

Reexamining The Story of Islam and Nation States in Southeast Asia

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ABSTRACT

This article explores why Islam in Indonesia could unite various diverse ethnic groups in one unitary state without significant friction? In Malaysia, Islam encouraged ethnic Malays to become the dominant element in all aspects of national and state life without being dragged into chauvinism? Why is Islam which was ethnically certain in the Philippines, a severe barrier to nationality? Three cases involve elements of Islam, ethnicity and nationalism but show different manifestations of reactions. Islam played different positions and functions as a unifier in Indonesia, a carrier of enthusiasm in Malaysia, and a barrier to nationalism in the Philippines.

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mencari tahu mengapa Islam di Indonesia mampu menyatukan berbagai suku bangsa yang beragam dalam satu negara kesatuan tanpa gesekan yang berarti? Sedangkan di Malaysia Islam memberikan semangat kepada etnis Melayu untuk menjadi elemen dominan dalam segala aspek kehidupan berbangsa dan bernegara tanpa terseret ke dalam chauvinisme? Mengapa Islam yang beretnis tertentu di Filipina menjadi penghalang serius bagi kebangsaan di negara tersebut? Tiga kasus yang secara bersama-sama melibatkan unsur Islam, etnis dan nasionalisme namun menunjukkan manifestasi reaksi yang berbeda. Islam memainkan posisi dan fungsi yang berbeda, sebagai pemersatu di Indonesia, pembawa semangat di Malaysia dan penghalang nasionalisme di Filipina.

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1. Introduction

In connection with this theme, there was an article written by Azyumardi Azra with a similar title, namely: "Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Religion in Southeast Asia" (Azra, 1999). Azra refuted Naisbitt and Fukuyama's thesis that ethnic and religious factors would incite nationalism to become *chauvinistic* and fanatical. John Naisbitt argues that parochial loyalty to ethnicity has given rise to chauvinistic ethnicity, which he calls new tribalism. When combined with nationalism, new tribalism virus will give birth to a radical understanding of nationalism that manifests in the act of ethnic cleansing. Naisbitt predicts that armed conflicts will be more motivated by tribalism than economic or political in present times. At the same time, Fukuyama considers religion to harm nationalism. According to Fukuyama, nationalism is thick with the color of religion will only produce religious sentiments and even religious wars.

According to Azra, the Southeast Asian region - specifically Indonesia and Malaysia - must be excluded from the thesis. In both countries, the ethnic factor did not give birth to chauvinistic nationalism; this was because Islam could tame ethnic sentiments so that they were not parochial. With Islam as a religion, nationalism in the two countries did not show the brutal attitude of Serbian nationalism but instead faced a more tolerant and friendly face. Southeast Asian Islam stimulates, fosters, and plays a very positive role in developing nationalism in the region (Azra, 1999).

Azra was right when he said that Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia reacted positively to the idea of nationalism because Islam succeeded in taming ethnic sentiments in both countries while fostering loyalty to a higher entity, namely the state. The role of Islam in the two countries is indeed more or less favorable. But Azra was wrong when based on his observations of the cases of Indonesia and Malaysia, generalizing that Islam in Southeast Asia played a very positive role in fostering, developing, and supporting the development of nationalism in the region. He seems to deny that in the Philippines, for example, Islam which acts with specific ethnic groups, has seriously undermined the country's nationality (A.Majul, 1989).

This article will discuss the above themes from the gap left by Azra. This article will find out why Islam in Indonesia can unite various diverse ethnic groups within the unitary state without significant friction? While in Malaysia Islam gives spirit to Malay ethnicity to become the dominant element in all aspects of national and state life without being dragged into chauvinism? Why is it that Islam which is ethnical with certain ethnicities in the Philippines, has become a severe deterrent to nationality in both countries? Three cases involved Islam, ethnicity, and nationalism elements but showed different reaction manifestations. In each case, Islam plays a different position and function, as a unifying Indonesia, the spirit of Malaysia, and undermining the Philippines.

2. Understanding Nationalism

Experts express many opinions regarding the notion of nationalism. In his book, *Sukarno's, Islam and Nationalism*, Badri Yatim (1999) has compiled some of these notions and concluded that one of the elements of nationalism agreed by various diverse ideas was "the willingness to unite in the political sphere within a nation-state (Yatim, 1999)."

