

Framing Dakwah: Frame Alignment Processes And Kammi's Struggle for a Sacred Society

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Abstract:

This paper aims to provide an empirical understanding of frame alignment processes in a contemporary Indonesian Islamic social movement organization (SMO). Field research on KAMMI a Muslim students' organization provides the primary empirical foundation for four frame alignment processes: (1) value amplification; (2) transformation of domain-specific interpretative frame; (3) frame extension, and; (4) frame bridging. Discussion toward framing context in this particular case will provide empirical evidences about how certain SMO formulated its strategies to mobilize its potential participants. Additionally this paper reveals the activists' point of view upon what currently known as Islamization tendency of Indonesia's society. In this case, KAMMI movement can be classified as a mixture of religious and political movement, and the main goal of the movement is to overcome Indonesia's crises. Here, moral degradation has been blamed by KAMMI activists as the main source of various socio-political problems. KAMMI activists believe that it can be solved through dakwah (proselytizing) movement, through which they argue Islamic values as suitable remedy to construct sacred society. In KAMMI movement, the activists use and implement the Islamic values under the umbrella of Islamic revivalist, and characterize their movement as significant religious duty.

Recently, especially after the resignation of Suharto's regime, Islam has become significant values in Indonesian community, both in social and political circumstances. Although Indonesia has the biggest Muslims population in the world, peoples' responses toward the process of Indonesia's Islamization actually vary. Van Bruinessen¹ describes two responses: the first respond explicates the optimist perception that Islam is the only significant alternative to overcome "patrimonial, authoritarian, and corrupt political culture", while the second respond presents the skeptic perception where Islam shown as serious treat along side with the terrorists attack in Indonesian archipelago. The debate between those two responses continually becomes inherent phenomena within the process of Indonesia's democratization.

Islam as a system of beliefs and as a political force has also contributed to the emergence of current religious movements which vary from Islamic political parties to mass organizations. In the notion of mass organizations, it covers: *Tarbiyah* (education) or dakwah groups (e.g. KAMMI, PKS or Prosperous Justice Party), *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI, Indonesian *Hizbut Tahrir*), *Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia* (MMI, Indonesian Council of *Mujahidin*), *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI, Islamic Defense Front), *Laskar Jihad* (*Jihad Fighter*), and *Jamaah Islamiyah*

(JI)². The movement's values of those organizations can be distinguished from moderate to strong fundamentalist, where each organization will have different agenda, and the followers vary from well-educated middle class to uneducated lower class community. To certain extent, those organizations essentially have similarity since all of them share the same essence of religious teaching which rooted from the genuineness of Islamic teaching³. In contrary, each organization has distinct mission and vision in order to achieve its goals.

The existence of Islamic movement in Indonesia relates to various actors, such as: politicians, NGOs activists, and student activists⁴. The historical emergence of Muslim student activism can be seen as a part of *ummat Islam* (Muslim community) resistance upon unfairness which suffered by them throughout times⁵. In fact, Muslim student activists cannot be separated from Indonesia's socio-political environment, since they have played an important and significant part of Indonesia's ongoing struggles for democracy. Various Muslim students' groups have been consistently raising issues and demanding socio-political reforms throughout the century. During the late 20th century, Muslim student activists became members of various Muslim students' organisations. One particular organization that recently emerged prior to the downfall of the Suharto's regime was KAMMI (*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia*, United Action of Indonesian Muslim Students)⁶. Although KAMMI can be considered to be the newest organization, it actually originated from the *dakwah* organization, which emerged during 1980s in several universities in Indonesia. However, *dakwah* organizations were primarily interested in religious education and did not become political. Consequently, in May 1998 KAMMI was established in order to meet the demands of those activists who were interested in political issues⁷. Here, KAMMI classifies and portrays as *dakwah* organization that consisted of activists who hold relatively moderate tone and have optimistic point of view toward the implementation of Islamic values.

In discussing KAMMI, this paper focuses on empirical research regarding the movement's mobilization strategies. These relate to two important questions: What values are being promoted in KAMMI's *movement*? *How are these values regenerated in KAMMI's movement*?

Setting and Method of study

From late-2005 through early-2007, I collected data on KAMMI in Indonesia, mainly in two locations, Jakarta and Bandung (West Java Province). The principal method of data collection involved participant observation, where I participated in various activities, such as: rallies, meetings, discussions, and trainings. I was accepted in each as a person who was interested in KAMMI's goals and as a researcher gathering data about their activities. Detailed field notes were taken and recorded during my participation in the organization. Life history interviews were conducted with 52 activists from local, regional, and central KAMMI's management. Additionally, 12 of KAMMI's alumnae were also interviewed. Finally, several documents published on KAMMI's website, and in various news papers and magazine were collected and analyzed.

