

Cultural capital, Islamism, and political distrust in Indonesian general election: an ethnicity-based community engaged in Islamic Defenders Front (FPI)

Muhammad Hilali Basya

Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta

E-mail: mhilali.basya@umj.ac.id

Hamka

Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta

E-mail: hamka@umj.ac.id

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Abstract

Although there have been many studies investigating Islamist movements and their views concerning the relationship between Islam and politics, very rare studies examining the ways particular ethnicity-based Islamist group invent and revitalize their cultural capital in dealing with Islamism. Based on the case of the role of FPI (the Islamic Defenders Front) group in Jakarta rejecting the result of Pemilu 2019 (Indonesian General Election), this study aims to investigate the way a young Batavian community that is engaged in the FPI (a semi radical Islamist organization) interpret their Batavian values and tradition in dealing

with Islamism. This research uses a case study approach that investigates cultural capital and its influence to a young Batavian community joining the FPI. This study relies more on in-depth interviews with the members as well as observation. Based on the fieldwork this article shows that tension in national political level in Pemilu 2019 which polarized society had encouraged these young Batavians to be engaged in an organization connecting them to wider Islamic groups. Instead of Muhammadiyah or Nahdatul Ulama (NU), their cultural capital is more supportive encouraging them to be engaged with the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI). Through this engagement in FPI and participation in political distrust rejecting the result of Pemilu 2019 they were not only involved with national issues, but also local issues dealing with their domination as an indigenous group living in an urban area.

Meskipun sudah banyak penelitian yang mengkaji gerakan Islamisme dan pandangannya mengenai Islam dan politik, belum ada studi yang menginvestigasi cara kelompok Islamis berbasis etnis tertentu merevitalisasi modal budaya mereka dalam mengekspresikan Islamisme. Berdasarkan studi kasus terhadap kelompok FPI (Front Pembela Islam) di Jakarta yang menolak hasil Pemilu 2019 (Pemilihan Umum Indonesia), penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji cara komunitas muda Betawi yang berpartisipasi dalam FPI menafsirkan nilai-nilai dan tradisi Betawi dalam mengadopsi Islamisme. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus yang menginvestigasi modal budaya dan pengaruhnya terhadap komunitas muda Betawi yang aktif di FPI. Penelitian ini menggunakan wawancara mendalam serta observasi. Artikel ini menjelaskan bahwa ketegangan politik di tingkat nasional pada Pemilu 2019 yang mempolarisasi masyarakat telah mendorong generasi muda Betawi untuk terlibat dalam organisasi yang menghubungkan mereka dengan kelompok Islam yang lebih luas. Ketimbang memilih Muhammadiyah atau Nahdatul Ulama (NU), modal budaya mereka lebih mendukung untuk bergabung dengan FPI. Melalui keterlibatan mereka di FPI dan partisipasi dalam menolak hasil Pemilu 2019, mereka tidak semata-mata merespon isu-isu nasional, tetapi juga menggunakannya untuk menghadapi tantangan lokal yang berkaitan dengan dominasi mereka sebagai kelompok “pribumi” yang hidup di tengah masyarakat urban.

Keywords: *Cultural capital; Political distrust; Islamism; FPI; Pemilu 2019*

Introduction

Islamists are the most active Islamic group in criticizing the secular aspects of modernity.¹ The 2019 General Election (Pemilu) in Indonesia, in which Presidential Election (Pilpres) features in the agenda, is a relevant example in examining the Islamist's view. The General Election was not only an arena of contestation for political parties to compete for the position of President, but also an ideological battle between Islamist groups on the one hand, especially the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), which wants the state to be led by figures representing Islam and rejects secularist candidates and groups who want the political space to remain devoid of religious identity on the other hand.²

There have been several studies investigating FPI movements and their views concerning the relationship between Islam and politics. One of them is Mark Woodward's work entitled the *Islamic Defenders Front: Demonization, Violence and the State in Indonesia*.³ Woodward studied the ways the FPI utilizes hate speech to legitimize violent attacks on organizations or individuals they regard as deviant. Another one is a work done by Timo Duile. In his article entitled *Islam, Politics, and Cyber Tribalism in Indonesia: A Case Study on the Front Pembela Islam*, Duile reveals the narrative and voices of FPI in their social media related

¹Peter Mandaville, *Global Political Islam*. New York: Routledge, 2007, 49-95; Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Umma*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004, 58-99; Daniel Brumberg, "Islamist and the Politics of Consensus", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (2002), 109-115; Shadi Hamid, "The Rise of the Islamist: How Islamist Will Change Politics, and Vice Versa", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 3 (2011), 40-47; Greg Barton, Ihsan Yilmaz, and Nicholas Morieson, "Religious and Pro-Violence Populism in Indonesia: The Rise and Fall of a Far-Right Islamist Civilisationist Movement", *Religions*, Vol. 12, No. 397 (2011), 1-22; Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin, "Islamism and Nationalism among Niqabis Women in Egypt and Indonesia", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2020), 49-77.