The element is subjective because it is closely related to the intrinsic aspect of human *obscure*. Is not human will unexpected and immeasurable? But besides this emotional element, nationalism also has objective features. These factual elements usually foster human desire to unite politically, which includes details: ethnicity, religion, language, customs, traditions, and homeland. However, these elements are not determinants of the existence of nationalism; the deciding factor is the "desire to unite in a country". Therefore, although the American population consists of various races and the population of Switzerland uses three or four languages, they remain a nation with strict national boundaries (Kohn, 1984).

In the idea of nationalism, "the desire to unite in a country" is not an empty word. After the desired country is formed inevitable consequences must be borne by all the components that initiated the country's formation. Nationalism requires allegiance to the state on the one hand and resistance to anything that can damage the country's integrity. Regarding this, Sukarno - as quoted by Badri Yatim (1999) - said that nationalism excludes all those who do not have the desire to live united, discouraging all groups who do not feel a group, and rejecting all mannerisms that are not sourced from the unity of things that have been endured by the people (Yatim, 1999).

By considering the explanation above, a conclusion can be drawn that the notion of nationalism can be distinguished in two contexts. In the context of the formation of the state, nationalism means "the willingness to unite in the political field in a nation state". Whereas in the context when the state was formed, the meaning of nationalism was as stated by Hans Kohn (1984) that is "one understanding which believes that the highest loyalty of individuals must be left to the nation-state (Kohn, 1984)".

3. Islam Versus Nationalism

For Muslims, or at least for some of them, the idea of nationalism has somehow confused. There were Muslims who did not find it difficult to accept the concept of nationalism. Mainly because they do not understand and appreciate Islam, so they do not feel a conflict between their Islamic understanding and the idea of nationalism. Partly it has given a new meaning to Islamic doctrines so that these doctrines become more accommodating to the concept of nationalism. But Abdullah al-Ahsan (1992) called the confusion the term identity crisis. When Muslims lost their traditional political power and unity at the hands of colonialism, they still maintained their identity as members of the *ummah*, which more or less meant the fellowship of Muslims throughout the world. Even seen from the positive side of the existence of colonialism, it strengthens the alliance (Benda, Sabit, & Terbit, 1985; Lombart, 2008; Yatim, Islam, & Persada, 2000).

In the case of Indonesia, the unifying effect of colonialism is evident. Before the era of Islamic colonialism, Indonesia was divided into five separate cultural plates; slabs on both sides of the Malacca Strait, the Sunda Strait, and the Java Sea, Sulawesi, and Maluku Sea Slabs. In each of these plates, the Islamic empire is the center of gravity. Colonial power with all the features of its manifestations, caused the cultural plates eventually unite and develop along with the development of *Pax Neerlandica*, a story that Snouck Hurgronje had predicted.

Colonialism had the effect of uniting *ummah* or the congregations Islamic, which were initially fragmented in various local and ethnocentric political entities into a larger alliance. But when in the 20th century various regions of the Islamic world had managed to break free from the clutches of colonialism in the form of nation-states, Muslims were faced with a dilemma; between choosing the *ummah* as self-identity or nationalism (Al-Ahsan, 1992). This crisis is not as simple as it seems because these two choices cannot be compromised. Efforts to compromise the two revealed in the jargon "I am part of the people, I am part of the nation", can only be seen as an attempt to narrow the distance between the two poles and succeed in certain countries. The jargon cannot solve the real root of the problem, "the problem of loyalty," because both the *ummah* and nationalism demand the highest loyalty from each individual who adheres to it. Each does not want to be numbered.

Abdullah al-Ahsan's (1992) opinion about the dilemma Muslims face is genuine. Still, today the dilemma is no longer between the *ummah* versus nationalism because the idea of *pan-Islamism*, which becomes the spirit of the *ummah* is no longer dominant in the Islamic world. At present, the most dominant attachment of Muslims is no longer with the brotherhood or universal unity as promoted by the idea of *pan-Islamism* but rather more related to the values and teachings of Islam. Therefore, Indonesian or Malaysian Muslims may not care much about the fate of Muslims in the Philippines and vice versa. Still, their loyalty to values and teachings or at least Islamic symbols is not in doubt. So the actual dilemma faced by Muslims today is not "*ummah* versus nationalism", but "Islamic values and teachings versus nationalism"(Al-Ahsan, 1992).

