

Islamic Populism in Rural Indonesia: An Agrarian Change Approach

Populisme Islam di Pedesaan Indonesia: Sebuah Pendekatan Perubahan Agraria

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ABSTRACT

A massive demonstration in Jakarta called “Aksi Bela Islam” (Action to Defend Islam) marks a continuity of the Islamist currents in post-New Order Indonesia. Many observers called it “Islamic populism”, a populist, cross-class alliance on behalf of the Islamic masses or “ummah” against capitalist development that has marginalized Muslims in the struggle for access to economic and political resources. However, despite this refreshing approach, many studies on Islamic populism still concentrate on the state (instead of capital) and the urban areas in explaining the development of Islamic populism. This article, therefore, offers a different approach to analyzing Islamic populism through the understanding of capitalism as a social relation and shifts to the countryside as its empirical basis by focusing on the case study of Bulak village in West Java. By combining insights from the literature on agrarian change and populism as a political strategy and adopting qualitative methods namely in-depth interviews (including oral history) and field observation, this article found that contemporary Islamic populism in Indonesia is a result of the specific development of capitalist relations in the context of rural agrarian change. In addition, it also found that Islamic populism is not a phenomenon confined to the urban areas, since it also spreads to the countryside. Moreover, Islamic populism in the countryside has distinctiveness, related to context, social background, and the ways it is mobilized.

Keywords: agrarian change, Aksi Bela Islam, Indonesia, Islamic populism, rural setting



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INTRODUCTION

The end of 2016 witnessed an important event in the continuation of the Islamic movement in Indonesia. This movement was manifested in a large-scale demonstration entitled Action to Defend Islam (ADI). Beginning with Basuki Tjahaja Purnama's statement that was considered "blaspheming" Islam, hundreds of thousands to millions of Muslims poured into the streets around the presidential palace. They demanded that Ahok, the familiar name of the Governor of DKI Jakarta, be brought to justice (Kresna, 2016). For observers, this event is a contemporary form of political Islam called "Islamic populism", which is a populist response of cross-class Muslims, bound by the narrative of the unity of the "ummah", to the situation of contemporary capitalism which is considered to marginalize Muslims (Hadiz, 2016; Hadiz & Rakhmani, 2017; Hadiz & Robison, 2012; Mudhoffir, 2020; Robison, 2014; Savitri & Adriyanti, 2018). The marginalization experienced and understood by Muslims includes access to economic and political resources in certain historical trajectories.

The demonstrators have diverse origins from a geographical point of view (Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2018; Savitri & Adriyanti, 2018), organization affiliation (IPAC, 2018), and social class background (Hadiz & Rakhmani, 2017). The nature of the diversity contained in the event, especially social class, is very clearly visible in the field. Some demonstrators were able to eat and drink in luxury international branded restaurants, while beside them there were demonstrators who had to jostle in small informal stalls and even had to work together just to fill their stomachs and quench their thirst (field observations from ADI).

The phenomenon of Islamic populism occurs not only in Indonesia but also in other parts of the world. In Egypt, for more than 30 years under President Hosni Mubarak authoritarianism became the background for Islamic movements, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, to rise to power (Beaumont, 2011). Meanwhile, in Turkey, the secularist regime, which is considered to have marginalized the Muslim community in economic and political aspects, has fueled Islamic populism, with the struggle for power by the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP) as the main actor (Oztaş, 2020).

Class diversity, according to observers, is one of the characteristics of Islamic populism in Indonesia. These classes consist of the urban Muslim middle class, the national bourgeoisie, and the combined urban poor class consisting of formal, informal, and unemployed workers. Each of these classes has different aspirations from one another (Hadiz & Rakhmani, 2017; Wilson, 2016). While the urban Muslim middle class feels that their mobility is hampered, the national bourgeoisie perceives that the domestic political constellation is increasingly removing them from the center of power. Meanwhile, the urban poor feel threatened by their increasingly closed access to survival. These aspirations emerged amid the excitement of modernity's promise of progress and prosperity. Therefore, for observers, the rise of Islamic populism must be placed within the contradictory nature of capitalism that continues in the historical span of society.

These classes are bound into the same "chain of equivalences", that is, they are both marginalized during political-economic struggles with other social forces and find their articulation in Islam. According to Hadiz (2016), the "ummah" narrative is a tool for unifying the classes in Islamic populism and at the same time replacing the "people's" proxy which is commonly used in other populism models. The "ummah" narrative is used because Islam provides a powerful "cultural pool" in mobilizing the masses. With this narrative, populists can identify themselves as part of the alliance (insider) and at the same time separate themselves from their opponents (outsider).

Apart from being cross-class, the second characteristic of Islamic populism in Indonesia is the predominance of the urban Muslim middle class and the national bourgeoisie. These two classes are the main driving actors of Islamic populism. The dominant strength of these two classes in Islamic populism can be traced at least to the Cold War and the establishment of the New Order regime. Both have access to economic and political resources originating from state development projects (Hadiz, 2016; Hefner, 2011). In addition, the dominance of the two classes cannot be separated from the collapse of communist social forces which in the mid-1960s experienced mass massacres (Bello, 2018).

The dominance of the urban Muslim middle class and the national bourgeoisie also correlates with other characteristics of Islamic populism. Observers claim that Islamic populism is a "typical" urban phenomenon. Hadiz (2016) dan Hadiz & Robison (2012), for example, state that Islamic populism shaped by and taking place in urban areas is the main differentiator from previous forms of political Islam that developed in rural areas with the main power coming from the landlord and merchant classes.

