

***Da'wah bil Qalam:
From Political Islam to the "Islamic Way" of Resistance
through Writings in Indonesia***

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Abstrak

Di tengah pergolakan politik yang terjadi di Indonesia antara oposisi dan pemerintah yang berkuasa (di bawah Presiden Joko Widodo), beberapa organisasi Islam membentuk gerakan protes dalam aksi damai (yang mahsyur dikenal sebagai Aksi Bela Islam) serta melalui tulisan yang dapat dikategorikan sebagai bentuk gerakan Islam dengan metode da'wah bil qalam (dakwah melalui tulisan). Artikel ini mengeksplorasi ide bagaimana menulis disebut sebagai 'perlawanan Islami' bagi Muslim di Indonesia dan hubungannya dengan konsep fillah, jihad dan amar ma'ruf nahi munkar.

Dengan menggunakan penelitian kepustakaan, artikel ini mengungkap hubungan antara penulisan (da'wah bil qalam) dengan Islam politik dan "perlawanan Islami" sebagai semangat kebangkitan Islam dalam dua periode penting di Indonesia, yaitu Orde Baru dan reformasi (pasca-Soeharto atau era kontemporer). Masing-masing periode membentuk cara da'wah bil qalam yang berbeda. Di Orde Baru, karena penindasan oleh pemerintah, beberapa aktivis Islam mulai menggunakan tulisan sebagai media untuk melakukan dakwah ketimbang berkhotbah melalui mimbar-mimbar. Para penulis Muslim harus "membungkus" kritik terhadap pemerintah dengan "cara yang indah". Setelah reformasi, da'wah bil qalam menjadi lebih terbuka. Da'wah jenis ini pun telah berkembang melalui internet, khususnya di media sosial. Namun demikian, intinya masih sama: da'wah bil qalam dapat dianggap sebagai bentuk perlawanan terhadap kehadiran negara yang dianggap tidak memihak pada golongan tertentu umat Islam.

Kata Kunci: *Da'wah bil Qalam, Islam Politik, Resistensi, Perlawanan Islami, Kebangkitan Islam.*

Introduction

It is interesting to know how these periods have shaped the different way of Muslim resistance towards the governments in terms of political Islam that is related to Islamic revivalism. Scholars sometimes use this term with *Islamism* or *fundamentalism* interchangeably (Dekmejian 1980:2).

The point that I would like to explain in this article is how the Islamic movement through writing can be considered as a form of resistance to the presence of a state that is

deemed to be impartial. Delibas (2009:89) considers that Islamic movements were born in response to the diversity of social, economic and political conditions that are driven by rapid urbanisation and the forces of economic globalisation that occur in Muslim countries, both Arab and Non-Arab countries. The Islamic movement is a new discourse in studies relating to the social movement. This term appeared in the decade of the 90s (Delibas 2009:360). Delibas' research emerges the notion that Islamic movements in Turkey rose (for instance,

the Welfare Party which is considered moderate because the basis is grassroots groups, not extreme Islamic ideology) as the impact of the negative effects of globalisation and the application of neoliberal economic policies.

In her study of the rise of Islamic movement through social media in Indonesia, Nisa (2018) prefers to use the term Islamic social movement rather than being trapped in the dichotomy between the Islamic movement and social movement discussed by Delibas since this concept seems to provide a clear explanation that the study of Islamic movements is also part of the study of social movements (that is more focused on Islamic movements). In addition, the work of Watson (2018) is also prominent as a reference to see the context of the Islamic movement in Indonesia. His article helps to understand the context of a more contemporary Islamic movement in Indonesia.

In relation to the discussion of resistance, one that I found relevant to the case of the *da'wah bil qalam* in Indonesia is the work of Scott (1985). In his ethnographic study of the resistance of peasantry against landlords in Malaysia, Scott revealed that resistance could be in any form, not merely through a revolution with violence, such as pretending to be sick, swearing, gossip, and other forms of petty resistance. We can see the similarity of resistance in the context of *da'wah bil qalam* conducted by the opposition of Islamic organizations in Indonesia. They feel they have been treated unfairly by the state, so that the resistance is needed to be raised, but in an "Islamic way".

Indonesia has the largest Muslim population¹, so that it is an obvious if all of the

aspects intertwined with Islami, including politics. Indeed, *da'wah*, according to Hirchkind (2009:117), necessarily extends to political topics. It is an activity of revealing and realizing Islamic ideals of moral life through persuasion, exhortation, and deliberation, making *da'wah* as a political practice (2009:117). However, before we go further to the concept of *da'wah bil qalam*, it is crucial to understand what actually *da'wah* means since the concept is the central to the topic and is critical for social sciences (Gerring 1999:358).