Muslims in nation-states are constantly faced with a difficult choice between preserving Islamic values and teachings at the expense of national interests, or vice versa, promoting national interests by ignoring those values and instructions. As long as it is unnecessary, Muslims generally avoid making clear choices. But if that choice has to be made, that's where the crisis occurs. Muslims are usually divided into two groups that have a conflict; one prefers to sacrifice national interests for the sake of Islam, while the other prefers to offer Islamic interests for the national good.

If the position of Islam in the country is strong enough, like in Indonesia and Malaysia, any choice that Muslims ultimately make does not have serious consequences. However, suppose the position of Islam in the country is weak as in the Philippines. In that case, the choice to prioritize the interests of Islam over the interests of the state will be an option that must be paid handsomely, not infrequently it must be paid with lives. In cases like this, Islam becomes a kind of undermining for a nation-state.

4. Islam in Southeast Asia A Portrait of the Situation

Demographically, countries in the Asian region can be divided into two groups; First, Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia; Second, the countries there, the Muslims became a minority population, a kind of Filipino. The position of Islam in countries that belong to the first group is more vital than in countries that belong to the second group. Of course, the level of power is relatively different from one another.

In Malaysia, Islam has an amalgamation with Malay ethnic groups, which in the 1980s numbered around 14 million people or half of Malaysia's population. Before the Japanese colonial era, Malaysia was a British colony divided into three government system blocks: the Straits Settlement, Federated Malayan States, and the Un-federated Malayan States. After being driven out between 1941 and 1945 by Japan, the British again strengthened their power in Malaysia by trying to make Malaysia a Straits Settlement, a territory led directly by the British. With this policy, the British sought to abolish the sovereignty of the Malay kings and sought to create political unity based on the unity of the Malay homeland (Malaya Union). However, this effort could be thwarted by the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), which took an oppositional attitude towards the Malay Union and received broad support from the Malay community, including the royal family. Instead, on January 21, 1948, the United Kingdom instituted the Institutional Partnership consisting of eleven empires/countries. The failure of the idea Malay Union which was replaced by a Malay sultanate alliance was a sign of the success of the Malay people in Malaysia to form a political unit based on cultural unity, namely Malay-Malay culture, not the unity of the homeland as in Indonesia. So, Malaysian independence on August 30, 1957 could be seen as Malay-Malay independence. This effort to fight for Malay-Malay Malaysia was perfected by the formation of the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee (MSCC) on July 23, 1961 which for its efforts succeeded in integrating Sarawak and North Borneo into Malaysian territory so that the population ratio between Malay and non-Malay becomes more or less 3: 1.

For Malay people in Malaysia, Malaysian independence is independence, so they try to preserve all elements related to the Malay-Islamic concept. Specifically related to Islam, for Malay ethnic groups in Malaysia, Islam is an objective factor that unites them, with which they become the dominant ethnic group, especially in politics. Ethnic integrity Malay as a political force is very dependent on Islam. Therefore, Islam has the power to impose its own goals.

However, not all Malay figures place Islam as the priority. At least Malay secular figures try not to establish Islam in the position of the sole policy reference in Malaysia. Because of this, there is often bickering of ideas, for example, between a more secular UMNO and a more Islamist PAS. However, no matter how great the dispute between the Islamic Malays with its secular circles, they always show unity when facing challenges from outside. This is because, psychologically, Malay ethnic has a concern over the possibility of the emergence of the domination of other ethnic groups to replace them, especially Chinese ethnic who becomes the second ethnic group in Malaysia. However, the combination of Islam and Malay ethnicity in Malaysia does not lead to chauvinism. Both the Malay secularists and the Muslim community argue that other ethnicities and religions in Malaysia have the right to live and develop. Disputes between Muslims and secularists in Malay ethnicity have become a kind of "self-control" that keeps these ethnic groups in their right mind and is not dragged into attitudes chauvinist (Abdullah, 1987; Bakar, 1988; Ongkili, 1967)

In Indonesia, Islam has a unique situation portrait, or even for some circles it is confusing and misleading. Donald K. Emerson (in Rais, 1994) describes it as follows: "Islam is an active minority - with a numerical majority - inside a pluralistic society under an authoritarian government engaged in secular development". Emerson's statement was still relevant except in the "authoritarian government" section because since the collapse of the 1998 New Order regime, the government has practiced more democratic political behavior (Ongkili, 1967).