²Ali Akhbar Abaib Mas Rabbani Lubis, "Contestation on Political Space between Islamism and Islamic Group in Presidential Election 2019", *AlTahrir*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2020), 205-229.

³Mark Woodward, et al., "The Islamic Defenders Front: Demonization, Violence and the State in Indonesia", *Contemporary Islam*, No. 8 (2014), 153-171.

to Pilkada (Regional Election) DKI Jakarta 2017, and argues that the FPI narratives “express not simply anti-pluralist or anti-NKRI notions but rather combinations of robust nationalism and their alternative version of pluralism with conservative Islamic approaches”.⁴ A further relevant study was done by Stephen Miller examining Islamofascism in FPI, in which he concluded that even though several characters of fascism are found in this movement, FPI’s ideology is still “coalescing as the organization emerges on the national stage.”⁵ A study on FPI’s effort in islamizing the state was done by Helen Pausacker. She took the role of FPI in banning the release of Indonesian Playboy magazine in 2007 as a case study. Helen concluded that “the Islamists’ attempts to enforce Islamic values through legislation [sic] is a struggle still in progress”.⁶ Meanwhile Lusi Andayani studied about the political role played by FPI in campaigning against non-Muslim governor in Pilkada (Regional Election) DKI Jakarta 2017.⁷

Those studies focused more on FPI’s thoughts and roles. There are rare studies examining how a particular background of FPI members such as ethnicity, social class, and cultural capital influence the way they deal with Islamism. Based on the case study of the role of FPI in Jakarta rejecting the result of Pemilu 2019, this study aims to investigate the way a young Batavian community engaged in the FPI interprets their Batavian values

⁴Timo Duile, “Islam, Politics, and Cyber Tribalism in Indonesia: A Case Study on the Front Pembela Islam”, *IQAS (International Quarterly for Asian Studies)*, Vol. 48, No. 3-4 (2017), 249-272.

⁵Stephen Miller, “Is Islamofascism even a thing? The case of the Indonesian Islamic Defenders’ Front (FPI)”, *Asian Review*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2017), 125-150.

⁶Helen Pausacker, “Playboy, the Islamic Defenders’ Front and the Law: Enforcing Islamic Norms in Post-Soeharto Indonesia?”, *Australian Journal of Asian Law*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2012), 1-20.

⁷Lusi Andayani, “FPI Role’s in Election of The DKI Jakarta Governor in 2017”, *International Symposium on Indonesian Politics (ISIP)*, Semarang 25-26 June 2019, Indonesia; similar study was also done by Fachriel Hayqal Maulana, Taufik Nurohman, and Faisal Fadilla Noorikhshan, “Sociopolitical Analysis of The Escalation of The Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) Movement During The Reign Of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) In DKI Jakarta 2014-2017”, *International Journal of Social Sciences Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2022), 49-72.

and tradition in dealing with Islamism, particularly what is related to FPI's political distrust to the KPU and other state institutions in the Pemilu. The study reveals cultural capital that developed within young Batavian FPI activists living in an area in Jakarta, how they define themselves in the FPI movement, and how they conceptualize Batavian's values in FPI Islamist agenda, especially in dealing with its political distrust.

This research uses a case study approach, an approach that examines actors, events, or organizations that are commonly used in qualitative research.⁸ Data collection has been carried out from April to August 2022. By utilizing purposive sampling, this study took a young Batavian community who are engaged in the FPI living in the periphery of Jakarta as the object. The data collection in this study relied on in-depth interviews with the members as well as participatory observation.

A young Batavian community and FPI

The community investigated in this study lives in an area located in periphery of Jakarta. This community consists of young generations of Batavian ranging from 25 to 40-year-old. Their numbers are around 50 people.⁹ It is worth noting that they come from the lineage, who generated their grandparents and parents.¹⁰ Inhabitants, who live in this area, are dominated by this big family. They could be regarded as the "indigenous" people of the area. Although there are high numbers of "new people" or so called migrants coming from West Sumatra, West Java, and Central Java in this area, they are still subordinated under the number of this indigenous inhabitants. Living in the same area and common lineage

⁸Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, (Third edition) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 52-58; Gary Thomas, *How to do your Case Study: A Guide for Students and Researchers*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2011, 1-30; Gary Thomas and Kevin Myers, *The Anatomy of the Case Study*, London, Sage, 2015, 1-16.