Many scholars argue that the concept of *da'wah* has plethora of definitions and meanings. It could be considered as supplication, convocation, invocation, calling, appeal, summoning, invitation, request, or even missionary activity (Walker, 1995). However, the term 'proselytisation' is commonly found in anthropological sources as well as in other social science articles to define briefly (and precisely) the concept of *da'wah* (or *da'wa*) (see Abdullah, 2010; Arnez, 2009; Hirchkind, 2009; Arnez and Nisa, 2016). In general, *da'wah* can be defined as a system or a way of inviting to and educating people about Islamic moral values' (Kamaldeen and Olatubosun, 2013:2). All activities of sharing Islamic values or kindness in any various form is considered as *da'wah*.

Da'wah has become one of the most important topics in contemporary Islamic thought since it is related to the social and political functions (Hirchkind 2009:108). Hirchkind, for instance, relates this concept with Islamic counterpublic (a way to counter mainstream public narration) in Egypt where he found out that *da'wah* has become the main reason to encourage fellow Muslims in the pursuance of the greater piety in all aspects of live (Hirchkind 2009:109). In relation to this, one of the characteristics that are inseparable with *da'wah* is *fillah* ("for the sake of God"). Consequently, Muslim involved in *da'wah* activities should devote themselves only for the

¹See <https://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/>, accessed on 9th of November 2019.

goodness and for the spread of Islamic ideas. Racijs (2004) in his study about Islamic *da'wah* reveal that some Muslims perceives *da'wah* as an individual compulsory for Muslim, while others, like a classic famous Islamic scholar, Imam Ghazali, believe it as a collective duty through which oneself does *da'wah*, other Muslims do not have to do it. Furthermore, according to some Islamic scholars, *da'wah* can be categorised into three main forms: *da'wah bil khitabah* (sermon, or *da'wah* in a forum, mosque, seminar, etc), *da'wah bil hal* (*da'wah* in 'everyday life' by showing kindness, for instance) and *da'wah bil qalam* (*da'wah* by the "pen")(Kango 2014:106).

This article focus on *da'wah bil qalam* because it is the most interesting one. *Da'wah bil qalam* (literally means *da'wah* by the pen), in general, is a form of spreading the kindness in the context of Islamic values through writings for the sake of *da'wah* (Arnez, 2009:5). At this point, *da'wah bil qalam* is a way to bring or introduce Islam to the wider community, while the other two forms of *da'wah* might absence since both of them are only for particular audience. Kango (2014:106) also stated that for Muslims, *da'wah bil qalam* might be more effective since people nowadays are busy and they do not have much time to go to the mosque or Islamic seminar to listen sermons. In brief, *da'wah bil qalam* means that the *da'iyah* (people who spread the *da'wah*), brings the *da'wah* to others.

Before we go through to the next section of this article, it is also important to know in brief the normative base of *da'wah bil qalam*. Although Bowen (2014:9) states that as a world religion, Islam is not only studied in terms of sacred-Arabic texts, it is also that looking at the Qur'an as the prime source of law is important for Muslims. Bowen (2014:5) indicates that he learns the normative sources in his fieldwork in Aceh because people are taking references from the particular source of values (colonial law, contemporary civil law, and Islamic codes)

(Bowen 2003:5). The normative base of this *da'wah bil qalam* can be found in the Qur'an (Q.S. 96:1-5), the first verses received by the Prophet Muhammad which is a command to read. Arnez (2009:5) argues that these verses are considered clear proof for Muslims to write for the sake of *da'wah (fillah)* and "to let others to read or to know more about Islam", and at the same time, it is also related to the obligation of being educated.² Thus, *da'wah* becomes a way of educating people and according to Hirschkind, it is a prior cultivation of virtues (Hirschkind 2009:130). It is more than an individual salvation. *Da'wah* is a form of Islamic movement that could construct ethical sociability by speaking in front of moral error for the sake of *ummah*. It is a medium of social and political reform, and in Indonesia context, the term is very close to political party (Hirschkind 2009:131).

