

# FRAMING *DAKWAH*: FRAME ALIGNMENT PROCESSES AND *KAMMI*'S STRUGGLE FOR A SACRED SOCIETY

Arundina Pratiwi

Sociology Department, Flinders University, Adelaide

neng\_arun@yahoo.com

---

## 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 investigating three frame alignment processes: (1) value amplification; (2) transformation of domain-specific interpretative frame; and (3) frame extension. Discussion about *KAMMI*'s framing processes provides empirical evidences about how it formulates its strategies to mobilize its potential participants. Additionally, this paper reveals the activists' perspectives on the tendency toward the Islamization of Indonesian society. *KAMMI* can be classified as a mixture of religious and political movement, with its main goal being to overcome Indonesia's crises. In particular, moral degradation has been blamed by *KAMMI* activists as the main source of various socio-political problems. *KAMMI* activists believe that this can be solved through implementing a *dakwah* (proselytizing) movement, through which they argue Islamic values would be a suitable vehicle through which to construct a sacred society. In *KAMMI*, the activists use and implement the Islamic values under the umbrella of Islamic revivalism, and characterize their political action as a significant religious duty.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Recently, especially after the resignation of Suharto's regime, Islam has become more valued in the Indonesian community, both in social and political forums. Although Indonesia has the biggest Muslims population in the world, peoples' responses toward the process of Indonesia's Islamization actually vary. Van Bruinessen (2004: p. 37) describes two responses: the first response explicates the optimist perception that Islam is the only significant alternative to overcome "patrimonial, authoritarian, and corrupt political culture", while the second response presents the more skeptical perception where this group is strongly affected by negative impression of Islamic movement conducted by terrorists. The debate between these two responses has become an inherent phenomena shaping 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. These mass organizations include: *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* (*Jl*) (Fox, 2004). The values of those movements range from moderate to strongly fundamentalist. Each organization has a different agenda, and their followers vary from the well-educated middle class to the uneducated lower class. To

a certain extent, these organizations are similar since all of them share the same essence of religious teaching which is rooted in the genuineness of Islamic teaching (Rahmat, 2005). In contrast, each organization has a distinct mission and vision in order to achieve its goals.

The existence of the Islamic movement in Indonesia incorporates various actors such as: politicians, NGO activists, and student activists (see Uhlin, 1997). The historical emergence of Muslim student activism can be seen as a part of *ummat Islam* (Muslim community) resistance against the unfairness they have suffered over time (Sidiq, 2003). 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. Muslim student groups have been consistently raising issues and demanding socio-political reforms throughout the century. During the late 20<sup>th</sup> 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) (Kraince, 2000). Although KAMMI can be considered to be the newest organization, it actually originated from the *dakwah* movement, which emerged during the 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 issues (see Rahmat and Najib, 2001; Sidiq, 2003). KAMMI classifies and portrays itself as a *dakwah* organization consisting of relatively moderate activists who have a positive point of view toward the implementation of Islamic values.

In discussing KAMMI, this paper draws 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?*

## **2 DISCUSSION**

### **2.1 SETTING AND METHOD OF STUDY**

From late 2005 through to 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.

### **2.2 THE CONCEPT OF FRAME ALIGNMENT PROCESSES**

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" (Snow, Rochford, Worden, and Benford, 1986: 464). This particular concept provides a useful model to identify and analyze the mobilization processes used in various SMOs. There are three categories associated with frame alignment (Snow, Rochford, Worden, and Benford, 1986: pp. 467-476; Della Porta and Diani, 1999: pp. 74-75). Firstly, 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). Secondly, "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 three frame alignment processes will be used to answer questions about KAMMI's values and its mobilization strategies.

## **2.3 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 Najib (2001: p. 168), KAMMI activists essentially try to implement the Prophet of Muhammad's appeal that "Muslims may reach their best performances by performing beneficial roles to society". Since the Prophet is considered to be a significant role model for Muslims, Islamic values become an important foundation for the movement. As a result, the activists are concerned about both short-term and long-term agendas.