⁹Rifda (pseudonym), a member of FPI, interview, Jakarta, 2 Agustus 2022

¹⁰Narlis (pseudonym), a member of FPI, interview, Jakarta, 25 Juni 2022

made them connected to each other.¹¹ Therefore, these young Batavians grew up together as close friend since they were child.

Most of them graduated from senior high schools; even though they live in the capital city of Indonesia, very few of them could pursue higher education.¹² Lack of financial support is one of the main problems causing them unable to obtain the higher education. Due to their educational background, most of them work with a low salary. They could be regarded as the lower-class urban society.

They are not trained especially in Islamic studies such as provided by Islamic classical schools or called *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school studying Islamic classical literatures). Even many of them studied in non-religious educational institutions. Nevertheless, they studied Islamic teachings through *majelis taklim* (non-formal education studying Islamic teachings taught by religious scholars called *ustadz*).¹³ The *majelis taklim* is conducted weekly and there are two *majelis taklim* attended routinely by these young Batavians. The first one mainly addresses Islamic faith (*akidah*), while the second teaches about Quranic studies (*tafsir al-Quran*) and Islamic morality (*akhlak*).¹⁴ As a result, their knowledge on Islamic teachings is not poor.

Living as an indigenous community in Jakarta is not always easy. Jakarta is the place in which various ethnic communities come and compete for a financial purpose. The urbanization or migration of people from various places in Indonesia, such as West Sumatra, West Java, and Central Java to Jakarta, to a certain extent, challenges the “existence” of these young Batavians. Those migrants gradually occupy and live side by side with

¹¹Narlis, interview, 25 Juni 2022

¹²Narlis, interview, 25 Juni 2022

¹³Rifai (pseudonym), a member of FPI, interview, Jakarta, 27 Juli 2022; Barkah (pseudonym), a member of FPI, interview, Jakarta, 23 Juli 2022 ; Narlis, interview, 25 Juni 2022

¹⁴Barkah, interview, 23 Juli 2022

them. I heard from these young Batavians of their unwillingness regarding the migrants' occupation district leadership position (*ketua RT or ketua RW*) in this area.¹⁵ This is the context encouraging them to be engaged in a Batavian organization like FORKABI (Forum for Batavians).¹⁶ This is indeed not the only one factor leading them to join the organization. There are some other advantages they could get from it such as wider network and business purposes.¹⁷ Nevertheless, it is clear that this organization supports them to design political strategies in preventing the migrants to get the local leadership position. The organization could inculcate ethnic sentiment among the members as well as Batavian voters and unite their votes in the local election.

However there are also some of these young Batavians who joined non-ethnicity based organizations, such as Pemuda Pancasila (the Youth of Pancasila). The organization was established during the New Order government (1966-1998) under the President Suharto to manage and control the political aspirations of Indonesian youths.¹⁸ Therefore the organization was often mobilized for supporting the New Order government policies, including the political party of the government (Golkar) at the time. Members of Pemuda Pancasila come from various ethnics in Indonesia. It is worth noting that Pemuda Pancasila in Jakarta is perceived to be the business competitor of FORKABI (also FBR, another Batavian organization) in getting car parking zones, such as in mini markets and other marketplaces. In these places they could get money by providing security and vehicle parking services.

¹⁵Narlis, interview, 25 Juni 2022; Rifai, interview, 27 Juli 2022; Barkah, interview, 23 Juli 2022; Firman (pseudonym), a member of FPI, interview, Jakarta, 24 Juli 2022.

¹⁶Rifai, interview, 27 Juli 2022; Lutfi (pseudonym), a member of FPI, interview, Jakarta, 30 Juli 2022.

¹⁷Narlis, interview, 25 Juni 2022.

¹⁸Loren Rytter, "Pemuda Pancasila: The Last Loyalist Free Men of Suharto's Order?", *Indonesia*, No. 66 (1998), 44-73

There is a heated conflict taking place between these two groups (Pemuda Pancasila and FORKABI) due to clashes in economic interests. They have clashed physically, involving many of their members. This conflict has also impacted the solidity of this young Batavian community as some of the members of this community joined Pemuda Pancasila.¹⁹ Consequently, there were tensions between the Batavians joining in the Pemuda Pancasila and members of FORKABI. Although the number of those who joined the Pemuda Pancasila is very small, it has caused disharmony within this Batavian community. There was a physical clash between these two groups occurring in their area, which involved members of this Batavian community. This bad situation caused their parents to be disappointed.²⁰