The reason why *da'wah bil qalam* become a part of Islamic movement in Indonesia is because Islamic writers who take the role as the oppositions to the incumbent president use writing as "weapons" to deliver critics and protests in various ways, embodied in a form of articles, articles, creative writings, or statuses in social media (Arnez 2009; Arnez and Nisa 2016). Therefore, the intention of *da'wah bil qalam*, according to Kailani (2012:33) is to enlighten and illuminate people through writings. The terms refer to the spreading of Islamic values, so that people will understand where Islam matters in a particular condition (i.e. politics). Also, it could be categorised as a part of Islamic revivalism, a transnational movement to return Islam into its roots (Dekmejian 1980:2). Arnez (2009:50) claimed that *da'wah bil qalam* in Indonesia is a compulsory for all Muslims who get involved in Islamic organisations (particularly in literacy

² Q.S. 96 (*Al-Alaq*:1-5): "Read in the name of your Lord who created. He created the human being from *alaq* (an embryo). Read, and your Lord is the owner of the Greatest Honour. That He taught with pen. He has taught the human being what he did not know".

movement) as a preparation to face “globalisation era”. This is related in Hirchkind explanation (2009) about *al-ghazwa al-fikri* (ideological conquest or cultural imperialism), a term of the ideological operation of mass media, films, secular education, and the increasing hegemony of Western cultural forms. Thus, *da'wah bil qalam* is one of the ways of preaching to combat the false or distorted understandings of Islamic principles, including in politics (2009:168).

Furthermore, *da'wah bil qalam*, according to Arnez will always be related to morality, spirituality and social responsibility since the intention of the writers suggest that their readers could follow Islamic rules and be committed in their fight against injustice and oppression (Arnez 2009:62). Similar project can be found in Cody's study on the enlightenment project for rural activists in Karampatti towards literacy and fight against injustice (Cody 2013).

The article aims to explore the idea of *da'wah bil qalam* as an “Islamic way” of resistance for Muslims in Indonesia in different orders, from the New Order and beyond and its relation to the related concepts in Islam, such as *fillah* (for the sake of God), *jihad* (holy war), and *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining goods and prohibiting evil).

Research Methods

This article is based on library research on Muslims' way of resistance in Indonesia and how this is related to the concept of *fillah*, *jihad* and *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*. Furthermore, some data that I put in this article came from my own experience as a member of Forum Lingkar Pena (Pen Circle Forum, FLP) since 2012 as well as my experience as a member who is interacted with others in the organisation who get involved in *da'wah* movement, and a research assistant in a research conducted by Australia-Indonesia Centre (AIC) on, among others, democracy in contemporary Indonesia.

Da'wah bil Qalam: Before and Early After the Fall of Suharto

In this section, I will elaborate more about how *da'wah bil qalam* rose in the era of Suharto or New Order (and early after he stepped down in 1998). Writing as a weapon to spread the critics to the government is not something new in reformation era (*era reformasi*). Rijal (2005) argues that the tendency to spread Islamic ideas through writing can be traced back at least, to the first Islamic magazine in 1985, *Sabili* (my way) which was followed by more Islamic magazines, such as *Ummi* (my mother, 1989) and *Annida* (calling, 1991). All of the magazines mentioned emerged as a response to the Suharto regime that suppressed political Islam by applying policies contradicted with Islamic values, for instance, all political parties were expected to adopt Pancasila (the five principles)³ as the single principle (*asas tunggal*). Some Islamic activists argue that this policy could mean that Pancasila would replace Islam or that *Pancasila* will be equal to (or even become) religion (Rijal 2005:431). For some Muslims, Islam should be the ultimate truth, based on the understanding that Allah's law should be above everything. Allah will be jealous if Muslims equal his law with the “man-made” one. We can see this “jealousy” in Mernissi's account, though in different context (Mernissi 2011:62). In brief, forcing *Pancasila* as the sole foundation means degrading the position of Islam. Thus, Munir (2004:4) states that the issue is not how to enforce Islamic states, but how Islamic guiding principles can be materialised in the government system.

Moreover, at that time, many preachers were controlled and prohibited to conduct *da'wah* in mosque or in seminars, some of

³³ *Pancasila* is the official, foundational philosophical theory of Indonesia. Pancasila comprises (1) Believe in the one supreme God; 2) Justice and civilised humanity; 3) the unity of Indonesia; 4) the democracy led by understanding wisdom among honorable representatives from the parliament house; 5) social justice for all of the people of Indonesia.

them even put in jail on charge spreading of hate speeches to the government (Rijal 2005:431). Because of this condition, some Islamic activists start to criticize in a “beautiful way” through *da’wah bil qalam* (Rijal 2005, Widodo 2008, Arnez 2009, Kailani 2012, Kango 2014, Isra 2016, and Arnez and Nisa 2016). This “beautiful way” of critic through creative writing could penetrate Islamic values, such as using very polite words, avoiding open critic to the government, and preferring to use metaphorical words in the study involving Forum Lingkar Pena, a massive Islamic writers organisation established in 1997 (a year before *reformasi*), this beautiful way of writing is also considered as the Islamic way of writing. This Islamic way of writing spreads the “literacy virus” as an obligation for Muslims to enlighten people (Widodo 2008, Arnez 2009, Kailani 2012, Isra 2016; Arnez and Nisa 2016).