Therefore, it can be said that the massive ADI demonstrations concentrated in large Indonesian cities are empirical evidence of Islamic populism as an urban phenomenon.

SITUATING THE ARGUMENTS

Despite the various highlights on urban classes, Islamic populism scholars still leave an empty gap, namely in the form of social class segments in rural areas. Although at first glance ADI was concentrated in big cities, many of the demonstrators came from rural areas. The Miftahul Huda Islamic Boarding School in rural Tasikmalaya is an example. Led by several kyai's, this pesantren bolstered thousands of ABI masses by conducting a long march from Ciamis to Jakarta (Suryarandika, 2016). Likewise in Bogor, around 12 thousand people departed from Ciawi for Jakarta (Henaldi, 2016). Most of them came from rural areas. The involvement of villagers in ADI cannot be said to be passive. Through his research at Miftahul Huda Islamic Boarding School, Pamungkas (2018) found that pesantren officials who mobilized the masses did not just join ABI, but had their own interpretations. The interpretations echoed include interpretations of the position of Indonesian Muslims in the face of diversity of beliefs and economic-political situations. Therefore, even though they seem "obsolete", pesantren, through their kyai, apparently still take an active role in welcoming Islamic populism.

The countryside as one of the loci of Islamic populism in Indonesia can also be seen from the historical development of the countryside itself. Taking the same research object as Pamungkas, Bazzi et.al (2018) found that the elite strength of the Miftahul Huda pesantren cannot be separated from the history of class struggles in the countryside that occurred in the mid-1960s. The agrarian conflict related to land redistribution and the implementation of the Basic Agrarian Law (UUPA 1960) is an important historical moment for the emergence of elite domination of pesantren in rural areas. Land assets belonging to landlords which are converted into the status of "waqf pesantren" is one of the strategies so that their lands are not taken over by the exponents of the 1960 Basic Agrarian Law (BAL), as is the case in areas such as Ponorogo, East Java (Castles, 1966). Securing land possession by rural Muslim landlords from the communist peasant class, according to Bazzi et.al (2018), is an important historical point for the emergence of the power of political Islam, which was transformed into Islamic populism, in rural West Java.

In addition to the findings of Pamungkas and Bazzi et.al, a study by Buehler (2016) related to the application of *sharia* regional law (*peraturan daerah*) also strengthened the position of the village as the locus of Islamic populism in Indonesia. Taking West Java as one of his research locations, Buehler found that the successful implementation of the *sharia* regulation was driven by individual actors such as kyai who were not tied to formal organizations such as political parties. Buehler started his study from the fact that Syari'ah regional regulations have proliferated in various places in West Java, while the votes for Islamic-based political parties tend to be static or even declining. From there he later found that there had been a shift in the "logics of power accumulation". During the New Order, the distribution of power was centralized in the circle of the national elite. However, after the collapse of the New Order, local elites, in this case, kyai and landlords, who previously depended on the center, quickly transformed into autonomous local elites. This shift has allowed local elites such as high school seniors to freely push their agendas in their respective areas. According to Buehler, the strength of the local elites that succeeded in taking the momentum after this reformation could not be separated from the long history of controlling economic-political access in the village since the Dutch colonial period.

In a broader context, the post-reform era was also marked by the development of studies of local elites who began to focus their attention on political dynamics at the local level (Aspinall & Fealy, 2003; Choi, 2012; Hadiz, 2010; Harris et al., 2004; Van Klinken & Nordholt, 2007; Van Klinken, 2009). These studies, despite their diversity, agree on one thing, namely that along with the collapse of the New Order power for more than 30 years, local elites who were previously incorporated and subject to the monopoly of central power, are now emerging and emerging as new forces. Decentralization, as opposed to the centralization of the New Order, not only released the domination of the center over the regions but also gave birth to a local elite class that was independent of the central political elites. Therefore, reflecting on the studies of the local elite, coupled with the findings of Pamungkas, Bazzi et.al, and Buehler, the countryside and its community dynamics are an important part that must be studied in the context of the development of Islamic populism in rural areas.

However, it is important to note that the majority of studies on local elites and studies conducted by Pamungkas, Bazzi et.al, and Buehler do not place the rural situation, along with local elites driving Islamic populism, in the context of the broader development of capitalism. The populist response of

Muslims to the political-economic situation of their respective class positions inevitably makes an analysis of the development of capitalism important. On the other hand, Hadiz and Robison's proposition that puts capitalism as the background/arena for the development of Islamic populism is indeed appropriate. However, it is important to note that although they both claim capitalism as their analytical proposition, this move reflects a theoretical novelty in the study of political Islam in Indonesia (Anugrah, 2016), capitalism still seems to be a mere patch. Hadiz and Robison's focus still revolves around changing state institutions and the extent to which these changes provide or narrow opportunities for the emergence of Islamic populism. Buehler (2017) even states that Hadiz and Robison's analysis is more like the "old social movement" approach than the class approach because it anchors its premise to state institutions as a determining factor in explaining Islamic populism. Meanwhile, for the author, apart from anchoring the analysis of Islamic populism to state institutional changes, Hadiz and Robison separate these institutional changes from the broader development of capitalism. The separation made them both, especially Hadiz, trapped in the neo-institutionalist approach which they criticized themselves (see Robinson & Hadiz (2004)).