The conflict encouraged leaders of these young Batavians to establish an organization, of which membership is based on the common area in which they live. The purpose of this organization is to neutralize the conflict.²¹ Furthermore, through this organization they might be reminded that they come from the same grandparents, so they are still tied by this brotherhood aspect. The organization effectively made them become more solid.²² Most of activities of this forum are 1) traveling to remote areas and staying for a couple of days (2-3 days), 2) cooking and eating together, 3) conducting religious lectures, and 4) doing sport like playing football, badminton, and table tennis.²³

Tension in national political level in Pemilu 2014, which polarized society, encouraged these young Batavians to be engaged in an organization connecting them to wider Islamic groups. In this regard, FPI became

¹⁹Rifai, interview, 27 Juli 2022; Lutfi, interview, 30 Juli 2022.

²⁰Narlis, interview, 25 Juni 2022.

²¹Rifai, interview, 27 Juli 2022.

²²Rifai, interview, 27 Juli 2022.

²³Rifai, interview, 27 Juli 2022.

their choice. The political tension was perceived by this young Batavian community that secular groups, including communist factions, would threaten Indonesian Muslims.²⁴ Joko Widodo (known as Jokowi), the presidential candidate, was seen by them as a figure who has close relationship with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), a party with an ideology that has a negative image in Indonesia because it is perceived as having a hostile attitude towards Islamic groups and being involved in the rebellion and assassination of generals in September 1965.²⁵ Many of them even believe that Jokowi's father was a cadre of the PKI.²⁶ Therefore, Jokowi and his allies were perceived as a group potentially hostile to Muslims. In line with this perception, Jokowi's Muslim supporters are regarded as "bad Muslims" or secularists.

Since 2014 this young Batavian community has become engaged with FPI activities. They often attended religious meetings (*pengajian*) conducted by the FPI, especially in Jakarta and its surroundings. Even, they had conducted a great religious meeting called *tabligh akbar* in their area inviting FPI figure as its source speaker.²⁷ The religious meeting was successful, and this encouraged them to establish a branch of FPI in their area. One of their seniors was appointed as the chairman of the FPI. This was the time in which this young Batavian group began to perform as the FPI usually did, monitoring and punishing those who are involved in activities regarded sinful such as trading of alcohol drinks and gambling. One of the young Batavians, Fahmi, explained to me that one night he with some other FPI members scrutinized areas suspected as places in which youths drink alcohol.²⁸ They drove out those drunk youths and warned them not to

²⁴Sobirin (pseudonym), a member of FPI, interview, Jakarta, 24 Juli 2022

²⁵Rifai, interview, 27 Juli 2022; Lutfi, interview, 30 Juli 2022.

²⁶Sobirin, interview, 24 Juli 2022.

²⁷Rifai, interview, 27 Juli 2022.

²⁸Fahmi (pseudonym), a member of FPI, interview, Jakarta, 20 Juli 2022

drink anymore because it is forbidden by God, Allah. According to them through these activities they not only attempt to educate people but also themselves because they are required to be disciplined and become a role model for other youths.²⁹

Revitalizing cultural capital

Why these young Batavians preferred to join the FPI, instead of other Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah and NU (Nahdatul Ulama) existing in this area, is important to be revealed. I argue that their cultural capital is supportive and encouraged them to be engaged with the FPI. By cultural capital I mean resources such as values, norms, or insights collected by people or community through cultural heritage of their predecessors such as parent, family, grandparent, ancestor, as well as their social environment. The concept of cultural capital was introduced by a French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu defines cultural capital as a resource that is accumulated or transmitted through cultural heritage and education.³⁰ In other words, cultural capital is shaped by many aspects of social life such as family, environment, and education.³¹ Every people or community has cultural capital, because they live within a particular family, environment and the pursue particular formal, informal, or non-formal education.³²

These young Batavians have been shaped by their big families' norms and vision. These norms and vision emphasize on the necessity of

²⁹Fahmi, interview, 20 Juli 2022; Narlis, interview, 25 Juni 2022.

³⁰Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital", In J Richardson, *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Westpost, CT: Greenword, 1986, 241-258.

³¹R Moore, "Capital", In M Grenfell (ed), *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2008, 101-118; Henry T Trueba, (2002) "Multiple Ethnic, Racial, and Cultural Identities in Action: From Marginality to a New Cultural Capital in Modern Society, *Journal of Latinos and Education*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2002), 7-28; Michael Olneck, "Can Multicultural Education Change What Counts as Cultural Capital?", *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (2000), 317-348.