In Indonesia, Muslims are "an active minority within a numerical majority." This means that it is a minority group from one side, while from the other side, it is the majority. Jalaluddin Rakhmat (in Rais, 1994) successfully demonstrated this through his five approaches: demographic, ritual,

intellectual, social, and ideological practices. From the demographic point of view, most of Indonesia's population is indeed Muslim. Islam is adopted by almost 90% of the Indonesian people spread across various parts of the archipelago with diverse ethnic backgrounds. However, when viewed from the perspective of ritual worship, the percentage will decrease dramatically. That percentage will shrink when viewed from an intellectual, social, and ideological standpoint. Not many Muslims understand the teachings of their religion, then implement the instructions in social life and make Islam their way of life (Rakhmat, 1989).

The consequence of the above situation is the weak position of Islam in Indonesia. The degree of weakness is certainly not the same from time to time. However, it can be said that the position of Islam in Indonesia is weak, in the sense that it cannot impose its own goals, as Islam in Malaysia, but rather must be more compromising towards the goals of the country which is not uncommon for some people to contradict with the basic the basis of Islam itself. For example, in the case of the application of Pancasila as the sole foundation, where Muslims were forced by the new order to apply Pancasila as the principle of all the institutions and activities they carried out.

Taufik Abdullah (1987) described the weakening of the position of Islam in Indonesia with the following phrase:

From this historical approach it is clear that the selection of roles played by supporters of the Islamic ideals began as initiators of the initiative (so those who formulated "answers" to structural "challenges") then were urged as one of the participants and companions in the dialogue, finally being forced to become a reactive element. It was the first Sarekat Islam (SI) which precisely, both ideological and sociological organizations formulated what the colonial structure meant and provided an appropriate political answer. But then SI / PSII and other Islamic parties lost the initiative. They are only one element of the solidarity group or other parties. Not infrequently, initiatives are taken by other groups, such as the formation of PPKI, initiated by the PNI (1928). Efforts to formulate a failed constitution in the constituents are the culmination of the "Islamic group" role as partners in dialogue. Since the formation of Guided Democracy, except for a glimmer at the time of the "Indian Summer" (meaning the last warmth before "winter" at the beginning of the "New Order" period), those who depart from Islamic political concerns are increasingly required to formulate answers to initiatives initiated by external factors (Abdullah, 1987).

The condition of Indonesian Muslims as "*an active minority within a numerical majority*" is the cause of the weak position of Islam in the country. This is because Islam is not a political and ideological orientation for most Muslims themselves. At the same time, political power and ideology can be used as vehicles to impose Islamic goals in a democratic country. Muslims cannot defend the Jakarta charter, lose in their constituents when they fight for Islam as the basis of the state, and the defeat of Islamic parties in the election is proof that Indonesian Islam is a "minority in the majority".

The fact that the role of Islam in Indonesia is more cultural rather than political also explains why Islam in Indonesia has become a unifying force for diverse ethnic groups without subsequently becoming a coercive force, as in Malaysia. Islam is not an objective factor in Indonesian nationalism. Still, merely a "tamer of ethnic sentiment", through which the Indonesian population consisting of several diverse ethnicities can be more fluid in relating to one another. This cultural Islam is the real strength of Islam in Indonesia. Even Snouck himself, according to Harry J. Benda (1985), reminded that the Indonesian people, no matter how their *abangan*, still considered himself a good and faithful Islam and was brutal to convert (Benda et al., 1985).

Regarding the idea of nationalism - in the sense of a "desire to unite in a country" - from the beginning, Muslims were the prominent supporters, even though Islam itself was not always *comfortable* with the idea of nationalism. In Indonesia, the term nationalism was introduced before World War I by *prijaji* youths who returned from the Netherlands and Chinese people who paid attention to Sun Yat-sen's progress. It was, then, developed with the founding of the Indonesian National Party in 1927, and with the development of Sukarno's ideology who enjoyed using it in his first theoretical texts (Lombart, 2008; Rahman, 2018).