The concept of Frame Alignment Process

Frame alignment processes refers to “the linkage of individual and SMO interpretive orientation, such that some set of individual interests, values, and beliefs and SMO activities, goals, and ideology are congruent and complementary”⁸. This particular concept provides a useful model to identify and analyze the mobilization processes used in various SMOs. Frame alignment occurs through four categories⁹. Firstly, the movement’s agendas can be accomplished by creating connections between different, but related, SMOs. This is known as “frame bridging”. Secondly, SMOs attract support through exaggerating particular aspects of their organization. This is known as “frame amplification”. There are two dimensions to this: “value amplification” (reference of conduct) and “belief amplification” (ideological components to achieve proposed values). Thirdly, “frame extension” is applied to extend the movement’s values to potential members. Finally, activists go through a self-adjustment, called “frame transformation”, where their sense of self becomes more aligned to the goals of the movement.

This research examines these frame alignment processes in relation to KAMMI. In particular, the four frame alignment processes will be used to answer questions about KAMMI’s values and its mobilization strategies.

KAMMI

KAMMI is essentially an Islamic movement organization where the main goal of is promoting the application of Islamic values in the process of national development. According to Rahmat and Najib¹⁰, KAMMI activists essentially try to implement the Prophet of Muhammad’s appeal that “It is best for you to become someone who really beneficial for society”. Since the Prophet considers as significant role model for Muslims, therefore, it becomes an important foundation for the movement. As a result, the activists mainly concern with both short-term and long-term agendas. Here, KAMMI movement does not only concern on certain issues or time frames in Indonesian politics. The movement takes its form in “organized, institutionalized, and inherited movement”.

As movement organization, KAMMI has its own vision and missions as its references. KAMMI has vision as “a permanent struggle place to deliver the potential nation leaders in establishing Islamic society in Indonesia”¹¹. It is clear from the vision what actually wants to achieve through the movement. There are nation leadership and Islamic society. In order to achieve those two purposes, KAMMI formulated its missions which cover:

1. Train Indonesian Muslim students on Islamic faith and piety.
2. Discover, develop, and improve Muslim students’ potentials in dakwah, intellectual, social, and politics.
3. Develop and improve the quality of Indonesian society toward the concept of *rabbani* (religious society), *madani* (civil society), justice, and prosperous.
4. Initiate and maintain communication, solidarity, and cooperation among Indonesian students in overcoming peoples’ and nation’s affairs.
5. Develop cooperation between various societal elements with the spirit of carrying goodness, spreading beneficial conducts, and preventing mischief practices (*amar ma`ruf nahi munkar*)¹².

Indeed those five missions in accordance with the vision, where the activists argue that the prospective future leaders for Indonesia's community and also Islamic community can be delivered through those missions. The activists believe that the success of socio-political reformation of Indonesia's society is strongly influenced by the leaders, where their attitudes will be affected peoples' performance¹³.

Frame Alignment Processes and KAMMI's struggle for a sacred society

In discussing KAMMI's activism, frame alignment processes are being used to reveal its strategies to achieve movement's goals. There are four frames: (1) Value amplification; (2) Transformation of domain-specific interpretative frame; (3) Frame extension, and (4) Frame bridging.

1. Value amplification

In KAMMI's movement, Islamic values promote as an appropriate remedy to solve the socio-political problems and also as a suitable reference to construct sacred society. Based on recent crises, Indonesian society was suffering from moral diseases, where peoples who hold public trust are easily committed serious crimes, such as corruption, collusion, and nepotism (commonly known labeled as KKN)¹⁴. Rasyid's argument is in accordance with KAMMI's postulate that Indonesian society has never been led by faithful leaders. As a result, most of nation leaders often brought for the peoples¹⁵.

In relation with those circumstances, KAMMI activists consider that the nation leader and its staffs should hold strong *amanah*, since it will provide them with strong moral guidance to perform their roles and responsibilities¹⁶. *Amanah* essentially means "responsibility"¹⁷. The concept of *amanah* presents in the *Qur'an* (the Holy book) at surah *An Nisa* verse 58-59 as follows:

God command you [people] to return things entrusted to you to their rightful owners, and if you judge between people, to do so with justice: God's instructions to you are excellent, for God hears and sees everything. You, who believe, obey God and the Messenger, and those in authority among you. If you are in dispute over any matter, refer it to God and the Messenger, if you truly believe in God and the Last Day: that is better and fairer in the end.¹⁸

KAMMI activists define *amanah* in broad context, through which it does not relate to obligation for accomplishing religious demands, but also associates with social trust as well. According to the activists, *amanah* means "consequence, both in this world and after life"¹⁹. The activists realize that personal consciousness toward *amanah* varies from strong to weak consciousness. The increase of *amanah* consciousness can be achieved by religious education, which performs through the notion of *dakwah* movement.

Dakwah essentially means "the call to Islam" as the propagation of the faith for non-believers²⁰. In KAMMI movement, the activists

perceive *dakwah* in a broad definition. *Dakwah* is not only talking nor inviting but also giving an example from others. We should do what we preach since people will see us from what

we do comprehensively. This activity is done in various forms and areas, not only in a mosque but also in a market, at home, at work, etc. Saying or expressing thanks and showing a good attitude to neighbors are also included into a dakwah as practiced by the Prophet of Muhammad. In general, dakwah covers every part of our life, not limited to mosque's activity.²¹

Here, KAMMI targeted individuals and community in order to accomplish its purpose to transform the society through religious education and moral reforms. According to Esposito (1991), the phenomena of "contemporary Islamic revivalism movement" can be associated with Muslim students' organization which actually exists in almost all Muslim countries, including KAMMI in Indonesia. In this case, the activists actively engage in schools and universities in order to achieve their agenda in producing new generation of Islamic leaders in the government (Islamic development agents), the bureaucracy, and the professions, through which they work for social changes in society.