³²Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital" ..., 241-258; R. Moore, "Capital" ..., 101-118.

establishing an Islamic identity in the state and society. This spirit is also strengthened by the perception about the role played by their grandparents or predecessors in fighting for establishing Islamic state. One of the interviewees, Narlis, told me that there is a story saying that during 1960s their grandparents had interacted with the DI (Darul Islam) or NII (the Indonesian Islamic State), a radical Islamic movement attempting to establish an Indonesian Islamic state.³³ Even, according to Narlis, two of these grandparents were engaged in this radical Islamist group.³⁴ It is worth noting that the DI or NII movement was established in 1948-1949 and had declared that they separated from the Republic of Indonesia.³⁵ Even though it has been banned and its leaders have been jailed, the movement has still been existing and developing during the New Order (1966-1998) and the post-New Order (1998-now).³⁶ Therefore this DI/NII movement is regarded as a rebellious movement threatening the modern state of Indonesia as well as its ideology, Pancasila. However the story needs to be rechecked whether their grandparents became engaged in the DI/NII movement or only made short interaction. Because another informant rejected about this information revealing that there was intensive interaction or even engagement of their grandparents with the movement.³⁷ The true that Barkah knows was that their predecessors favored the Islamic struggle performed by Ahmad Nasir (the chairman of Masyumi) and Buya Hamka (one of the main figures in Masyumi dan Muhammadiyah).³⁸ It is worth informing that the Masyumi was the biggest Islamic political party

³³Narlis, interview, 25 Juni 2022.

³⁴Narlis, interview, 25 Juni 2022.

³⁵Alamsyah Andi Rahman and Vedi R Hadiz, "Three Islamist generations, one Islamic state: the Darul Islam movement and Indonesian social transformation", *Critical Asian Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (2017), 54-72.

³⁶Alamsyah Andi Rahman and Vedi R Hadiz, "Three Islamist generations..."

³⁷Barkah, interview, 23 Juli 2022.

³⁸Barkah, interview, 23 Juli 2022.

in Indonesia during the Old Order (1945-1966) campaigning for the implementation of Islamic law in the state for Muslims.³⁹

Islamic organizations campaigning for Islamic modernization such as Muhammadiyah or calling for purification like Salafi movement are not attractable for these young Batavians. According to one of them, such modernization and purification are not the heritage of their grandparents.⁴⁰ They prefer to follow a kind of Islam that had been performed and expressed by their predecessors. This statement is often emphasized when they talked about the reason why they choose a certain Islamic expression, particularly the FPI Islamic style. This view could explain why Muhammadiyah could not develop in this area. This modernist organization is often seen as “foreign” for these young Batavians. They associate Muhammadiyah with West Sumatra (Minangkabau) people.⁴¹ As a matter of fact, I found that many Batavians, particularly females, have become activists and members of this movement. However these Muhammadiyah Batavians tend to be seen as “deviants” by this young Batavian community because they are perceived to be diverging from norms and traditions of their predecessors in this area.

This is also the case with Islamic traditionalist organizations like NU. Although Batavian Islamic tradition in this area shows similarity with NU tradition such as reciting *surah yasin* every Friday night, commemorating 7 nights for death ceremonies, and belief of *wasilah*, a concept about saints and certain ulama being able to mediate between Muslims and Allah, they do not like NU political attitudes, which they perceive too pragmatic.⁴² The

³⁹Remy Madinier and Andree Feillard, “At the Sources of Indonesian Political Islam’s Failure: The Split between the Nahdlatul Ulama and the Masyumi in Retrospect”, *Studia Islamika*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1999), 1-38.

⁴⁰Fadil (pseudonym), a member of FPI, interview, Jakarta, 22 Juli 2022

⁴¹Hamid (pseudonym), a member of FPI, interview, Jakarta, 29 Juli 2022

⁴²Hamid, interview, 29 Juli 2022.

Pemilu 2014 and 2019 are some of the cases they regard as the indication of NU pragmatic behavior in dealing with political power. NU leaders are seen by these young Batavians not to show attitudes of ulama as they expected.⁴³ These attitudes are seen as the opposite of their predecessors': to fight for Islam no matter what happen will impact them such as intimidation from the government or even to be jailed. Consequently, the NU existing in this area could not develop well.

I argue that their cultural capital that has been accumulated from their predecessors caused them to be incompatible with the nature of Islam in Muhammadiyah, Salafi, and NU. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital possessed by a person or community will shape their thoughts or awareness in behaving, acting, and choosing a position.⁴⁴ These young Batavians studied Islam from *majelis taklim* conducted by their family. Through this *majelis taklim* their ustadz, who are senior generation of this young Batavian community, as well as their other seniors such as uncles, fathers, and cousins transmitted values and attitudes of their predecessors in fighting for Islam. The transmission also took place through informal meeting and chatting. Usually their old generation would tell stories of their predecessors describing their political behavior as well as their Islamic views concerning particular issues in the past.⁴⁵ This transmission became the way how these young Batavians accumulate the values which they found similar with what FPI has been fighting for.

