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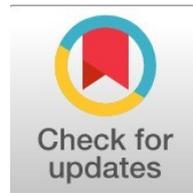
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Modern Islamic Historiography Analysis of Guided Democracy Political Islam

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Abstract

General Background: Islamic historiography in Indonesia has undergone significant transformation alongside the emergence of academically trained historians adopting critical and interdisciplinary approaches. **Specific Background:** One prominent contribution is Ahmad Syafii Maarif's work *Islam dan Politik: Teori Belah Bambu Masa Demokrasi Terpimpin (1959–1965)*, originally his master's thesis, which examines Islamic political parties during the Guided Democracy era. **Knowledge Gap:** Despite its pioneering nature, limited scholarly reassessment has critically examined the scope, balance, and analytical depth of this work within modern Islamic historiography. **Aims:** This study aims to revisit Maarif's work through literature review and descriptive analysis to evaluate its historiographical contribution and limitations. **Results:** The findings indicate that the work provides an early and significant analysis of Islamic political party activities during Guided Democracy, particularly highlighting the strategies of the NU Party, but it disproportionately emphasizes NU while underrepresenting other parties such as PSII and Perti. **Novelty:** This study offers a focused historiographical critique that situates Maarif's work within the broader development of modern Islamic historiography in Indonesia. **Implications:** The study underscores the need for more balanced and comprehensive historiographical analyses of Islamic political movements, encouraging further critical engagement and methodological rigor in the study of Indonesian Islamic history.

Highlights:

- Early scholarly examination of Muslim political organizations during 1959–1965 is identified.
- Disproportionate attention is given to Nahdlatul Ulama compared to other groups.
- Limited analytical coverage of PSII and Perti creates gaps in historical interpretation.

Keywords: Historiography, Guided Democracy, Ahmad Syafii Maarif

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Introduction

The awareness of Indonesian historians regarding issues raised in historical writings by colonial authorities or those influenced by colonialism, which often had motives that benefited the colonial powers, was revisited in a history seminar held in Yogyakarta in December 1957 [1]. The meeting was attended by several historians and individuals with an interest in Indonesian history, who gathered at Gadjah Mada University to discuss a new direction in determining the type of historical writing for Indonesia in the future. With discussions that challenged the old paradigm of Indonesian historical writing, it can be said that the gathering marked a new milestone in the awareness of Indonesian historians, serving as a signpost for the birth of modern Indonesian historiography [2].

One interesting aspect following the conference was not only the emergence of a large number of Indonesian historiographical works. However, it is also important to consider, quantitatively, the rise of new Indonesian scholars trained in history departments at universities [3]. These scholars began to adopt historical methodology in their writings and started incorporating interdisciplinary approaches, particularly from the humanities such as anthropology, as well as social sciences like sociology, political science, and economics. The impact of using these auxiliary disciplines in writing Indonesian history has introduced a new pattern, referred to as "a new approach," which contrasts with the old style of historical writing that was more narrative, descriptive, or even encyclopedic in nature [4].

The success of the history seminar did not, however, mark the end of meetings among historians. Several years later, gatherings among historians continued to occur frequently. Moreover, more specific meetings focused on certain themes began to emerge [5]. This can be seen in 1983, when the IAIN Sunan Kalijaga successfully hosted a seminar specifically discussing the history of Islam in Indonesia [6].

The organization of this seminar was also quite encouraging for the future direction of Islamic history writing in Indonesia [7]. Although some of the panelists were graduates from various universities, not all of the presenters were formally trained in history. Only Ahmad Syafii Maarif from Indonesia had the appropriate qualifications [8]. The rest of the participants from Indonesia were those with an interest in the study of Islamic history. Nevertheless, the seminar should still be highly appreciated [9].