The analysis of capitalism must start from the premise that capitalism is a "social relation" (Marx, 1973), that is, relations related to access to production and reproduction that bind the entire population to historically certain classes. In the rural context, we must examine how the formation and dynamics of class relations are formed and developed. Focusing on this process can provide us with a solid foundation on which to place the development of Islamic populism. Pamungkas and Buehler have alluded to the important role of local rural elites in pushing the political Islam agenda. However, it is important to note that we must place the emergence of local elites as a social category in the development of capitalism specific to rural areas and not merely in the context of local political/rural political struggles. The struggle for control of production resources in rural areas, as mentioned by Bazzi et.al, can be a guide in observing the development of class formations formed between local elites and the masses in the context of Islamic populism. Furthermore, this article will try to explore how the process of developing capitalism in rural areas, viewed from class dynamics in agrarian change, presents the material basis for the development of Islamic populism in rural areas.

This article attempts to answer the question of how the Islamic populism in the context of the development of capitalism in rural areas emerges. The context of the development of capitalism in the countryside is important because it will provide an overview of how the control of the sources of agrarian production shapes class formation in the countryside. Class formation in rural areas, in turn, will provide an overview of how actors, in this case class, can emerge and have the power not only in the economic aspect but also in the political and cultural aspects. Changes in agrarian control relations, therefore, will provide a background on how Islamic populism can grow and develop in rural areas.

ISLAMIC POPULISM: AN AGRARIAN CHANGE APPROACH

This article combines Marx's political economy approach (1973; 1992), critical agrarian studies (Bernstein, 2010), and Islamic populism studies (Hadiz, 2016; Weyland, 2017). In *Capital* (1992), Marx said that to investigate the capitalist system, the first step that must be done is to investigate the production of "commodities", because commodities are the only element that can meet the needs of human life. As an element of subsistence, commodities are created, exchanged, and consumed following the "social division of labor" which spans various sectors including agriculture, industry, and so on. This social division of labor reflects the class division between those who get the product (value) and those who produce it (labor). The class division in society, therefore, can be seen in how commodity production was organized and reorganized throughout history because in commodities there is a "rich totality of many determinations and relations" (Marx, 1973).

In subsequent developments, Marx's theoretical exposition of the development of capitalism and class relations inspired various Marxist theorists in various parts of the world. One of the most well-known is the debate about the historical emergence of capitalism, known as the "transition debate" (Denemark & Thomas, 1988), and the "primitive accumulation" debate, which is a theoretical formulation to explain how capitalism relations develop (De Angelis, 2001; Glassman, 2006; Hall, 2012; Read, 2002). Another development took place in critical agrarian studies. Bernstein (2010) states that Marx's legacy in agrarian studies rests on the importance of sites of agrarian production in rural areas (such as plantations, forests, and mines) in the development of capitalist relations because these sites contribute abundant capital and cheap labor—a statement also contained in Chapter 8 *Capital* entitled "the so-called primitive

accumulation”, in which Marx discusses the emergence and development of capitalism by taking England as a case in point.

This article uses a critical agrarian approach (Bernstein, 2010) to explain how the development of capitalism in rural areas becomes the background of the emergence of Islamic populism. The critical agrarian approach tries to explain how the mastery relations of agrarian resources, such as production facilities (land, inputs), work, production products, and markets form “class composition” and “class relations”. Class composition is a description of classes in a certain historical (objective) space, while class relations concern how classes interact (subjectively) (Bernstein, 2010). Questions about (1) who controls the means of production, products, markets; (2) who hires the work (hired in) and rents out the work (hired out); (3) and what is the function of the production, whether for mere subsistence or accumulation (Zhang, 2015) will give an idea of how the composition and class relations develop.

Islamic populism can be explained by placing it in the development of class composition and relations – or Bernstein (2010) calls it “class dynamics” – in the countryside. Apart from the separation between the study of class composition and relations in agrarian studies (Habibi, 2021), the analysis of class composition must be continued with an analysis of class relations in the historical development of capitalism (Oya, 2004). The reason behind the need for sustainability is that class relations are not only concerned with the image of class but also how the class is experienced by society. Although class position can determine all ongoing social practices, these practices are not always perceived as exploitative class relations. Elements of identity such as religion, race, and gender would become social expressions when changes in agrarian resource control relations take place. Mastery of the means of production, work, and reproduction, therefore, always involves the expression of identity (Bernstein, 2010).

Based on the above approach, Islamic populism is a “political strategy” for the dominant classes in the countryside. Weyland (2017) defines populism as a strategy of “personal leadership” to control the masses (“the people”) under their control through electoral means. Weyland draws on the experiences of Europe and Latin America. In the context of Islamic populism in Indonesia, the people’s proxy is replaced by “ummah” because this term is extracted from sources of Islamic teachings that are more in line with the identity of the masses and can function to “suspend” the differences in interests between them (Hadiz, 2016). Although personal leadership characteristics are correlated with Buehler’s (2016) study of political Islam in West Java and Sulawesi, cross-class alliance – with the bourgeoisie playing a major role – are more representative of Islamic populism in Indonesia as a whole. Likewise with the electoral route, although it occurred in Europe, Latin America, and Turkey (Hadiz, 2016), demonstrations were also an option that was taken in the ADI.

Islamic populism, therefore, is a dominant class political strategy which, with the ummah narrative, forms cross-class alliances with the lower classes to achieve the goal of political economy, namely controlling access to material resources. In the rural context, Islamic populism is placed in the development of capitalism, concerning the relation of control over sources of agrarian production. “Social facts” in the form of changes in the control of the means of production and reproduction or class composition always involve efforts to translate non-class elements into “political facts” (Bernstein, 2010). The translation effort is aimed at securing, or fighting, in the context of agrarian production sources.