The proof is, however strong the ideological conflict between Islam and nationalism in the Old Order era, and however urged the Islamic ideology in the New Order era, Muslims are rarely tempted to withdraw their loyalty to the Republic of Indonesia, and all attempts to form a federal state or secession proved to fail after years. This is proof that Islam is not an objective factor that binds Muslims' loyalty to the state but something else. In Indonesia Islam does not become a national identity as in Malaysia.

It is true what Snouck and Hazeu said that in the 19th century, Islam had become an ethnic identity. But when the idea of nationalism at the beginning of the 20th century, Islam was not and did not become the national identity that united them. What unites the Indonesian people into a nation is the desire to be independent, to seize the entire territory of the *Pax Neerlandica* (Dutch East Indies) and maintain it intact. *Pax Neerlandica* is a Dutch-controlled territory in the archipelago called the Dutch East Indies. The boundaries of *Pax Neerlandica* are determined by several agreements between the Netherlands and other colonial countries. The London Treaty (1824), and later the so-called "Sumatra agreement" (1871), gave the Netherlands the power to act in Sumatra, while the United Kingdom was able to strengthen its authority on the Malacca Peninsula. In addition, the declaration of 1828 divided Irian from north to south following longitude, then the 1904 agreement with Portugal determined the boundaries of the two parts of the island of Timor (Lombart, 2008).

Indonesian nationalism grew due to new factors created, as reflected in the Youth Pledge and the jargon of "one homeland, one nation, one language". *Nusa* or Indonesian homeland, is *Pax Neerlandica*, created by the Netherlands. Indonesian nationality was created because of a common destiny and purpose that is both to be colonized and wanting independence from the Netherlands. Indonesian is a Malay language that, because of necessity and is considered to have become, has been *lingua franca*, named the national language. There are no objective factors with long historical roots that are recognized and apply to all. Indonesia as a nation is still very young.

Therefore, at the beginning of the 20th century when Indonesian nationalism was still in the cultural and political phases. Viewed from the development of Indonesian nationalism can be divided into three phases; the cultural phase in which unity is still based on ethnic and regional similarities, the political phase in which the Indonesian nation begins to move in the political field with the primary goal of Indonesian independence, and the phase of searching for ideology where the Indonesian people through long debates look for the doctrine that is the basis of their nationality (Yatim, 1999)

Islam did not experience friction with the idea of nationalism because all wanted the same thing, namely united to independence. But when entering the phase of searching for Islamic ideology began to feel the friction. Taufik Abdullah (1987) very skillfully described the conflict as follows:

One of the essential ideological debates in the history of the Indonesian national movement revolves around the fundamental problem of struggle. That colonial power was undesirable was a relatively generally accepted consensus. The problem is what is the legal basis for the battle? Those who will later be called or call themselves nationalities say that the basis of the struggle is Indonesian nationalism. But what is the meaning and meaning of nationalism? Does respect for the motherland not go beyond devotion to God, asks Haji Agus Salim. We are not chauvinists, said Soekarno; our nationality departs from the dignity of humanity. Alright, said A. Hassan, leader of the Islamic Union (PERSIS) Bandung, but if we fight for any nation, the formulation may be, not for the sake of God, then in fact we have involved ourselves in sin without mercy. Is not one of the most opposed by the Great Prophet Muhammad. Is the nature of *Asabiyah*, ethnicity, while Islam universal? So fighting for the nation is a matter that denies the basic teachings of Islam (Abdullah, 1987).

Indonesian nationalism continues to grow to the next phase concerning its relationship with Islam. In the 1950's, for example, when on the one hand, Muslims in Parliament were trying to make Islam an ideology of the state, partly denying the validity of the Republic of Indonesia, namely Darul Islam. Darul Islam, or the Islamic State of Indonesia, was proclaimed on August 7, 1949, by Sekarmadji Maridjan Kartosoewiryo in Malangbong village, Garut Regency, West Java. The

proclamation, aside from being a response to the Republic of Indonesia's tendency towards secularism, it was also an effort to realize the theological ideals of the Islamic state. Darul Islam or the Islamic State of Indonesia is centered in West Java and has considerable influence in Aceh, South Kalimantan, Central Java, and South Sulawesi. This movement can be traced around the early 60s (Al-Chaidar, 1999).