Despite the importance of Ahmad Syafii Maarif in the field of Islamic history in Indonesia, unfortunately, his expertise as a historian has not been accompanied by sufficient research [10]. Therefore, one effort to explore his thoughts is to conduct a comprehensive study of the historiography written by Ahmad Syafii Maarif [11]. This research goes beyond just a review in a newspaper. It also aims to encourage other historians to actively engage in historiographical studies—not just to compete in writing historiography but also to openly offer suggestions and critiques of others' historiographical work. This will provide valuable input for both the authors and the broader community of readers [12].

Methods

In this study, the theme being researched is not entirely new. There are several studies that bear similarities to the one being conducted by the author. For instance, the author references a study by Wahyu Iryana titled *Historiografi Islam di Indonesia*, published in *Jurnal Al-Tsaqafa*, Vol. 14 No. 01, 2017 [13]. The discussion in Iryana's article overlaps with the author's study, but the author's focus is more specifically on Ahmad Syafii Maarif and his work *Islam dan Politik: Teori Belah Bambu Masa Demokrasi Terpimpin (1959-1965)*.

Another study with a similar focus is the work of Lukman Al Hakim and Rosipah, who wrote about *Perkembangan Historiografi Islam Modern Indonesia: Telaah Karya Islam dan Masyarakat Pantulan Sejarah Indonesia*, published in *Jurnal Tsaqofah & Tarikh*, Vol. 6 No. 02, 2021. While the author's study addresses Ahmad Syafii Maarif, Lukman and Rosipah's research is more focused on Taufik Abdullah [14].

Results and Discussion

A. The Emergence of Modern Islamic Historiography in Indonesia

The emergence of modern Islamic historiography in Indonesia cannot be separated from the earlier Islamic historiography that developed in various regions of Indonesia long before the country gained independence [15]. In several kingdoms across the archipelago, historical writing was manifested in the form of *babad* (chronicles), which were predominantly found in Java, *hikayat* (epic tales) common in Sumatra, Borneo, and what is now Malaysia, *tambo* specific to the Minangkabau ethnic group, and smaller forms like *silsilah* (genealogies), *kisah* (stories), and *haba* found in Aceh [16].

These traditional historical writings show distinct differences, particularly in the language used to describe past events believed to have occurred. However, there is a commonality among these traditional historiographies, particularly the strong presence of mythological or supernatural elements in their explanations [17]. Moreover, there was a lack of adherence to modern historical writing standards, such as the absence of chronological order, with no clear beginning or end. The most prominent feature was the palace-centric nature of the historiography, meaning the narratives primarily revolved around the ruler or king in power [18].

Understanding this, several Indonesian historians who had experienced education, particularly in Western-style schools,

attempted to adopt a more critical approach. The burden faced by modern Indonesian historians also arose from the fact that colonial writings, which were largely concerned with the colonial settlers in the region, had a heavy bias. These writings often portrayed the indigenous people negatively, especially when they interfered with colonial exploitation processes [19].

In response to colonial sources, several Indonesian writers, especially post-independence, though critical writings on colonialism had already appeared prior to independence—such as the thesis by Husein Djajadiningrat in the Netherlands, titled *Tinjauan Sejarah Kritis Banten pada Awal Abad ke-20* (A Critical Historical Review of Banten in the Early 20th Century)—began to develop a new approach to history [20]. They sought to place the indigenous people at the center of historical narratives. What had been regarded as rebellions by the colonial powers were now portrayed as acts of heroism, with these figures emerging as national heroes in Indonesian historiography [21].

The drive to write national historiography stemmed from both ideological awareness and intellectual concern for the region and its people who had undergone or were still experiencing history [22]. In addition to reversing the roles of the indigenous people, this nationalistic approach to historical writing strongly emphasized values such as nationalism, heroism, and patriotism. This is evident in the publications, which often featured biographies of heroes, political figures, and both local and national leaders to support these values [16].

The model of historical writing faced challenges from various quarters. The peak of this was the first national history seminar held in Yogyakarta in 1957 [23]. The national historiography approach was contested, and an effort was made to formulate a new model of modern historical writing with a fresh awareness, not merely reversing the roles of historical actors. This modern Indonesian historiography was supported by those who had received formal education in history, making it more academic. Additionally, another characteristic was its critical stance toward sources, and the themes of history were not limited solely to politics and power [16].