The influence of this cultural capital can be found as well among the older generation of this young Batavian community living in this area. Even though

⁴³Firman, interview, 24 Juli 2022.

⁴⁴Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital" ...; K Maton, "Habitus", in M Grenfell (ed), *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*. Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2008, 49-66; see also Amr Adly, "An Islamist Economic Habitus: Islamist-Affiliated Businesses in Egypt", *Contemporary Islam*, Vol. 17 (2023), 339-361.

⁴⁵Narlis, interview, 25 Juni 2022.

they are not formally engaged with FPI activities and programs, their discourse show that they favor FPI's position in dealing with the government. WhatsApp (WA) group through which they attempt to strengthen connection of the big family is often utilized for discussing national political issues.⁴⁶ Some of the issues they were concerned with are Pilkada DKI Jakarta 2017 and Pemilu 2019. Through this WA group they forwarded messages supporting FPI's critical voices to the government including mobilization for fighting against Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, or called Ahok,⁴⁷ for Governor Election in Pilkada Jakarta 2017, as well as rejection of the result of Pemilu 2019. This cultural capital is revitalized and contextualized in a new situation where they have to choose which political position they should take.

FPI's political distrust and local political contestation

Many of these Batavian community members were involved in campaigning for the rejection of the result of Pemilu 2019, with a variety of participation levels. Some of them expressed their anger and critiques in social media, particularly in WhatsApp Group (WAG) named with their main forefather's name. This social media group consists of larger family members with estimated numbers more than seventy memberships. Most of them live in the same area in the periphery of Jakarta. Members of this WAG were dominated by the opponents of Jokowi government. Although not all of them are members of the FPI, they tended to favor Islamist rhetoric, particularly the voices articulated by FPI figures. This tendency could be seen from comments in the WAG. Fadil, one of the

⁴⁶Several studies show the significant role of social media in consolidating their movements. See for example a work done by Francesca Comunello and Giuseppe Anzera, "Will the Revolution be Tweeted? A Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Social Media and the Arab Spring", *Islam and Christian Muslim Relations*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (2012), 453-470.

⁴⁷Ahok was the Vice-Governor of Jakarta for the period 2012-2017. He was appointed as the Governor in 2014 when Jokowi (the Governor of Jakarta) was elected as the President of Republic of Indonesia in Pemilu 2014 for the period 2014-2019.

Batavians, told me that he wrote in the WAG such a statement: “Jokowi government and his allies, particularly elites of PDIP, had manipulated votes. They are cheating in order to prevent figures supported by Islamic parties to be victorious.”⁴⁸ Another member, Sobirin, stated:

Jokowi government had been supported by Chinese government and businessmen in order to be the winner of the Pemilu 2019. The Chinese government and businessmen have economic interest in Indonesia, and those Chinese believe that Jokowi and his allies are the friendliest group that can cooperate with the Chinese. Only Habib Rizieq who is brave to fight against this bad government and its allies. We cannot expect from other Muslim figures such as from NU and Muhammadiyah.⁴⁹

While some of them expressed their critical views on social media, others articulated their disappointment in informal chatting when they were in *majelis taklim* or *pengajian*, a forum in which these young Batavians learn Islamic teachings. Even though topics of the *majelis taklim* focus on *akidah* (faith) and *ibadah* (rituals), conversation before and after *pengajian* usually addressed political issues around the Pemilu 2019. One of the most often topics discussed was cheating or manipulation done by the KPU and government.⁵⁰ One of the members of the community, named Lutfi, told me that a few weeks before and after the election of the Pemilu 2019 he was enthusiastic to talk more about the partiality of KPU.⁵¹ Lutfi said that this topic was different with the usual issues he previously discussed with friends. While waiting for the *pengajian* to begin, he usually had conversations with other *jamaah* (participants of the *pengajian*). The topics could be any things, but focusing more on local issues ranging from daily activities until local criminal news. Unlike the usual weeks, during the Pemilu 2019 he was more

⁴⁸Fadil, interview, 22 Juli 2022.

⁴⁹Sobirin, interview, 24 Juli 2022.

⁵⁰Rifai, interview, 27 Juli 2022.

⁵¹Lutfi, interview, 30 Juli 2022.

enthusiastic about discussing national issues, particularly those related to conspiracy made by KPU and Jokowi government.