And when Islamic groups in parliament failed to make Islam the state ideology and the Darul Islam problem was successfully reduced from an ideology-political issue to a mere security problem, Islam in its form as an alternative ideology of the Indonesian nation experienced a setback. Since then, the Unitary Republic of Indonesia seemed to say that the state ideology debate with Islam had been completed, with victory on the side of the secular nationalists. Since then, Islam was forced to be reactive and compromise. This was further strengthened by the destruction of the PKI ideology in 1965, which meant that the only ideology left in Indonesia was nationalism. When the New Order was born and chose Pancasila as the state ideology, then forced it to all elements of the nation, Islam was forced to be reactive and give a compromise answer. This phase is the most painful phase for Islamists and arguably the final stage of the ideological struggle between Islam and nationalism won by nationalism.

Later in the 1990s when Muslims were already familiar with Pancasila and had been able to forget the politics of flow, they began to be integrated synergistically with the state. They developed a new interpretation of Islam that emphasizes the substance. With this new approach, they see Pancasila and the state as a forum that they can fill with the substance of Islam, namely in the form of universal values. In this phase, Islam, which has been interpreted substantially, is no longer in conflict with nationalism, but colors it. And this may be the Islam that Snouck and Hazeu once feared, Islam that continues to develop and improve itself culturally.

In the Philippines, Islam is in a relatively different situation from the situation in Indonesia or Malaysia. *First*, Islam is embraced by a minority. In the Philippines, Islam is embraced by people *Moro*, a minority. *Second*, the Islamic minority seeks to separate itself from the central power and form its own state based on Islam. The main reason, because the central government does not accommodate their interests as Muslims. In the Philippines, Moro Muslims experience *devaluation*. Their economic conditions are stagnant, their social traditions are threatened, and their laws and customs are in danger of disintegration. Therefore they consider it necessary to *revitalize* through the formation of their state. This can be seen for example in the "Muslim Leaders' Agreement to Unite": "In the name of Allah, the Muslims who inhabit the islands of Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan declare their determination to separate from the Philippine republic and establish an Islamic State, which can accommodate idealism and aspirations of the people, who can maintain and develop their religious heritage ..." (Djunaidi, n.d.)

In this case, Cesar A. Majul's (1989) article entitled *The Dynamics of Philippine Islam* is sufficient to clearly illustrate the situation of Islam *vis a vis* nationalism in the Philippines. Of course, because it was published about two decades ago, this book does not project the latest developments. However, due to limited references, this article will suffice to the information presented by Majul, at least to explain Islam in the Philippines until the 70s, an era of upheaval in which Islam in the Philippines came face to face with the country.

Demographically, Muslims are the second-largest religious community in the Philippines after the Catholic community. There were at least 3 million Muslims in the Philippines in 1975 or 7 percent of the total population of about 42 million people. From the ethnic point of view, Muslims and Filipino Christians are one, namely the Malay tribe, but basically, they are people who are separated like water from oil. Muslims in the Philippines, regardless of differences, always identify with one another as Muslims. They constantly realize that their religion is different from other Filipino religions (A.Majul, 1989).

Filipino Muslims have no desire to live in a country with Filipino Christians, so they have their nationality, whether they admit it. The bitterness of historical experience has made it difficult for these two religious communities to unite. In this case, Spanish colonialism played a vital role. Spain

brought Christian missions to the Philippine islands already inhabited by the Muslim community. When the Spaniards came to the Philippines in 1565, they encountered fierce resistance from at least three sultanates, Sulu, Maguindanao, and Buayan. They use the term *moro* to name the Muslim population. And to oppose people *Moro* this they use the hands of Christian indigenous people who are known as *indio*. The war between the *Moro* and the *Indio* in the land of the Philippines has been going on for centuries in the spirit of the holy mission, in which the people *Moro* feel they are fighting infidels and vice versa. And in this war the *moro* never thought to the *indignant* Spanish, until finally America came in 1898. In 1898 America succeeded in seizing control of the Philippines from the hands of Spain and gradually gained sovereignty over Islamic groups that Spain did not previously touch. Partly because the sultans and *datu*s who had influence had been given gifts, salaries, and flattery, there was no unity of action against America. Partly because of the superiority of Americans in weaponry (A.Majul, 1989).