This new awareness in historical writing in Indonesia also sparked a similar awareness, particularly among the Muslim majority population, to discuss the future of Islamic historiography in Indonesia. As a result, from June 8 to 10, 1983, several Muslim scholars gathered at IAIN Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta to formulate theories and methodologies for Islamic history writing in Indonesia. Five important figures presented papers at the seminar. First, Mukti Ali, who wrote about the *Methodology of Writing Islamic History in Indonesia* [24]. Second, Nourouzzaman Shiddiqi, who discussed Islam during the Japanese occupation, specifically the Ulama and Muslim movements in Indonesia. Third, Muin Umar, who addressed *Islamic Historiography in Indonesia* (likely focusing on its growth and development). Fourth, Ahmad Syafii Maarif, who presented on Islam in Indonesia from the perspective of contemporary history. Lastly, Karel A. Stenbrink, who wrote about the *Methodology of Islamic History Studies in Indonesia: Some Notes on the 19th Century* [18].

In his paper, Mukti Ali discussed how Islamic history writing in Indonesia was approached using two methods. First, the approach of Islamic history in Indonesia as the history of the Muslim community. An example of this approach is what was written by HAMKA in his book *Sejarah Umat Islam* (History of the Muslim Community). The second approach viewed Islamic history in Indonesia as part of the national history of Indonesia. In this second approach, Muslim scholars who had been educated in history tended to adopt this method.

One of the authors who used the approach of Islamic history in Indonesia as part of the national history of Indonesia was Ahmad Syafii Maarif, who also participated in the Islamic history seminar at IAIN Sunan Kalijaga. In this paper, the author will discuss one of his works, which was his final thesis for his Master's degree at Ohio University in the United States. This thesis was later published as a book titled *Islam dan Politik: Teori Belah Bambu Masa Demokrasi Terpimpin (1959-1965)* (Islam and Politics: The Bamboo Split Theory during the Guided Democracy Period, 1959-1965). The book was first published in 1988.

B. Biography of Ahmad Syafii Maarif

Ahmad Syafii Maarif was born on May 31, 1935, in the village of Sumpur Kudus, Sawah Lunto, Sijunjung, West Sumatra, to parents Makrifah and Fathiyah. The majority of the population in his hometown adhered to Islam, a faith that was deeply rooted in the region, especially due to its connection to Minangkabau traditions. It is therefore not surprising that the young Syafii was immersed in religious teachings, receiving instruction from his father and the surrounding religious environment, particularly the Muhammadiyah teachings that had flourished in the area [25].

The influence of Muhammadiyah on his life was significant. After completing his education at the Sekolah Rakyat/Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in his region, the young Syafii continued his studies at the Madrasah Mualimin in Lintau, West Sumatra, and later transferred to Madrasah Mualimin Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta, where he graduated. Afterward, he pursued higher education at the university level, initially choosing to study law at Cokroaminoto University in Yogyakarta.

However, Syafii did not complete his law studies. His father passed away, and the political turmoil in West Sumatra due to the PRRI (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia) and the resulting disruption to transportation routes to Sumatra made it difficult for his family to send financial support. This limitation prompted Syafii to take up various jobs, including teaching Quranic studies, working as a laborer sorting scrap metal, and serving as a cloth shop assistant. Despite his daily work, Syafii continued to pursue higher education. Given the structured nature of the law courses and his work commitments, he eventually decided to switch to the History-Culture department at the same university. It took him about five years to earn his bachelor's degree in 1964. He furthered his education at IKIP Yogyakarta, earning his full bachelor's degree in 1968 with a thesis titled *Gerakan Komunisme di Vietnam* (The Communist Movement in Vietnam) [25].

This degree was not the last for Syafii. After marriage and having children, he continued his education in the United States, still focusing on history. He studied at Ohio University, earning a master's degree. Afterward, Syafii pursued further studies at The University of Chicago in the field of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, specializing in Islamic Thought. He obtained his PhD in the early 1980s, with a dissertation titled *Islam as the Basis of State: A Study of Islamic Political Ideas as Reflected in the Constituent Assembly Debates in Indonesia* [25].