METHODS

Site

This article is the result of field research conducted in a village called Bulak (not the real name) in the Bogor Regency, West Java. This village was chosen because it is one of the large ADI bases. In addition, this village also allows data on the history of agrarian change to be extracted because informants over the age of 70 are still available, even though archival document data is relatively scarce.

This article takes a qualitative approach as a research method because it seeks to reveal the meaning experienced by individuals and the relationships between them in depth related to certain phenomena (Creswell, 2007), namely agrarian change and Islamic populism. To reveal these meanings and relations, the field approach in this article begins by placing Marx’s key concepts (relations of production, work, class) in a complex reality, linking these concepts with the field data obtained, and reflecting these data back into the field new concepts (Mezzadri, 2021). This article uses various data sources including in-depth interviews, observations, and document studies. Sources of data derived from interviews were

also obtained through the “narrative/oral history interview” technique. This technique is carried out to explore “memory” and is intended to reconstruct the past because of the very limited written archive data (Chew, 2000). Because the written archive is very limited, narrative interviews are mostly used in this article.

I conducted this research with two field visits, namely from January to March 2020 and October 2020 to February 2021. The first field visit was spent to find suitable research locations and guide informants. In addition, the author used this first visit to explore the general description of the village including its history, demographic structure, commodities, and the main livelihoods of the villagers. Oral histories and literature studies are helpful in obtaining this general picture. In particular, the “commodity chain” approach (Hopkins & Wallerstein, 1986) is used in the narrative interview process to reveal the history of the social relations of production, namely the agrarian domination relations, which lie behind them.

The second visit was spent exploring knowledge about class dynamics and their relationship to the development of Islamic populism. In-depth interviews, observation, and literature study methods are very useful in this process. Most of the interviews were semi-structured. Informal conversations and observations were more often carried out because when in the village, ADI was a topic that was considered “sensitive” so it was impossible to ask “openly” about this. Starting from narrative interviews, information about class composition and relations was obtained. In this stage, knowledge about the linkage between class dynamics and the development of Islamic populism is gained little by little. The narrative interview process also makes an important contribution in building “trust” with the villagers so that in-depth interviews and observations to gain knowledge about Islamic populism can be conducted.

This research has also been delayed since March 2020 and only run again in October 2020 due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This outbreak also affected the data collection process. However, with a fairly strict village health protocol, the fieldwork process can still be continued, although with a slightly decreased intensity compared to the first visit.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historical Background

The history of the development of capitalism in Bulak has been going on since the entry of Dutch colonialism. As stated by Hoadley (1994), since the entry of Dutch colonialism, the social relations of production have changed drastically, from what was previously relatively “communal” and subsistence to become private – though not fully – and commercial. The forms of control of the means of production, work regimes, and rural agrarian reproductive relations that we know today, instead of being an inherent feature of Javanese society, were actually injections from the Dutch colonial era. While plantations are directly owned by foreign plantation companies (Pelzer, 1986), rice and secondary crops are managed by indigenous people. The control over the means of production, production products, work systems, and reproduction is carried out by a handful of village elites who are representatives of the village apparatus and the ulama.

The lands in the village were formerly owned by the Lurah and the hajj pilgrims. There are the famous HM and HD. HM was also the first village head here during the Dutch era. Since the era of independence until now, the lands were passed on to their children and grandchildren. In fact, that land is “bent” as the term used to be, meaning “Cannot be owned.” (AR, 95 years, Tenant Farmer)

This land tenure by the ulama and village officials was the result of Dutch political policy. In accumulating profits in Java, the Dutch used local Muslim elites as their “cultural brokers” (Buehler, 2016; Geertz, 1960) while at the same time keeping them away from political activities (Benda, 1958). The use of this local elite became more and more firmly established at the end of the 19th century, marked by a change in the regime for the control of agrarian resources in rural Java (Kano, 1984). In this historical period, land privatization such as buying and selling, renting, and pawning began to occur massively, as well as the use of daily wage and profit sharing (*maro*) mechanisms in the implementation of production activities.

Sangadji (2021) mentions that the establishment of Dutch colonialism was the first milestone in the occurrence of “primitive accumulation” which is the initial formation phase of capitalistic social relations as already mentioned. From this process the emergence of classes in rural West Java can

already be seen. The ulama, as well as the hajj, became a class of landlords and capitalist farmers who got their wealth from the agrarian production process. Most of the rest of the village population is absorbed into various classes such as tenants, farm laborers, informal non-agricultural workers or both. The class position of the ulama and the hajj provided a large base of social and political power. This is indicated by several things. First, the landlord clerics, especially those who did not become village officials, and hajjis, succeeded in mobilizing resistance against colonialism when their capital accumulation was disrupted by Dutch policies such as the establishment of plantations and forced cultivation during the Japanese colonial period. Second, the high economic access of the ulama goes hand in hand with the also large cultural and political access. Many of the ulama and hajjis, besides controlling the sources of agrarian production, become village officials and leaders of local assemblies or pesantren. Third, ulama and hajj get great access in the form of a network to the center of power. This took place especially after the colonial period ended. Fourth, thanks to the great economic, political, and cultural access, the ulama and hajj are not only safe during the “crisis” period, but also can take advantage of the situation.