At first the Americans felt responsible for "Westernizing" these Muslims, so that they were able to govern themselves alone as Filipino Christians. However, because Muslims preferred the traditional government system *datu* and generally did not show enthusiasm for participating in the new government system, the American plan to administer Muslim independence was changed and adapted to Filipino Christians. This happened in 1920 when Islamic provinces fell into the hands of Filipino Christians, who were eager to inherit the imperial mantle at the time of independence, as promised by the United States (Majul, 1989).

In reaction to this change in American policy, in the first half of the 20th century, Filipino Muslims made several petitions to America containing reluctance to unite with Filipino Christians in a country. Cesar A. Majul (1989) described the resistance and the various reasons he addressed as follows:

In 1921 they had made a petition containing the decision to elect a government under the American protectorate as a better alternative than submitting to Filipino Christians. A similar petition was presented three years later and was finally accepted by the American congress. In March 1935, more than a hundred *datu* Maranao wrote to President Roosevelt, who expressed their desire to be excluded from the independence of the Philippines proposed. Instead, they want to be placed under the protection and guardianship of the United States of America's protection and guardianship until it can form their own country's independence. They insist that in an independent Filipino nation, Muslims will not be allowed to participate in government and will not be given the same opportunity to use economic benefits, they are not entirely convinced, that Islam will be respected - especially recognized by the Philippine government.

Some Americans support these Islamic petitions, both because of a grudge against Filipino nationalists, or because they are sympathetic to the desires of the Muslims, partly because of America's own economic interests. The plan to separate the political union of Mindanao and Sulu was contained in the Plan *Bacon Bill* which was presented at the American congress in 1926. However, this bill caused a negative reaction in the Philippines, which was an American colony, and caused very strong pressure on congress. This bill became an issue that united nationalists to oppose what was called the American plan to divide the country and make profits, and therefore Bacon Bill "died" at the congress (A.Majul, 1989).

Finally, until the establishment of the Commonwealth Government of the Philippines in 1935 and the proclamation of the Philippines as an independent republic in 1946, plans for the southern region of the Philippines to become an independent political entity never materialized. America left the Philippines as a country with two peoples bound by two historically separate political entities. The Philippine government administers state affairs with the prejudice of the Spanish and American colonialists, that Muslims and other indigenous minority groups can be Westernized. While Muslims believe that there is a hidden agenda behind the Philippine government's programs to kill Islam in the Philippines (A.Majul, 1989).

Therefore, although there are Muslims who are absorbed in the new national government, but for many reasons, the majority of these Muslims do not have a sense of national identity. First, these

Muslims find it difficult to respect or accept national laws specifically relating to the problem of *al-ahwâl al-sakhsiyah* (private law) because it is considered contrary to the Shari'a. Second, the school system introduced by the government is seen as an agent where the government separates Muslim children from their Islamic historical roots. Third, because the government transmits Christian populations to Muslim areas so that Muslims become a minority in their own regions, the program is felt as an effort by the pro-Christian government to seize Muslim lands (A.Majul, 1989).

The suspicions of the Muslims seemed to be justified when the Corregidor incident occurred in March 1968, in which 180 Muslim youth recruited by the Armed Forces of the Philippines to become special units were slaughtered in a training program. The Ilaga mob incident followed the incident in 1971, namely militias of the military which, according to Muslims, were backed up by churches and the Armed Forces of the Philippines who carried out genocides in various Muslim villages and towns. These two incidents became trigger points that aroused the enthusiasm of Filipino Muslims to separate from the country. They cannot feel loyalty to a nation that discriminates against them and does not provide equal benefits. For example, this can be seen in the "Agreement of Muslim Leaders to Unite" which was declared on July 15, 1971. In this agreement, Philippine Islamic leaders called the Corregidor and Ilaga incidents, as evidence of government discrimination against Muslims. They demand the government to act reasonably in treating and protecting its citizens. And if their demands are ignored they warn of the danger of disintegration (A.Majul, 1989).