Upon returning from the United States, Syafii resumed his career as a lecturer at IKIP Yogyakarta, where he remained until his retirement. In addition to his academic career, he was actively involved as an intellectual within Muhammadiyah, serving as the organization's chairman from 1998 to 2005. After retiring from teaching, Syafii continued to contribute to religion and his country through his writings, including books and opinion columns in various media outlets across multiple disciplines. He passed away in 2022.

C. Study of the Work: Islam and Politics: The “Split Bamboo” Theory in the Era of Guided Democracy (1959-1965) Content Analysis

The manuscript in this book is derived from the final thesis that Ahmad Syafii Maarif completed at Ohio University in the United States to obtain his master's degree [26]. The first publisher of this manuscript, IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, states that the translation of the thesis was not done in its entirety. The publisher acknowledges that certain additions and omissions were made to adjust the content to the evolving context and circumstances that emerged when the book was first published in 1988. The publisher claims that these adjustments made the book more engaging and flexible compared to the original thesis format [26]. The publishing process, as traced by the author, occurred approximately three times with different publishers. The first publication took place in 1988 by IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Press. The second edition was released in 1996 by Gema Insani Press, which is the version the author uses for this review. Lastly, the book was republished by IRCISoD in 2021.

The author attempts to compare the editions published by Gema Insani Press (GIP) and IRCISoD. In both the IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Press and GIP editions, the book's title remained unchanged. However, regarding the appendix, the GIP edition includes additional content. In the latest edition published by IRCISoD, the title was expanded to *Percaturan Islam dan Politik: Teori Belah Bambu Masa Demokrasi Terpimpin (1959-1965)*. Likewise, the page count in each edition differs: the GIP edition has approximately 222 pages, while the IRCISoD edition has increased to about 290 pages.

The author speculates that the increase in page count is primarily due to the font type and the layout adjustments made to make the book more readable. Additionally, the last section of the book includes a biography. Unlike GIP, which provides information about other books marketed by the publisher, this is not included in the IRCISoD edition. Furthermore, when comparing the introduction of the first edition from IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, the book used the old Indonesian spelling system (*Ejaan yang Disempurnakan*), whereas the most recent edition follows the *Pedoman Umum Ejaan Bahasa Indonesia* (PUEBI).

In terms of structure, the GIP and IRCISoD editions are similar. The first chapter serves as the introduction. In this section, Syafii explains two reasons for choosing the theme of his thesis. First, despite Indonesia's majority Muslim population, during the Guided Democracy period (1959-1966), the position of Indonesian Muslims was weak. Second, to the best of the author's knowledge, no specific studies had addressed the position of Islam in practical politics during the Guided Democracy period [26].

In the introduction, Syafii also discusses his approach to historical writing, which tends to examine how past events have moral implications. He claims that he is influenced by Ibn Khaldun's approach to history, which seeks to extract moral lessons (*i'tibar*) from past experiences. According to Syafii, this approach aligns with the teachings of the Quran, which encourages humanity to learn lessons from the past [26].

In Chapter Two, the book discusses the Rise and Fall of Political Islam at the Beginning of the Post-Independence Period. Although the discussion focuses on the post-independence period, Syafii draws connections back to the formation of the MIAI (Majelis Islam A'la Indonesia) in 1937, continuing through the rise and fall of political Islamic movements during the Japanese occupation, the struggle of Islamic groups in determining Indonesia's state ideology, the establishment of the Masyumi political party, and its fate during the Parliamentary Democracy period, which held Indonesia's first general election, and its involvement in the drafting of laws in the Constituent Assembly.