This power continues to this day. The class formation in the countryside, with ulama and hajj as the dominant class, is relatively stable. When the wave of political parties began to spread to the villages, the ulama and hajjis also emerged as party leaders. The dominant party in Bulak Village is Masyumi. According to AA (96 years old), Masyumi's vote of support in Bulak reached almost 100%. The position of the ulama and hajjis in this party added to their strength. This has been especially evident since the Japanese era took place (Benda, 1955). In addition to being party leaders, many of them held positions as PETA's military leaders.

The dominance of Islamic forces in Bulak made the influence of the communists very small, which can be considered the main driver of the mobilization of the working classes in the countryside. According to AA, the influence of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) was minimal, marked by the “*tulis tonggong*” (write shoulder) incident in which the names of tea plantation workers were included as party members. For the rest, no signs of the PKI's strength were found in Bulak. The turmoil of “unilateral action” in the implementation of land redistribution of the 1960 LoGA did not spread to Bulak, although it had threatened and disrupted production activities a little. In 1965, when massacres and political riots occurred in various places, Bulak Village and many villages in the West Java region were relatively calm, except in certain places such as Indramayu (Safitri, 2018).

Green Revolution: The Upside Down of Clove and Melon

The power of clerics and hajjis was getting stronger entering the New Order. Even though Masyumi was disbanded, this did not affect their dominance. In fact, at this time, many of them succeeded in expanding their capital accumulation. This period is known as the green “revolution”. Patel (2012) stated that this revolution was the direct opposite of the red “revolution” that was instigated by many communist powers when the Cold War escalated.

The national political turbulence won by the military and Islamist factions made Indonesia fall into the arms of the western bloc led by the United States (US). The 1960 LoGA was discontinued and replaced with massive food subsidies and economic and political structural adjustments. (Robison, 1986). This moment was a victory for the ruling class in the countryside. Those who had been “threatened” by the communist forces, can now rise up and gain wealth from the new economic and political regime.

In this process, class differentiation in the countryside was getting worse (Husken & White, 1989). The control of agrarian resources, which had previously been dominated by the landlord classes and capitalist peasants, is now getting bigger. In Bulak, the ulama and the hajj have further strengthened their position in the economic, political, and cultural aspects. The Green Revolution targets the production of commodities such as rice and secondary crops to stabilize the national food stock, the majority of which is only distributed in the upper-class layers. Meanwhile, residents who only have small land (below 1 ha) and limited production inputs have to struggle to maintain their reproductive resources. “Tools as well as capital loans are distributed to those with large lands (ulama and hajj) ... irrigation is also the same ... those with two plots of land will not get it ...”, said AR. In fact, many of them were thrown into poverty by losing their agrarian production sources and had to be willing to become farm laborers or work in other informal sectors. (Kusno, 2010). Through the clove intensification project (Situmorang, 1985), landlords such as KA (65 years) and capitalist farmers such as HA (64 years) were able to accumulate extraordinary wealth. In just a year, KA can earn a net profit of almost two million rupiah, while HA even reaches more than three million rupiah. This figure is fairly large because in the 1980s,

the price of rice in the market was only Rp. 125/kg. This process of wealth accumulation can occur because of the availability of cheap land and labor in the countryside. When political turbulence creates a crisis, only the ulama and wealthy hajjis are able to survive and even turn the crisis into a land of profit.

Holding the role as cultural brokers, they gain political access both nationally and locally. In rural areas, people like KA and HA become members of local Farmer Groups (Poktan) which have broad access to subsidies and markets for selling produce. According to HA, Poktan consists of farmers who own at least 1 ha of land or more. He referred to them as “original farmers”, while farmers with land ownership of less than 1 ha were considered “non-original farmers” and could not enter Poktan and control subsidies for seeds, fertilizers, and medicines.

KA, who is the leader of the pesantren and the assembly as well as HM's son-in-law, gets a supply of labor from the students and residents who, according to one of his workers, U (63 years old), takes the form of “devoted work”, namely voluntary work with low wages below the general standard, not to mention the benefits derived from the practice of pawning and renting land. Meanwhile, HA, who is purely a capitalist farmer, gained access to capital from the political network he got from the police and military thanks to President Suharto's regular visits to the large Tri-S Tapos farm in the village next to Bulak (Bachriadi & Lucas, 2001). Through this capital, HA can expand its clove and melon business outside the Bogor area. While KA adopts service work, HA adopts paid work for a full year. In addition, both KA and HA also lease their land to residents as well as receive mortgages from residents.

The working system in Bulak is a legacy of the Dutch colonial era. While the system of “serving work” is a privilege obtained by a kyai like KA, the work system is generally closed to a kyai/landlord and open to capitalist farmers like HA. Closed nature means that workers who can rent out their labor are only those who are close to the kyai/landlord. In Bulak, the average resident who works for the kyai is called “*santri*”. They are usually people from the local village or the village next door. This system still survives today because the ulama-santri relationship is deeply embedded in the daily life of the villagers and, although not as intensive as it used to be, is still used because it benefits the ulama. Meanwhile, an open system means that workers from anywhere are free to rent out their labor to capitalist farmers, even though the profit percentage is only in the form of money, unlike the *santri* who simultaneously get the harvest and “protection” from the kyai/landlord.

