cases, Jokowi seems unexpectedly to have turned his back on any plans for structural changes. The President who faced many obstacles in implementing his reformist agenda and feared the emergence of new enemies that could hinder his popularity as president, directed his policy toward what Warburton called 'New Developmentalism'. Jokowi's new paradigm is pragmatic and growth-oriented in its policies, statist-nationalist in its ideological positioning, and conservative in its approach to problems of transparency and governance and of human rights and justice. There are uncanny echoes of the past in this new developmentalism. It recalls the New Order's emphasis on pragmatic developmental programming and its rhetorical aspiration to 'modernise' Indonesia. Jokowi's personal style has even prompted comparisons with President Soeharto—some admiring and others critical (Warburton 2016:315).

This new developmentalism project, with priority on public private partnerships in infrastructure development programmes, has heightened the number of agrarian conflicts in Indonesia. Compared to 2016, there is a fifty percent increase in 2017 with two new conflicts happening every day (KPA 2017). Almost every conflict justifies a deployment of either police or military forces to the sites, especially to remote, rural areas allocated for plantation and/or mining concessions. Even now, at the village level the expanded presence of the military is felt most directly by the assignment of military

personnel known as ‘Village Guidance Non-Combat Officers’ (Babinsa) to villages and urban slums, and the stationing of non-commissioned officers in each of the military’s several hundred sub-district commands (Koramil) (Bourchier 2015). Babinsa was an apparatus of oppression whose role was one of the determining factors that enabled the success of the Green Revolution in the 80s. This success inspired Jokowi presidency to re-apply it in rice field expansion project as part of his national food security program. This idea of mobilization and direct control of rice production is backed up by an MoU signed by the Indonesia National Military commander and the Minister of Agriculture on the 8th of January 2015, which includes 50000 personnel of Babinsa to provide security supports in food production. However, the implementation of such idea in the one million hectares of rice field project in Merauke was challenged by various forms of peasants’ resistance. This resistance emerges not as rural peasants opposition to incorporation to the new form of commodity production, but rather because they are not incorporated on profitable terms. In West Sumatra, rice farmers also rejected to plant rice twice a year, despite the Governor’s threat of military confiscation of their rice fields. But, their rejections are mainly because local conditions insufficient infrastructure make double-cropping risky and unsuccessful. Such cases show that the military’s attempt to maintain rural depoliticisation is not going uncontested.

The return of authoritarian regime is also marked by the constructed paranoia of “proxy war” by the military head of staff. He claimed that foreign powers are trying to seize control in Indonesia in the form of supports to LGBT, NGOs, distribution of narcotics, control of natural resources and the latent resurgence of communism. Including ‘the return of communism as a latent danger’ in the proxy war doctrine justifies the military’s program of “Country Defenders” or *Bela Negara* which supposedly is to be implemented in all campuses, Islamic education institutions (pesantren), and mass organisations. This military’s proxy war and country defender programme is marketed noisily as a strategy to defend the nation but its astounding breadth and omnipresence make it look more like a strategy to increase the military’s role in civilian affairs (Russell, 2016).

The new pathway of ‘Economic Jihad’ and invisibility of rural peasant

The pivotal strategy that crystalizes the identity politics of Indonesian Moslems is the transformation from religious teachings to party politics, as seen by the establishment of the so-called Justice Welfare Party (PKS). In the general election of 1999 the PKS gained 1.4 per cent of the vote, which gave them seven seats in Indonesia’s parliament the People’s Representative Council (DPR). The PKS represents primarily middle class urban Moslems, who were critical of the New Order authoritarian regime, and continues the Islamism movement which was used to be part of Iran revolution and Ikhwanul Muslimin movement of the 1970s and 1980s (Hilmy, 2010). This process of politization of Islam has served as a base for Islamic populism that gained momentum in the 2014 Presidential election and 2017 Jakarta Governor elections. In both elections, right-wing Islamists always support a candidate coming from either a military background or Islamist groups.

Hadiz (2016) analyses Islamic populism as the formation of *ummah* which is manifested in a moment of suspended difference, as in the 411 and 212 momentums, which united the radical and moderate Moslems. Indonesian Moslems whose Islam has become essentialised through the move into conservatism believe in the glorious future of Islam if the *ummah* is led by a Moslem leader and established strong economic power. The fact that Indonesia’s economy is dominated by Chinese-Indonesian businessmen, as most of the top 50 richest Indonesians on the Forbes’ lists are ethnic Chinese, therefore, justifies their campaign for economic *jihad*. The economic *jihad* takes its form, for example, in the establishment of the ‘212 Sharia Cooperative’ which has set a target to gain profit of five billion rupiahs per year. This 212 Cooperative forms ‘212 Marts’ that serve as commodity retail outlets targeted to sell 20% of Moslem product, and 80% non-Moslem products in the short run, and in the long term 80% Moslem, and 20% Non-Moslem products. The 212 Sharia Cooperative aims to collect savings, expand Moslem business networks, and investment power in selected sectors, such as: real estate development (housing, apartments and condominiums), with a target of 212 trillion rupiahs in its tenth year of investment. To date, the 212 Mart has opened twenty eight outlets

in Java. Moreover, many of the organisers of this movement are popularly known Islamic *ulama*, set an ambition to place 212 supporters in political positions through various political parties. As these many forms of economic and political attempts are still in their very early initiation, '212' has become a symbol and label for Islamic economic and political movement with middle class *ulama* and followers as the riders of this wave of right-wing populism.