After the fall of Suharto in 1998, *Pancasila* lost its hegemonic authority and was challenged by massive waves of “Islamisation”, especially in the form of identity politics related to religions (Nordholt 2008:2). Islamic magazines and Islamic writings also have been more “brave” to spread Islamic ideas, such as criticising governments or vividly bringing Islam to public audience (Rijal 2005:430-435) and at the same time do not lost their characteristics as Islamic way of writings. In spite of the three Islamic magazines (*Sabili*, *Ummi*, *Annida*) more and more Islamic writings were published, such as *Tarbawi* and *Saksi* (Rijal 2005:430). Both of these are affiliated to an Islamic political party, namely Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperous and Justice Party, PKS) and along with *Sabili*, all of these Islamic magazines consistently criticise the government policies that is considered as a proof of “de-islamisation”. The proliferation of Islamic magazines and writings is caused by the new era of democracy when the climate of suppressive policies towards Islam (like what Suharto did) is less (Rijal 2005:430-435).

Some scholars understand this phenomenon as a process of radicalisation and tolerance declination marked by massive number of Islamic reformist movements. These are called *gerakan tarbiyah* or *jamaah tarbiyah* (*tarbiyah* movement) (Rijal 2005, Arnez 2009, and Nisa 2018). *Reformation* era brought freedom for more transnational Islamic revivalism (reformist) and Islamic radicalism to grow, and at the same time, Islamic organisations adopted that kind of Islamic understandings, established in the name of freedom of speech and religious expression, making Indonesia less tolerance (Nordholt 2008, Robinson 2014, and Harsono 2009),

Interestingly, those transnational Islamic organisations have gained support and attention from Indonesian Muslim even though Robinson (2014:26) describes it as “the creeping influence of intolerant Wahabi models of religious purity”. In relation to this, it is argued that Islamic radicalism in Indonesia has come to its prominence with the significant contribution of financial support from international organisations from Middle East countries, such as Saudi Arabian authorities (Hefner 1997, van Bruinessen 2002, Rijal 2005, and Nordholt 2008). PKS is a salient example since not only this Islamic political party affiliated with *Jamaah Tarbiyah* or *Ikhwanul Muslimin* (Islamic Brotherhood) in Egypt, but they have also received funding from those countries and not funded by any major western donors (Nordholt 2008:15).

***Da’wah bil Qalam* as a “Jihad”: From Ahok Saga to #2019GantiPresiden**

In this section, I will discuss more about *da’wah bil qalam* in the contemporary era, especially after Jokowi has been elected as the president. In the context of Islam and for the obligation of *da’wah*, it is important to notice that all writings produced either by the “Islamic reformists”, such as those affiliated with PKS and Islamic traditionalists, such as those who

are members of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) are still considered as *da'wah bil qalam*. It does not matter where do people come from or what are their Islamic backgrounds, it is the motive or intention (*niat*) that defines a particular writing can be categorised as *da'wah* material or not. In referring to Rijal's (2005) account on the intention of *da'wah*, I see *da'wah bil qalam* is in accordance with *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining goods and prohibiting evil). It is a way to spread the goodness and at the same time, it is a "weapon" to fight against evil. Kango (2014:106) argues that *da'wah bil qalam* could possibly become the power to perform *jihad* (holy war) towards all the "enemies" of Islam. Even though the concept of *jihad* in the context of *da'wah bil qalam* and war (in its literal meaning) is significantly different, nonetheless, the core meaning is similar: a form of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* for the sake of God (*fillah*).

All of the Islamic magazines and writings mentioned above are taking part in the process of *jihad*. For the Islamic writers, media such as magazines, newspapers, social media, is the arena of *jihad* and pen is the symbol of "weapon" that can facilitate them to write. Kailani (2012:33) describes this phenomenon as a way of Muslims to find out what is the most effective way of *da'wah*. Moreover, it is also important to note that the form of *da'wah bil qalam* is different in each era: in the New Order, *da'wah* or *jihad* through writings tended to be more secretive; in the early era of *reformasi*, *da'wah* or *jihad* through writing was more open in criticising; and in the Indonesian contemporary era, *da'wah* or *jihad* is extremely open due to the presence of the internet and social media.