In Chapter Three, the book explores Islam and Guided Democracy: The Crystallization Process (July 1959 - December 1960). The discussion begins with an overview of the political situation during this period. The chapter then delves into the Islamic parties, which, according to Syafii, followed two distinct paths. The analysis sharpens further with the formation of the Democracy League, an alliance of the Masyumi party, PSI (Indonesian Socialist Party), Partai Kristen Indonesia (Indonesian Christian Party), and IPKI (Indonesian Independence Supporters' Union), which sought to oppose Guided Democracy. Although Masyumi opposed Guided Democracy, its members, including Soekiman WiryoSENDJOJO and Jusuf Wibisono, were invited to join the DPRGR (People's Representative Council of Mutual Cooperation) appointed directly by Sukarno. Syafii concludes the chapter by discussing Masyumi's struggles and attempting to analyze why Sukarno despised Masyumi.

Chapter Four further intensifies the discussion, focusing on Islam and Guided Democracy during the Collaboration Period (April 1960 - December 1965). While the chapter addresses political Islam, Syafii focuses more on the NU Party (Nahdlatul Ulama), which supported Guided Democracy. Syafii analyzes why the NU Party chose to collaborate with the government,

examining the political strategy of the NU Party, which was based on religious principles taught in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and later applied in practical politics.

The final chapter serves as a conclusion. In his closing remarks, Syafii does not attempt to provide a broad summary of the points he studied. The issue of Islamic parties, particularly the NU Party, which was given significant attention in Chapter Four, is not extensively discussed here. In this section, Syafii refrains from drawing any analytical conclusions regarding the Guided Democracy period. Instead, his conclusion is more normative, urging for change in the future.

At the end of the book, an appendix is provided, relating to the previous chapters. The first appendix is titled Islam and the Formation of a Noble Life System. The second appendix is titled The Medina Charter and Social Convergence. This appendix was originally published in *Jurnal Pesantren*, No. 3 Vol. III in 1986. The third appendix is titled Criticism of the PKI's View on the Indonesian Revolution, which was published in *Sigma Pi Gama*, No. 2, Vol. III, August 1974, pages 24-43.

The fourth appendix is titled Jawaban KH Saifuddin Zuhri Atas Empat Pertanyaan (KH Saifuddin Zuhri's Answers to Four Questions), which is a written interview conducted in 1978 [26]. Appendix V is titled Piagam Universitas Muhammadiyah (Charter of Muhammadiyah University), taken from a book published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs titled *Tuhan Hanya Esa, Itulah Keyakinanku (God is One, That is My Belief)* in 1965. Appendix VI is titled Kedudukan Negara dalam Perspektif Doktrin Islam (The Position of the State in the Perspective of Islamic Doctrine), which was written for a seminar on the Concept of the State in Islam at UII (Islamic University of Indonesia) on October 18, 1987. Appendix VII is titled Konsep Negara dan Masyarakat Sipil dalam Perspektif Islam (The Concept of the State and Civil Society in the Perspective of Islam), based on a paper presented at Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta on June 1, 1996. Appendix VIII is titled Demokrasi dan Nasionalisme: Pengalaman Indonesia (Democracy and Nationalism: Indonesia's Experience), a paper presented at IKIP Yogyakarta during a seminar on May 26-27, 1996.

Following the appendices, the book also includes a bibliography and an index. In his work, Syafii cites a variety of sources. According to the bibliography, Syafii references at least 62 books, 13 magazines and journals from various media, four different newspapers, and several interviews with sources [26]. Based on the appendices presented above, the author concludes that this book is not merely a historical account, but also includes Syafii's opinion columns, which were presented in May and June 1996, long after Syafii had earned his master's degree [26].

D. Strengths and Weaknesses

The study of Islamic parties during the Guided Democracy period (1959-1965) is often overlooked. Much of the focus tends to be on Soekarno, the Indonesian Army, and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), all of which are frequently depicted as highly influential during this period. Analyzing Islamic parties, particularly in the context of the Guided Democracy era, offers an alternative way to view the political events of that time. Given that this study was conducted in the late 1970s as Syafii's master's thesis at Ohio University, it was a pioneering effort, especially in the field of modern Islamic historiography.