Yes, if you are the same as kyai, you have to obey how much you want to be paid. We are taught to have respect for the kyai because they are our guide in order to be safe in this world and the hereafter. If there is a problem here, the kyai will also help the residents. As much as possible we repay their services (U, 69 years old, Agricultural Laborer-Farmers Tenant)

Although clove commodities, and especially melons, are relatively easy to access, the strength of capital and political networks is a determinant of differences in access to rural communities. Landlords and capitalist farmers such as KA and HA have easy access to the means of production, labor and markets. With political power, they can sell their crops directly to wholesale market traders. Meanwhile, they can get seeds and fertilizer from village cooperatives. In addition, ulama and hajj usually played an important role as irrigation regulators, which made waterways to their lands abundant—as was the case in other villages in West Java (see, for example, Horikhosi (1976)). “In the past, cloves were sold directly to cigarette factories, not through cooperatives. Incidentally, it's an acquaintance of mine, so it's easy,” said HA.

From this source of wealth, the landlords and capitalist peasants could increase their social power in the countryside. This ability can be seen from how KA became a political broker for every political party that wanted to seek support in their village, both during the New Order and after. In addition, people like KA can influence development policies in the village such as infrastructure procurement projects or the disbursement of the village budget. Meanwhile, HA can invest the profits in their children's education up to higher education and boost their family status to become highly respected in the village. In fact, the average child managed to become a village elite or successfully build a household in the city and become part of urban political Islam. This shows the link between the rural bourgeois class formation and the populist politics they promote with similar developments in urban areas.

While the few landlords and capitalist farmers controlled most of the sources of agrarian production, the majority of the population turned into smallholders, agricultural laborers, or informal non-agricultural workers. U (69 years), HO (68 years), and MN (76 years) are examples. Their downfall was mainly due

to their vulnerability to the agrarian system during the green revolution and was evident when melon and clove prices fell.

They all come from small farming families with land holdings ranging from 0.1 to 0.5 hectares. In the agrarian structure in the countryside, these small farmers belong to what Bernstein (2010) calls petty commodity producers (PCPs), namely those who on the one hand can hire labor and accumulate, but under certain conditions, they also sell their labor to landlords or capitalist peasants. Even though U and HO had time to taste the blessings of cloves and melons, it was a steep road and the blessings did not last long. While U relies on agriculture for his livelihood, MN is an informal trader and is a seasonal agricultural laborer. She and her husband have been traders for decades because they have to cover their narrow plot of land due to crop failure. This crop failure did not occur naturally, but was due to lack of access to seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation. MN and her husband are still lucky because they did not lose their land. So many villagers like him had to lose their land, as experienced by HO.

Before getting to know cloves and melons, HO was a small farmer who also worked informally in the property sector.¹ Meanwhile, U relies on his narrow plot of land while working as a farm laborer in the KA clove plantation.² When cloves entered the village in the 1980s, many people like U and HO, who initially planted secondary crops, were forced to lose competitiveness and transform into farm laborers before finally daring to borrow capital from landlords to start small clove plantations. This defeat was caused by the rising rents of land that people like them couldn't afford. With a fairly tight job market, people like U and HO inevitably have to work for KA and have to be willing to accept substandard wages because KA is the only person willing to hire them.

The two of them and some of the other small farmers had success in managing cloves and melons, although many from their class had to bite their fingers because they failed to compete for land rent, especially from outsiders. However, this success was only temporary. By the mid-1990s, the price of cloves in Bulak had fallen drastically. This was due to the monopoly of Suharto's cronies by making the Village Unit Cooperative (KUD) the only door for clove sales from the village. Meanwhile, the melon commodity was successfully controlled by Chinese businessmen who saw an opportunity and eventually invested large amounts of their capital, outperforming the villagers, including the landlord class and Muslim capitalists such as KA and HA.

When the price of cloves plummeted and melons were controlled by Chinese businessmen, many of the villagers who had previously been successful suddenly became bankrupt. Having fallen from the stairs, small farmers like U and HO have to deal with large amounts of debt and lose their various assets such as land, houses, vehicles, and so on (as the proverb says: rub salt into the wound). "My generation is one of the unlucky generations because they didn't have time to taste "green gold" (melon) and cloves because my father had taken them bankrupt. It's all because of Tomi (Soeharto) and the Chinese people," said M, a 44-year-old farm laborer.

At this moment, even though the ulama and hajj have declined, it is capital and a large political network that have saved them. Then, they can also turn the crisis into an advantage. They are even considered to be "saviors" for the confused villagers, by lending money and employing them, even though they are paid cheaply and even without being paid at all. Landlords and capitalist farmers like them also still have a large safety net on commodities such as rice and secondary crops. "Fortunately, KA helped me. Even though the wages are small, if it wasn't for him, I might not be able to pay the debt. So, it's still good to have someone who can give you a job," said U.

The Raising of Chinese Businessman

Over time, the arrival of Chinese businessmen in the 1990s turned out to be gradually threatening the economic and political position of the local Muslim elites. From the melon business, they ventured into the teak plantation and property sector. Entering the 2000s, Chinese businessmen began to build villas and resorts around the village and became dominant. In fact, some old villas and resorts are deserted by visitors and closed because they have lost sales. In addition, Chinese businessmen converted clove plantations and vacant land into teak plantations. They even had time to employ local Muslim leaders. This control of the plantation and property sectors coincided with their entry into the local political arena

¹ Interview with HO, November 8, 2020.

² Interview with U, November 8, 2020.

through village head elections (pilkades). This intervention culminated in winning their candidate and made their intervention in several village development projects stronger.