As a social movement organization, KAMMI has its own vision and mission. Its vision is to be "a permanent place of struggle for delivering potential nation leaders in establishing Islamic society in Indonesia" (KAMMI's Statute, 2004). In order to achieve the development of national leaders and establishment of Islamic society, KAMMI formulated the following mission statements:

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*) (KAMMI's Statute, 2004).

KAMMI 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 the whole Indonesian community (Rahmat and Najib, 2001: p. 173).

## **2.4 FRAME ALIGNMENT PROCESSES AND KAMMI'S STRUGGLE FOR A SACRED SOCIETY**

The strategies used by KAMMI to achieve its mission are revealed here by investigating the frame alignment processes used. Three frame alignment processes are discussed: (1) Value amplification; (2) Transformation of domain-specific interpretative frame; and (3) Frame extension.

### **2.4.1 VALUE AMPLIFICATION**

In KAMMI, Islamic values are promoted as an appropriate remedy to solving socio-political problems, and a suitable reference around which to construct a sacred society. Based on evidence from recent crises it has been argued that Indonesian society was suffering from moral decay, where people who hold public trust were committing serious crimes, such as corruption, collusion, and nepotism (commonly known as KKN) (Rasyid, 2006: pp. 21-25). 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 agony for the peoples (Rahmat and Najib, 2001: p. 173).

KAMMI activists therefore argue that the national leadership and its staff should hold strong *amanah*, since it will provide them with strong moral guidance to perform their

roles and responsibilities (Sidiq, 2003: p. 210). *Amanah* essentially means “responsibility” (Federspiel, 1995: p. 10). The concept of *amanah* is presented 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” (The Qur’an, 2004: p. 56).

However, KAMMI activists define *amanah* in a broad context through which it is not just related to the obligation for accomplishing religious demands, but is also associated with social trust. According to activists, *amanah* meant “consequence, both in this world and after life” (Interview with Nurdin, 2006). The activists realized that personal consciousness toward *amanah* varies from strong to weak. Increasing the strength of *amanah* consciousness can be achieved through religious education, as performed through the notion of *dakwah* movement.

*Dakwah* essentially means “the call to Islam” as the propagation of the faith for non-believers (Esposito, 1991: 216). In KAMMI movement, the activists

“perceive *dakwah* in a broad definition. *Dakwah* is not only talking nor inviting but also giving an example for 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” (Interview with Mamad, 2006).

Here, KAMMI targeted individuals and public in order to accomplish its purpose to transform the society through religious education and moral reforms. In this case, the activists actively engage in various *dakwah* activities in order to attract potential participants for the movement. Based on empirical evidence, KAMMI actively engaged promoting Islamic values as integral part of 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.

#### **2.4.2 TRANSFORMATION OF DOMAIN-SPECIFIC INTERPRETATIVE FRAME**

Frame transformation applies in KAMMI as a part of defining activities, events, and performances that are meaningful and important for the purpose of the movement. In KAMMI activists need to correlate their attitudes and point of views to the movement’s values. Thus, the activists frequently need to adjust to movement demands by transforming the ‘self’ and ensuring that the movement’s aims remain salient to them. In order to achieve its agenda, KAMMI encourages its activists to become pious Muslims, who hold and apply strong *amanah*, and practice *dakwah*. These performances are considered necessary to fulfill the movement’s political agenda. Thus, religious performance is carefully planned and guided throughout KAMMI’s processes, where it implements various activities such as: *Madrasah* KAMMI (Religious Mentoring), *Dauroh Marhalah* (Leadership Training), *Dauroh Siyasi* (Political Training), *Dauroh Ijtimai* (Social Training), political discussion, etc. (Interview with Abidin, 2006). All of these activities are considered to be an important method for educating and guiding activists in the movement. The leader of KAMMI considers KAMMI’s activities, especially education and training activities, as a significant method for regeneration (i.e. spiritual awakening process).

"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" (Interview with Iyan, 2006).