Syafii's analysis focuses specifically on the political strategy of the NU Party, examining how its policies were shaped by religious doctrines commonly taught in pesantren, the largest constituency of the NU. This religious framework guided the NU in formulating practical political decisions, particularly during the Guided Democracy period. Furthermore, Syafii delves deeper into how the NU's practical political policies were formulated through key figures such as the kiai (Islamic scholars) sitting in the Majelis Syuriah, especially the Rais Am (the supreme leader) Kiai Wahab Hasbullah. His leadership played a pivotal role in the NU's political actions, particularly in supporting Soekarno, especially after the Masyumi Party, which had opposed Guided Democracy, was forced to dissolve.

However, the book is not without its shortcomings. The focus on Islamic parties is heavily weighted toward the NU Party. If the analysis is to center on the NU, one might question why Syafii did not directly write about the NU Party during the Guided Democracy period. Why include the term "Islamic parties" when the discussion predominantly concerns the NU? The roles of other parties, such as PSII (Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia) and Perti (Partai Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah), also deserve more attention. Furthermore, Syafii could have examined the struggle of Masyumi sympathizers after the party was disbanded during the Guided Democracy era, which was given a significant portion of the discussion, especially from chapters two to four.

The insufficient treatment of the NU Party leads to gaps in Syafii's analysis, particularly in terms of figures within the NU who opposed Guided Democracy. Although Syafii briefly mentions these figures, he does not provide an in-depth analysis. Key figures like Subchan ZE, Jusuf Hasyim, and Jahja Ubeid, who played significant roles in opposing Guided Democracy, are not explored in detail. Moreover, within PSII, figures such as Mch Ibrahim and Syech Marchaban, who led the Gemuis movement against the PKI's political influence, are also underexplored [27].

It appears that Syafii may have been influenced by a bias toward Masyumi in his writing [26]. His portrayal of Masyumi in this study is extensive and largely without critique. This is particularly evident when Syafii discusses its political adversaries, namely Soekarno and the PKI, in a way that lacks balance. For instance, Syafii does not critically examine the role of PKI during the period, while his treatment of Masyumi's involvement in the PRRI (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia) in West Sumatra, although acknowledged, is not explained in detail. This selective treatment suggests a degree of partiality in Syafii's analysis.

When Syafii's focus of discussion is on the Guided Democracy period, Masyumi had already disbanded. Despite this, Syafii allocates a substantial portion of the discussion to Masyumi members or modernist groups, who had been subjected to harsh

treatment by the government. As a result, the discussion of Islamic parties, particularly the NU Party, is not addressed comprehensively. This selective emphasis on Masyumi and the modernist group leaves a gap in Syafii's analysis, as it does not fully explore the role and actions of the NU Party during the Guided Democracy era.

Conclusion

The emergence of Indonesian Muslim academics who had received formal education, particularly in the field of history after the independence period, made significant contributions to the development of modern Islamic historiography. This contribution was not merely in the quantity of works being produced and circulating in society but also in the quality of historical discussions, which began to be approached using historical methods and even incorporated auxiliary disciplines.

One of the pioneering figures in modern Indonesian Islamic historiography is Ahmad Syafii Maarif. He is noted for completing formal education from undergraduate to doctoral levels with a focus on history. Specifically, during his master's and doctoral studies in the United States, he produced at least two significant works related to the lives of Muslims in Indonesia.

One of his works is *Islam dan Politik: Teori Belah Bambu Masa Demokrasi Terpimpin (1959-1965)*, which is revisited in this research. This book is a translation of his master's thesis at Ohio University, USA. When this work was written, around the late 1970s, discussions regarding Islamic parties during the Guided Democracy period had not been undertaken. Therefore, it offered a new perspective in the writing of Islamic history in Indonesia at the time. However, upon closer review, Syafii's study was actually quite broad, leading to an incomplete exploration of other Islamic parties during the period. The discussion primarily focuses on the NU Party, neglecting the roles of other Islamic parties such as PSII and Perti.

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