Even when the FPI called its members to rally in front of Bawaslu (General Election Supervisory Agency) office in Jakarta protesting the result of the Pemilu 2019, almost all of this young Batavian community participated. They came to the rally representing one of the FPI branches in Jakarta. By renting a small bus they went to the central area of the protest in the morning. They collected the fund from themselves as well as proposed donation to their Batavian seniors for the charge of the bus rent as well as for foods during the rally.⁵²

Joining this demonstration was very important for them. One of them said:

To join other Indonesian Muslims protesting the result of the Pemilu 2019 has faith implication. It proved the level of our faith. I felt so proud when being involved in this protest movement. I felt comfortable. The movement looked like a sacred struggle fighting against evil, and I was one of the God fighters eliminating the satanic rulers⁵³

This young Batavian community was critical to the agenda of secularists. They perceived that the secularists were the group attempting to manipulate votes in order to make Jokowi win. Jokowi is regarded by these young Batavians as the cadre of the PDIP in which many secularists holding the elite position. Perception of fighting against secularism became their energy. They did not like the secularists dominating the government. Rejecting the result of the Pemilu 2019 was perceived as the best way they could do in preventing it. Furthermore, this Batavian community was also concerned with the increase of the use of drugs and easy accessibility of alcohol drinks within society. They perceive that the group manipulating the Pemilu 2019

⁵²Narlis, interview, 25 Juni 2022.

⁵³Lutfi, interview, 30 Juli 2022.

consisted of elites and figures who support the spread of drugs and alcohol drinks. According to them, PDIP's elites and its cadres are dominated by non-pious figures. These elites and cadres are associated with bad behaviors especially related to religious norms. Therefore the Batavian community was imagining themselves as the sacred fighters struggling for eliminating alcohol drinks and drugs from Indonesian society.

These views indicate that they have perception as commonly expressed by all Islamist movements. The movement imagines themselves as the agent not only fighting for constitutional rights but also for the religious truth. They perceived themselves as the soldiers of God struggling for establishing Islamic teachings.

It is worth mentioning that Islamist ideology is not the only one factor encouraging them to participate in the political distrust movement. Imagination about classic Batavian heroes also emerged. These young Batavians perceived that they were representing struggle spirit of legendary Batavian fighters such as Pitung and Jampang. These two figures are well known as Batavian heroes fighting against Dutch colonial government. One of the young Batavians said:

As a Batavian I have been inspired by stories of Batavian figures, Jampang and Pitung. They sacrifice their life for helping oppressed people from the Dutch colonial soldiers. They do not care whether they will be jailed and killed by the Dutch. This is the spirit that I felt when I join the protest against KPU and Jokowi government rejecting the result of Pemilu 2019.⁵⁴

The involvement of this cultural imagination shows the influence of the cultural capital to their decision, behavior, and political orientation. They revitalize their culture in giving the meaning of their political distrust to the KPU and government.

⁵⁴Rifai, interview, 27 Juli 2022.

Furthermore, even though this Batavian community favored Islamist rhetoric of FPI in dealing with the clash between the proponents of Jokowi and his opponents, these young Batavians have their own agenda. They have another motivation related to their vested interests. This community was concerned with their superiority as an indigenous group within their neighborhood living together with migrants. By participating in this national protest movement opposing the government, KPU, and other state institutions, these Batavians intended to show to “the neighbor migrants” that they have potential political power, so that they do not underestimate them. Regardless of whether the FPI’s protest movement would success or fail cancelling the result of the Pemilu 2019, this Batavian community felt successful showing their power to their “neighbor migrants” in their area. The political distrust and protest action looked like an “arena” for this young Batavian community to get attention from migrants living in their neighborhood. Many of those migrants coming from East Java (Jawa Timur) and Central Java (Jawa Tengah) are the supporters of Jokowi and PDIP.

These “neighbor migrants,” as assumed by this Batavian community, attempt to solidify their Javanese identity in Jakarta. One of the efforts done by those migrants, as supposed by the Batavian community, is by uniting their votes in selecting local leaders such as a head of urban village (*Ketua RW*) or hamlet (*ketua RT*). There were statements from these young Batavians in informal chatting related to their worry about the occupation of these local leaderships to the migrants, as explained by one of them:

Do not let the position of *Ketua RT* and *Ketua RW* are taken by the migrants. We have to be cautious, because their voices are solid and they will struggle for getting it. Once they occupy the positions, they will subordinate us as the owner of this land. Most of them are the supporters of PDIP, the secularist political party.⁵⁵

⁵⁵Narlis, interview, 25 Juni 2022.