In this arena of power contestations, the rural poor have a place only as consumers of these 'economic *jihad*' ideas. They are lured by the charisma of many popular *ulama* whose media publications became a free campaign for their 'Defending Islam' and 'Economic Jihad' rhetoric. The floating mass strategy, that has depoliticised rural peasants for the last 40 years, has successfully contained rural resistance and protests mainly by limiting grievances to the claim that incorporation into commodity production should be on more profitable terms. In several cases this has taken the form of a quasi-class politics of farmers' cooperative (Savitri & Prawirosusanto 2015, Larastiti 2018, Wijaya 2018). While such depoliticisation is now hardened through military re-invasion into rural life, and politisation of Islam, the political channel of rural resistance is accommodated mainly by indigenous people movements. None of these situations can provide a way for emancipatory peasant politics to flourish.

This combination of forces - right-wing militarism, conservative Islamic populism and the prevailing "dull compulsion of the market" – has become a powerful instrument for the co-optation and/or destruction of genuine emancipatory rural initiatives, as can be seen in the three local-level studies which my colleagues have prepared for the ERPI conference (Rahman 2018, Larastiti 2018, Wijaya 2018). Two of these cases take a longer time-frame and trace the trajectories of communities of former colonial plantation workers who were able to occupy plantation lands after the collapse of Dutch rule in the 1940s, with an initial genuine vision to set up egalitarian agrarian communities inspired by socialist ideals. In one case, the peasant organisation was brutally dismantled by the New Order regime and its members killed, imprisoned or re-proletarianised under harsh conditions resembling a labour camp. Following the collapse of the New Order the next generation again struggled successfully to re-assert their rights to land, finally achieving land redistribution in 2011 and forming an independent co-operative in 2012. Post-redistribution however, the members failed to follow through with the other elements and political commitment necessary to achieve genuine emancipatory agrarian reform, and have reverted to forms of market-based farm management, that in turn strengthen tendencies to differentiation and land concentration (Wijaya 2018). In the second case, the cooperative survived the New Order period thanks to links with senior (ex) military figures, but at the cost of the loss of its original egalitarian and emancipatory ideals, as it became locked in the combined traps of incorporation into the state- (and military-) dominated cooperative structure, formalization of land titles and the imperative of business expansion, leading to increasing internal inequalities (Ciptaningrat 2018). Equally disturbing is that in both cases, the internal organisation of the cooperative is now marked by patriarchal and authoritarian structures.

Finally, the study by Abdul Rachman (2018) shows how in the space of a few years, a genuinely emancipatory religious-agrarian movement aiming to establish a self-sufficient, egalitarian agrarian settler community, was destroyed by the paranoid "moral panic" generated by the alignment of mainstream media, mainstream/orthodox Islam and the ultra-nationalist state (military and police) apparatus. With its leaders charged with both blasphemy and treachery/secession, the 8,000 settlers were forcibly dispersed and returned to their places of origin for re-education in religion and national philosophy, and their fields and houses destroyed.

Conclusion

The conjuncture of two historical currents: marginalization of Islam combined with militarism of everyday life throughout the period of authoritarian regime in Indonesia has produced a condition where right-wing populism in Indonesia arises as a new style of fascism. As Hall argues, (1988:168) politics is where forces and relations, in the economy, in society, and in culture, have to be actively

worked on to produce particular forms of power, and forms of domination: contingent and open-ended, this production of politics is still an on-going process, but not unpredictable. The return of developmentalism in the present time of Indonesia has clearly worsened the conditions of inequality, and heightened rural resistance and agrarian conflicts in various forms. However, these grievances do not transform into any types of emancipatory peasant politics because rural poor resistance is contained within two types of movement: the identity politics of indigenous peoples' movements, and a quasi-class politics in the farmers' cooperative movement. The death of class-based rural movements in Indonesia has entrapped rural resistance in the dull compulsion of market power.

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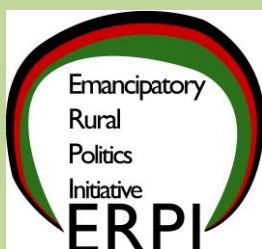
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