Three years later, on March 18, 1974, the threat of Islamic Moro to separate from the Philippines was truly realized. Nur Misuari on behalf of the Chairman of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) Central Committee proclaimed the founding of the Moro Republic. This disintegration movement is certainly an indicator that the government's actions in the 1971-1974 time periods were unable to satisfy the Moro Islamic Leaders. They felt that the government ignored the demands they declared in the "Agreement of the Islamic Leaders to Unite". But more than that, the "Manifesto of the Formation of the Moro Nation" which became the Moro Republic Proclamation Text, explicitly mentions other reasons that are more latent than just the Corregidor and Ilaga incidents. The manifesto states: "WE, the people of Moro, who want to free themselves from terror, oppression and tyranny of Philippine colonialism, which have caused untold suffering and misery, by seizing our land, threatening Islam through the destruction and desecration (on a large scale) of places his worship and the Scriptures, killed our brothers, sisters, and old people, in a campaign of extermination of our nation at a very terrible level."

The following years of the 70s in the southern Philippines were filled with a tug of war between the central government in Manila and the Moro Muslims represented by the MNLF. One wants to maintain the country's integrity; the other wants to separate. This conflict broke out several times into open warfare on the ground, and several times it was also brought to the negotiating table. This conflict could almost be resolved through the Tripoli Negotiations in 1976. The central government in Manila agreed to grant autonomy to the 13 provinces that the MNLF claimed as their territory, while the MNLF decided to ignore the idea of secession. However, on May 1, 1977, Foreign Minister Carlos P. Romulo claimed that the MNLF had violated the agreement through a press statement. Romulo's press statement was answered by Nur Misuari, Chairperson of the MNLF Central Committee in a speech before the International Congress on Cultural Imperialism in Algeria. In the speech, Nur Misuari accused the Filipino government of violating the agreement, and he later reiterated the MNLF's return to the idea of secession (A.Majul, 1989).

The Philippine Government has made various follow-up efforts. The Philippine government claims to have negotiated with the MNLF on ten occasions from January 1975 to April 1979, and President Marcos has held nine high-level dialogues with representatives of the OIC; the Philippine Government also mentioned that to provide true information about the situation in the southern Philippines they had sending missions to the Islamic Conference since 1973. In an official statement read by Foreign Minister Carlos P. Romulo, the Philippine government claimed to have taken all possible means to resolve the conflict in the southern Philippines peacefully. And of course, what was not stated implicitly in that statement was the amazement of the Philippine government about why

the Moro Muslims in the Southern Philippines remained determined to separate themselves. According to Majul (1989), the astonishment is caused by a lack of understanding of the Philippine government regarding the nature of Islamic teachings and the dignity of the Moro Muslims living in their country.

As a result, Islam combined with Moro people in the Philippines has caused acute problems for the problem of nationalism in the country at least until the end of the 70s (A.Majul, 1989). The policies of the central government which were deemed not accommodating with the objectives of Islam, had triggered the birth of a separatist movement which relied on Islam as the spirit of struggle. This is where Islam becomes a rival for nationalism. The loyalty of Muslims to Islamic goals has made Muslim minority groups in secular nationalist countries have very high resistance to the policies set by the government for them. As a result, they become left behind or abandoned, then become an anomaly that is sometimes considered appropriate enough by the government to be eradicated in the interests of nationalism.

5. Conclusion

The portrait of the Islamic situation in the countries of Southeast Asia shows that three different reactions are born by the meeting of elements of Islam, ethnicity, and nationalism in a country. As for the change, the variable is an element of political power. In cases where Muslims are politically potent, as in Malaysia, the position of Islam in the state is vital so that it can force its goals into national goals, or at least force national goals to conform to its goals. In such cases, Islam is compatible with nationalism. In cases where Muslims are the majority but politically weak, the position of Islam in the state is vulnerable, so it cannot impose its goals and must be compromised. However, the state cannot simply impose its policies without trying to adapt these policies to Islamic objectives. In such cases, Islam is compatible with nationalism. In cases where Muslims are a minority, the position of Islam in the state is very weak. The condition can freely impose its policies so that Muslims are depreciating and resisting. In such cases, Islam is incompatible with nationalism.

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