The lurah (kades) dares not harass the Chinese people. It's because he is supported by them anyway. Take a look at R & C villas and resorts, the road is smooth, the water is good. Although there is noise of parties and fireworks, they are never reprimanded. (KA, a landlord)

The expansion of agrarian and property businesses, to political intervention, is clearly a real threat to the local Muslim Bulak elites. On the other hand, this phenomenon also sparked an antipathetic response from the working class and tenant farmers. In addition to limited access to land and work, villa and resort activities also disturb the “calm” of the village, especially when religious rituals such as regular recitations are carried out. The sound of music and firecrackers sounded loud with a fairly frequent intensity. The new culture exhibited by Chinese businessmen through their property business is a threat to the survival of the Bulak community, who have long made Islam a symbol of their daily life. In fact, there was an almost unilateral closure of the residents of Bulak against one of the resorts for allegedly holding a liquor party, although the action soon subsided due to negotiations between village officials, clerics, and resort owners.

They are really rude (Chinese businessmen)! Just build (villas and resorts) here and there. Never heed scholars like me. Disturbing order... this village is known for its strong Islam! I suspect their presence will destroy us, Muslims here. (KA, a landlord)

This land and political control by Chinese businessmen became the background for the development of identity politics in Bulak. The expansion of agricultural land and the property business on the one hand and the narrowing of job opportunities on the other have become a “social fact” which is not only perceived as a mere class experience, but also includes religious elements which are marked by feeling disturbed by villagers in carrying out their religious rituals. This fact becomes a “fire in the husk”, and with the right political interpretation, will be a great explosion.

Islamic Populism in the Rural Areas

The emergence of Islamic populism in rural Bulak is closely related to the changing relationship of mastery of agrarian resources. There were five moments of agrarian change that became the background for this emergence, including the fall of melon and clove commodities; business expansion by Chinese businessmen; the political intervention of Chinese businessmen; lack of job opportunities; and the entry of “foreign” cultures. These five points sparked responses from various social classes in Bulak.

First, the fall of melon commodities into the hands of Chinese businessmen. In this moment, many villagers who had time to enjoy the green “gold”, suddenly had to be willing to lose the gold in an instant. It can be said that almost all the informants I met always highlight anti-Chinese sentiments when talking about history and village development.

Second, the arrival of the Chinese businessman was a decisive factor in influencing the economic and political dynamics in Bulak village. After successfully mastering the melon commodity, Chinese businessmen expanded into other commodities and even other sectors. In the agricultural sector, these businessmen have started to cultivate teak plantations which are becoming more and more widespread. In villages next to Bulak, their total plantations can reach more than 5 hectares. In other sectors, the expansion of Chinese businesses is marked by the proliferation of luxury villas and resorts. One of the majestic resorts named R & C was even able to close other resorts that had been around for a long time.

Third, in the political context, Chinese businessmen began to display their power. The climax was that they were able to defeat the power of the ulama and the haj who were previously dominant in the village head election (pilkades). Apart from the existence of some ulama who joined coalition with Chinese businessmen in the election, but later on, these Chinese businessmen are increasingly independent from their “political friends”. They increasingly dominate the direction of village development policies in both the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, such as infrastructure development in the form of irrigation and road widening.

Fourth, due to increasing business expansion, the majority of job opportunities in the agriculture and property sectors are increasingly dominated by Chinese businessmen. Many of the younger generation of the village are forced to work in places owned by Chinese businessmen. This younger generation mostly comes from small farming families who fell due to the melon monopoly and the falling price of cloves. The agricultural sector provides fewer job opportunities than the property sector. In teak

plantations, people like M (44 years old), who is a child of HO and does not own land, for example, must be willing to compete with workers from outside the village who are more trusted by the garden owner. Only a few villagers can work on teak plantations. The people who work on these plantations are also usually close people or landlord hajj laborers who can enter and work on the plantations on their links. Land tenure by Chinese businessmen also increases rental prices due to the dwindling availability of land. Many of the villagers cannot afford the rent. Indeed, there are also those who are still able to rent land, but usually they are in partnership with each other and this is very rare.

Meanwhile, people like M can usually work in the property sector such as R&C. However, it is important to note that although this job opportunity is wider, the working conditions experienced by the villagers are very tough. In a day, they are required to work for 12 hours with a break of less than one hour. The wage paid is IDR 50,000/day with a 100% deduction if the person concerned is sick or has a work permit.

Fifth, the establishment of villas and resorts usually invites people from outside the village to come to Bulak. In the villa or resort, they usually held lavish parties and events that were considered against the religious norms of the village. While villas usually only have parties on the weekends, resorts can host parties on weekdays. The sound of fireworks and loud music was enough to disturb the villagers. The location of the resort which is next to residents' homes not only interferes with their relaxing time at home, but also disrupts the assembly's routine recitation activities. There have even been several puffs of smoke from fireworks that covered the streets and entered people's homes. KA even suspects that the R&C resort activity is an activity that wants to destroy the Muslims in the village.

These five things are preconditions for the emergence of Islamic populism in rural areas. Sources of agrarian production, especially land, as a source of life, are considered to have been usurped by the Chinese. Various classes, ranging from landlords, capitalist farmers, small farmers, and farm laborers unite under the "jihad command" of their ulama to respond to changes in the control of agrarian production sources in their place.

It is important to note that even though they are in alliance, they have their own unique and distinct responses. The landlord class and capitalist farmers feel that the expansion of teak plantations and property will eventually displace their land tenure. Very few large village landowners can compete with Chinese businessmen. In addition, the increasing political power of Chinese businessmen is also another threat. Landlords such as KA and capitalist farmers such as HA feel that the political stage of the village and their influence in village development policies continues to decline. This, according to them, can further reduce their influence on rural communities in the wider context.