The information from the interviews indicates that their worry is based on the local political context in which some head positions of hamlet (RT) in their urban village (RW) were occupied by Javanese figures. Such a concern did not occur only in recent time, but also since more than ten years ago. 1980s up to now is the time in which more Javanese people come to Jakarta and lived in the neighborhood of this Batavian community. Based on my interview with some migrants in this area, these migrants feel disappointed with leadership of indigenous figures who are not responsive to complaints or aspiration of their denizens. One of the migrants told me:

Probably, as the indigenous persons, the heads of hamlet deriving from Batavian figures think that they are the owners of the area. Consequently, the head position that they occupy is not to serve the inhabitants, but to the other way around. They want to be respected and served by the people.⁵⁶

This might be one of the reasons why the migrants tend not to vote for the indigenous figures and reversely attempt to consolidate their vote for non-indigenous figures. They are disappointed with the indigenous leaders who are not responsible and accommodative to public voices and aspirations. This can be seen as a tension between indigenous and migrants.

This “own agenda” of the Batavian community engaged in the FPI indicates that the Islamist movement is not only motivated by the ideology of Islamism. In the case of this Batavian community, many FPI members are also motivated by their dignity as the owner of Jakarta competes politically with the migrants in their neighborhood. Cultural capital inherited from their forefather as well as political context challenging their existence with the coming of migrants has led this young Batavian community to participate in the protest movement rejecting the result of Pemilu 2019.

⁵⁶Fatih (pseudonym), a migrant, interview, Jakarta, 20 Juli 2022

Conclusion

This article attempts to fill the gap about the discourse of Islamist movement that is rarely revealed by other researchers. It investigated the extent to which a particular background of ethnicity, social class, and culture affect Muslims in dealing with Islamism. This research is based on a case study of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) branch in the periphery of Jakarta that rejected the result of Pemilu (Indonesian General Election) 2019. This FPI branch was managed by young Batavian community. The study explores the way in which the young Batavian community that is engaged in the FPI construed their Batavian and family values and tradition in dealing with Islamist ideology and its political distrust to the government in the Pemilu 2019.

Living as an indigenous community in the multi-ethnic society of Jakarta has stimulated the young Batavians to consolidate their identity and “power” in order to be able to overcome challenges threatening their “existence.” The massive urbanization of villagers to Jakarta for economic purposes has impacted the emergence of tension between the indigenous (Batavians) and the migrants for decades. The tension is from economic, social, and political. Such tension led these young Batavians to build ethnic sentiment and strengthen their Batavian identity.

Furthermore, tension on the national political level during Pemilu 2019 as well as Pilkada DKI Jakarta 2017, which polarized society, had encouraged these young Batavians to be engaged in an organization connecting them to national Islamic groups. Surprisingly, the NU (Nahdatul Ulama) is not their choice even though Batavian Islamic tradition is more similar with the NU. I argue that the cultural capital of these young Batavians is more compatible with the semi radical Islamist movement, the FPI. Their cultural capital encouraged them to fight for the establishment of an Islamic state and society as well as to fight against

groups they perceive as enemy and “bad.”

Therefore, showing political distrust to the KPU and the government is a consequence of this Batavian community political position. They participated in the protest movement criticizing the impartiality of KPU and Jokowi government. In their opinion, the KPU has been manipulated by Jokowi government and his allies to prevent “the Islamic candidate” to be the winner. They perceive that the government consists of “bad Muslims” that would disturb agenda of the Islamization of the state. In this political distrust they called back their imagination about Batavian legendary heroes that consistently fought against the Dutch colonial government.

Interestingly, even though this Batavian community preferred Islamist rhetoric of the FPI in dealing with the clash between the proponents of Jokowi and his opponents, these young Batavians have “hidden agenda”. The political distrust and massive rally action were also utilized for showing their “power” to the “neighbor migrants”. In other words, the protest became a “showground” to overcome challenges they were facing in dealing with the local sources’ competition as well as political contestation with the migrants.

This study contributes to the wider discussion about Islamist movements. Not all proponents of Islamism are motivated by its ideology. There are other factors that might influence Muslims’ engagement with the Islamist group. In the case of the young Batavian community, their cultural capital accumulated from their ancestors and families has a great influence on their engagement with the semi-radical Islamist group, the FPI. Their participation in FPI’s political distrust rejecting the result of the Pemilu 2019 is also encouraged; one of them, by their vested interest is related to local competition in dealing with economic resources and political leadership in their hometown.

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Interview

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Narlis (pseudonym), a member of FPI, interview, Jakarta, 25 Juni 2022

Rifai (pseudonym), a member of FPI, interview, Jakarta, 27 Juli 2022

Rifda (pseudonym), a member of FPI, interview, Jakarta, 2 Agustus 2022

Sobirin (pseudonym), a member of FPI, interview, Jakarta, 24 Juli 2022