Spiritual awakening processes vary across activists, and it can be classified into three categories:

1. *Continuous pathway*. The term continuous pathway is being used in order to describe the process of religious adjustment that has been done by KAMMI activists who have strong religious background. It can be considered as continuous pathway, because they were usually felt like continuing their previous activities.
2. *Moderate adjustment*. The moderate adjustment category is applied to illustrate how the university students, who have moderate Islamic background, were conducting their spiritual adjustment process. The term of moderate is being used to classify the activists who have already experienced early religious teaching, which conducted whether by their parents and/or religious teacher, but they did not feel that they have strong understanding and attachment to religious values for various reasons.
3. *Extreme makeover*. The term an extreme makeover is utilized to describe remarkable phase experiencing by some KAMMI activists who have weak religious background. In this particular section, we will able to notify various factors or problems that were challenging the activists' religious commitment at certain time of their livelihood.

### **2.4.3 FRAME EXTENSION**

With frame extension, SMOs extend their agendas to the public and potential participants. KAMMI uses various methods to achieve this: mass media coverage, rallies, political discussion, publication, and real actions (Field observation, 2005-2007). This is in line with Esposito's view that dakwah organizations use 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)" (Esposito, 1991: 216). 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" (Miichi, 2003: p. 22). Miichi's analysis relates to what the activists called and known as *rahmatan lil alamin* (universal blessing).

Besides targeting religious consciousness KAMMI also extend its activism to political issue. The urgency of KAMMI political movement relates to the activists' evaluation upon Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono or SBY government (i.e. current Indonesian government) which labeled as unsuccessful on solving KKN problem. For that reason, KAMMI activists consistently and strongly carried their missions demanding significant solutions toward KKN practices. In order to show the urgency of their movement's agenda, KAMMI activists often published their opinion and concern in various media, such as: KAMMI's website, various news papers and magazine published locally and nationally. The main purpose of their actions is providing public awareness about the danger of KKN practices upon peoples' prosperity.

The following quotations are taken from various articles published in KAMMI's website, new papers, and magazine show such motivational framing efforts:

- *Indonesia berada di persimpangan jalan: Mana jalan ke sorga?* (Indonesia in crossroad: Where is the way to heaven?). (Article in KAMMI's website, 22 March 2005)

- *Gagalnya reformasi* (Reformation has been failed). (Article in KAMMI's website, 9 June 2006)
- *Hentikan kebohongan SBY-JK* (Stop SBY-JK falsehood). (Article in KAMMI's website, 20 March 2007)
- *KAMMI: Tak ada Capres/Cawapres yang layak* (KAMMI: Nonexistence of suitable President Candidate/Vice President Candidate). (Article in Gatra magazine, 13 May 2004)
- *Tiga aksi demo warnai pelantikan presiden* (Three rallies accompany presidential inauguration). (Article in Gatra magazine, 20 October 2004)
- *Peringati lima tahun reformasi, mahasiswa berunjuk rasa* (Commemorate 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of reformation, students perform rallies). (Article in Gatra magazine, 20 May 2003)
- *Mahasiswa kembali serukan penuntasan kasus korupsi* (Students call for eradicate corruption cases completely). (Article in Pikiran Rakyat news paper, 8 August 2005)
- *"Kado perkawinan" untuk SBY-Kalla* (Wedding present for SBY-Kalla). (Article in Suara Merdeka news paper, 21 October 2004)

Those various quotations represent how KKN problem has been used by KAMMI to persuade and build public awareness that the problem has not completely addressed and solved by the government. The publications of various articles are not mainly targeted the activists, since it is also seen as the mechanism to educate the society about what sort of problems existed in the nation today. As a result, peoples will always be aware about the misleading policies of the government that may influence and harm them.

### 3 CONCLUSIONS

This paper has shown that the participation of KAMMI activists has been strongly influenced by how KAMMI represents itself as a social movement organization. In this way activists and potential audiences are able to be persuaded and convinced by KAMMI about the necessity of the movement. As this paper notes, values are an important aspect of the persuasion strategy and the frame alignment processes utilized by KAMMI, whether directly or indirectly, result in activist's self-adjusting their behaviour (e.g. becoming increasingly religious and living according to Muslim values). In this way the mechanisms through which frame alignment increases the salience of movement values has been highlighted.