2. Transformation of domain-specific interpretative frame

In order to achieve its agenda, KAMMI encourages its activists to become pious Muslims, who hold and apply strong amanah, and also practicing dakwah. These performances are considered as necessary actions to fulfill their movement agenda. The fulfillment of religious performance is being carefully planned and guided throughout the movement processes, where the organization implemented various activities such as: *Madrasah* KAMMI (Religious Mentoring), *Dauroh Marhalah* (Leadership Training), *Dauroh Siyasi* (Political Training), *Dauroh Ijtimai* (Social Training), political discussion, etc.²². All of those activities are considered as an important method to educate and guidance the activists in the movement. The leader of KAMMI considers KAMMI's activities, especially education and training activities, as a significant method for regeneration.

In my opinion, the most dominant influence for the activists is the regeneration process. This process will shape perception, ideas, and concept of the activists. The aim of regeneration process is mainly to establish the Muslim comprehensively, not only to be a politician or else. Here, we are trying to establish the activists with good personality and attitude. KAMMI movement does not mainly deal with the ideas, but also with the heart, attitude and behavior as well.²³

3. Frame extension

For the purpose of frame extension, where SMO tries to extent its movement agendas to public and potential participants, KAMMI performs various methods cover: mass media coverage, rallies, political discussion, publication, and real actions²⁴. KAMMI's strategies to extend its movement in accordance with Esposito's view that dakwah organization also involves in various socio-economic institutions, such as: "education, publication, broadcasting, economic institutions (i.e. Islamic banks, insurance companies), and social services (i.e. hospitals, clinics, legal aid societies)"²⁵.

In order to draw wide interest from public and potential participants, KAMMI as dakwah organization also endorses modern values such as "democracy, civil society, human rights, and equality of women"²⁶. Miichi's analysis relates to what the activists called and known as *rahmatan lil alamin* (universal blessing).

Islam has the concept of *rahmatan lil alamin*, where we are obliged to disseminate the truth regardless differences of religion. *Rahmatan lil alamin* means God's Universal mercy, and Islam is the mercy for this whole world. So our presence should bring blessing to them. Once movements are not in line with the concept of *rahmatan lil alamin*, they are not Islam and neither blessing but a disaster.²⁷

4. Frame bridging

For achieving its agendas, KAMMI cannot perform and promote it on its own. Accordingly, KAMMI may have close relationship with various social and political institutions, which have the same nuance of values and ideology. On the one hand, KAMMI activists may have relationship with other students' organization.

When KAMMI fight against corruption for example, this issue is inter-religions; as long as other organization from another religion such as Christian organization has the same agenda, we allow them to join with our action.²⁸

On the other hand, KAMMI's alumnae indicate their engagement with various social or political organizations. Several alumnae become members of one particular Islamic political party known as dakwah party called *PKS* or *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* (Prosperous and Justice Party)²⁹.

Both KAMMI and PKS fight for the same purposes [i.e. sacred society] and classify as dakwah organization.³⁰

Besides, other alumnae have various roles, such as: NGO activists, civil servant, lecturer, etc.³¹. Since KAMMI's activism is considered as students' activism, therefore, the alumnae need particular organization to continue their previous activism by becoming activists in various organizations with significant environment (i.e. dakwah movement) to achieve the sacred society as they hoped for.

Conclusions

This paper has shown that movement's participation has been strongly influenced by representation of movement's organization, where the activists and potential audiences are able to be persuaded and convinced by the organization about the necessity of the movement. As this paper notes, movement's values are importantly implemented in persuasion strategy through frame alignment processes, whether directly or indirectly, towards the activists' self-adjustment process on the movement.

The purpose of this paper is mostly taxonomic. It identifies four framing strategies relevant to KAMMI's movement, particularly in the context of frame alignment processes: frame amplification (i.e. value amplification), frame transformation (i.e. transformation of domain-specific interpretative frame), frame extension, and frame bridging. Even though the strategies of movements' organizations vary according to issue and context of movements, the organizations generally implement those four strategies to persuade and convince both the activists and potential participants by influencing their knowledge, character, and logic.

In the case of KAMMI's activism, the Islamic values have been used to influence the activists and also public as the perfect remedy to overcome recent socio-political crises. Since, Indonesia is classified as the biggest Muslim country in the world, therefore, the implementation of Islamic values will bring significant achievement for Islamic movements to accomplish a sacred society. KAMMI activists portray their activism (i.e. dakwah activism) as their religious duty. Therefore, they believe that their knowledge and character should congruent with movement's demands and they are willing to adjust their personalities and performances accordingly. Frame alignment processes are intended to support KAMMI's call for dakwah by emphasizing Islamic values as appropriate remedies for Indonesian crises.

Acknowledgement:

I thank Dr. Debra King for her many helpful and pointed comments on the paper.

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