Meanwhile, the smallholder class felt threatened that they could no longer farm because of the high rents of land. In addition, those who usually conduct regular recitations feel very disturbed by the property business activities of Chinese people. In fact, they think that if this continues, it is not impossible that in the future Bulak Village will lose the element of Islam as a symbol and practice of their daily life. As for the agricultural working class, they think that Chinese businessmen have narrowed down their job opportunities in both the agricultural and property sectors. In these two sectors, they think that Chinese businessmen are more accommodating to foreign workers. In addition to lack of job opportunities, the workers also have the same aspirations regarding Islamic values which have been disrupted due to property business activities.

This social fact in the form of changes in the control of agrarian resources is translated into political facts by the ulama who are also landlords. This can happen because the ulama, as *mu'allim*, are considered as people who have more abilities than ordinary people. This legitimacy has been built for a long time, namely since Dutch colonialism entered the Java countryside. This has been strengthened by the economic and political power dominated by the ulama, along with the hajj, since the colonial period, and has been increasing since the New Order took place.

In Bulak, the legitimacy of the ulama is marked by the routine activities of the assemblies and pesantren which are never absent for a whole week. There are study schedules that are neatly arranged from Monday to Sunday. In addition, the assembly is the only organization where various village issues are discussed: it can be through a fiqh study or an interpretation study. Apart from being a place for mobilizing anti-colonial resistance, for several times the assembly in Bulak has also organized residents to expel water tankers belonging to a well-known mineral water company for damaging roads. In addition, the assembly also plays an important role in defending the population when there are road disputes with outside developers. The role of the ulama is very vital. Many residents say that the ulama

are important figures in solving the problems of the population. These problems are in the form of inheritance disputes, marriage and divorce, cases of criminality or thuggery, to become “instructors” in increasing the productivity of farming and non-farming businesses owned by the population. When the agrarian crisis occurred in Bulak, the people considered the ulama to be “saviors” who provided them with capital loans and jobs, no matter how large the capital and wages were and how big the consequences they had to endure.

In this village, kyai or ulama not only teach the Koran, but also take care of agriculture, marriage and inheritance issues. There is a saying, “ngeprok cai memeh ceret” (covering the water before it spills), meaning that before the problem gets bigger, it must be solved. (KA, a landlord)

The legitimacy of the ulama and the important role of the assemblies provided them with a direct connection to the masses. Through lectures, recitations, and daily encounters, the ulama were able to organize other classes into their power. However, the capacity of the ulama here is not an individual capacity. They, even though they have their own assemblies, must align themselves with one another in perceiving problems and encouraging their populist response.

It was in this context that ABI mobilization took place in Bulak. As a figure who has Islamic legitimacy, the scholars interpret the facts of agrarian change into facts of populist struggle. One of the hadiths that is famous for being the interpretation of scholars in this context is “*isy kariman aw mut syahidan*”. This hadith has the meaning of “living noble or dying as a martyr”. The meaning implied in this hadith is that every resident in the village must unite to rise up against injustice. The cruelty in question is of course the control of agrarian livelihood sources by Chinese businessmen. A noble life is an absolute requirement, according to KA, for the struggle of the villagers, while martyrdom is another condition that must be chosen if a noble life is not conveyed.

The situation is now more chaotic. The economy is getting tougher. While the government seems to be keeping quiet... we Muslims cannot be silent. We must rise. How can we rise up? we must unite... 'Isy Kariman aw mut syahidan!' We have to uphold the life that started... if we can't, then we will be martyred. (KA, Landlord)

The response of various social strata in Bulak Village is manifested in the ABI. Hundreds of motorbikes and dozens of cars flocked to the streets. Posters and billboards of one of the “high priests”, Habib Rizieq Shihab, were plastered along the main village road and became a sign of how big the mass flow was in welcoming Islamic populism to urban Jakarta.

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, two important conclusions can be drawn. First, Islamic populism, despite the many spotlights given by scientists, does not only occur in urban areas, but also echoes to the countryside. This empirical finding can only be achieved by placing the dynamics of the village in the development of capitalism specifically. The populist response anchored by the villagers involved in ADI is very distinctive, relating to the process of agrarian change. The two are interrelated.

Second, because Islamic populism is also found in rural areas, the study of Islamic populism must also be directed to the villages. Research conducted by Bazzi et al (2018), Pamungkas (2018), and Buehler (2016) is a good introduction to seeing this phenomenon. However, capitalism as a “social relation” is still not the unit of analysis in these studies. In addition to the research of Hadiz, Robison, and Wilson which is still focused on the institutional analysis of “the state”, Bazzi et al's research is also still focused on the dynamics of institutions without placing them in a wider social development, namely capitalism. In addition, although Pamungkas' research is able to present the “agency” of rural communities in Islamic populism, his research is still focused on the “ideational” aspect without relating it to the “material” aspect that forms the “agency”. Buehler's research, although it can capture the accumulation of power owned by local elites in post-New Order political Islam, Buehler still leaves a gap about how these local elites can occupy political positions as elites and how they, with the power they have, are able to bolster the masses to support political Islam.

The relationship between the control of production sources and their changes is a key element in understanding the origins and context of the development of Islamic populism in rural areas. The cross-class characteristics contained in Islamic populism must be anchored in the social relations of production, because it is these relations that shape these classes. With the context of complex and

different economic-political dynamics, it is certainly interesting to see how the villages in other parts of Java and outside Java have become the locus of the emergence and development of Islamic populism in Indonesia. Agrarian change, as a very prominent phenomenon in rural areas, will provide a nuanced picture in coloring the conversation about the topic of Islamic populism in Indonesia.

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