The purpose of this paper was mostly taxonomic. It identified three framing strategies relevant to KAMMI: frame amplification (i.e. value amplification), frame transformation (i.e. transformation of domain-specific interpretative frame), and frame extension. Even though the detail of SMO strategies vary according to the issue and context of each movement, organizations often implement those three frame alignment strategies to persuade and convince both the activists and potential participants by influencing their knowledge, character, and reasoning.

In the case of KAMMI activism, Islamic values have been used to influence the activists and also public as the perfect remedy to overcome recent socio-political crises. KAMMI activists portray their activism (i.e. dakwah activism) as their religious duty. Therefore, they believe that their knowledge and character should be congruent with movement's demands and they are willing to adjust their attitudes and behaviour accordingly. Frame alignment processes support KAMMI's call for dakwah by emphasizing Islamic values as appropriate remedies for Indonesian crises.

### 4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank KAMMI activists and alumnae for sharing 'their world' and Dr. Debra King for her many helpful and pointed comments on the paper.

## 5 REFERENCES

### Books:

- Della Porta, Donatella and Diani, Mario. 1999. *Social Movements: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Collins, Elizabeth Fuller. 2004. *"Islam is the Solution": Dakwah and Democracy in Indonesia*. Paper Published in Ohio University.
- Esposito, John. L. 1991. *Islam the Straight Path*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Federspiel, Howard M. 1995. *A Dictionary of Indonesian Islam*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University, Center for International Study.
- Fox, James J. 2004. *Currents in Contemporary Islam in Indonesia*. Paper presented in Harvard Asia Vision 21, 29 April-1 May 2004.
- Rahmat, Andi and Najib, Mukhamad. 2001. *Gerakan Perlawanan dari Masjid Kampus (Movement Resistance from Campuses' Mosque)*. Surakarta: Purimedia.
- Rahmat, M. Imdadun. 2005. *Arus Baru Islam Radikal: Transmisi Revivalisme Islam Timur Tengah ke Indonesia (New Wave of Radical Islam: Transmission of Islamic Revivalism from Middle East to Indonesia)*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- Rasyid, Daud. 2006. *Reformasi Republik Sakit: Peluang and Tantangan Penerapan Syariat Islam Pascakejatuhan Soeharto (Reformation of Sick Republic: Possibilities and Challenges toward the Implementation of Islamic Syariat After the Downfall of Suharto)*. Bandung: Syaamil.
- Sidiq, M. 2003. *KAMMI dan Pergulatan Reformasi: Kiprah Politik Aktivis Dakwah Kampus dalam Perjuangan Demokratisasi di Tengah Gelombang Krisis Nasional Multidimensi (KAMMI and Reformation Encounter: Political Movement of University's Missionary Endeavour Activists in Democratization Struggle toward Multidimensional National Crisis)*. Solo: Era Intermedia.
- Uhlin, Anders. 1997. *Indonesia and the "Third Wave of Democratization": The Indonesian Pro-Democracy Movement in a Changing World*. Richmond: Curzon.
- Van Bruinessen, Martin. 2004. "Post-Soeharto Muslim Engagements with Civil Society and Democratization". In Samuel, Hanneman and Nordholt, Henk Schulte, *Indonesia in Transition: Rethinking 'Civil Society', 'Region', and 'Crisis'* (pp. 37-66). Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.

### Journals:

- Kraince, R.G. 2000. "The Role of Islamic Student Groups in the Reformation Struggle: KAMMI (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia)". *Studia Islamika*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2000, pp. 1-50.
- Miichi, Ken. 2003. "Islamic Youth Movements in Indonesia". *International Institute for Asian Studies Newsletter*, 32, November, p. 22.
- Snow, David A., Rochford, Burke E., Worden, Steven and Benford, Robert D. 1986. "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation". *American Sociological Review*, 51, pp. 464-481.

KAMMI's Documents:

KAMMI. 2004. *Broad Outlines of Organizational Direction*.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2004. *KAMMI's Statute*.

Magazines and News Papers:

Gatra (20 May 2003; 13 May 2004; 20 October 2004).

Suara Merdeka (21 October 2004).

Pikiran Rakyat (8 August 2005).

Website:

KAMMI website: <http://www.kammi.or.id/>