Now, I will discuss the contemporary issue on political Islam that has been related to *da'wah* in Indonesia since 2014, 14 years after the *reformasi*, when the country divided into political binary between those who pro-Jokowi and those who pro-Prabowo. In recent years,

since the political situation heat up between the opposition and the incumbent, demonstration movements are increasingly prevalent in Indonesia. In post-2014, when the Indonesian elections were only attended by two candidates, namely Joko Widodo (Jokowi) and Prabowo Subianto, people was divided into two: those who were pro-Jokowi (*Projo*) and the other is pro-Prabowo. These dichotomy are often involved in debates on the social media even in the trivial matters, for example Jokowi breeds a frog or Prabowo rides a horse. Everything cannot be separated from the conversation of their respective supporters. This dichotomy created two sentimental labels, *cebong* for those who are pro-Jokowi (as a mocking because Jokowi have frogs as pet) and *kampret* for those who are pro-Prabowo (literally means "bat", but it is also a mock in the daily life of Indonesian people)

It is important to understand the background issue of what happen nowadays in contemporary Indonesia concerning the relationship among Islam, politics and the state, especially in Post-Suharto Era, when the politic of identity is echoed more loudly in the atmosphere and Indonesia is considered "less tolerance". It is interesting to note that while Prabowo is supported by many Islamic parties and members of Islamic organisations who are mostly affiliated with the puritans such as the *salafi-wahabi* or *Ikhwanul Muslimin* (Islamic Brotherhood), most of the Jokowi "Muslim supporters (voters)" are coming from the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the biggest and one of the oldest traditionalist Islamic organisation in Indonesia, initiated by the grandfather of the third president, KH. Abdurrahman Wahid. In brief, the binary of Indonesia presidential election in 2014 has contributed to the emergence of public opinions that Prabowo is "more Islamic" and more "pro-Islam" than Jokowi (Harsono 2019).

As the incumbent, Jokowi has become the object of critics by the opposition. Lots of

Prabowo's supporters affiliated with Islamic organisations took the role as the opposition and frequently hold protests as their expression of insecurities about "de-Islamisation"⁴ and secularisation of Indonesia towards the government policies (the most notable was the *Aksi Bela Islam* [Defend Islam] and the #2019GantiPresiden [2019 Change the President]), either by massive scale demonstrations or through writings (via social media, publishing books, and writing in newspapers). Nevertheless, some people believe that secularisation is necessary, preventing religion to include in the political domain since it is grounded in passionate attachments and faith, incompatible with rational argument (Hirschkind 2009:136).

One of the important cases related to this binary and the concept of *jihad* that can be used as an illustration is the Ahok saga. In 2016, Ahok—Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (the former governor of Jakarta after Jokowi, a non-Muslim Indonesian with Chinese ancestry)—was convicted with blasphemy law of insulting Islam and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. While campaigning for his re-election, he told his audience (in Kepulauan Seribu, a district in Jakarta) that they should not be misled (*ditipu*) by individuals (in this context, politicians or governments) who use the verse in the Qur'an (Q.S 5:51) which states that Muslims should not allow themselves to be led by or be the allies of Christians and Jews (people of the Book). The debatable word in this verse is "*auliya*" which in this context is open to several interpretations such as leader or best friend (Watson 2018:15). Ahok, in many occasions, clarified his words that he was just afraid that some individuals will use the verse for explicitly forbid Muslims to

vote for Ahok as governor since he was a Christian.⁵

Interestingly, after Ahok's case got viral, Muslim groups had different responses to that case: pros and cons. Traditionalist Muslims, such as those who come from Nahdlatul Ulama appeared to be the first who defend pro-Ahok, while the reformist (some scholars categorised them as fundamentalist), such as those who were considered as *salafi-wahabi*, or PKS were mad with the situation. The former Islamic group supported Ahok morally as a victim of the intolerance in an Islamic-majority country since Ahok's case was considered as the violation of *Pancasila*. The latter Islamic groups, however, started to collect mass and had a plan to organise the biggest demonstration that Jakarta has ever had for demanding Ahok's trial and imprisonment (Watson 2018:15). A series of demonstrations were inevitable, known as *Aksi Bela Islam (Defend Islam Action)* started from *Aksi Bela Islam I* (October 14th, 2016) to *Aksi Bela Islam VII* (May 5th, 2017). However, the most noticeable one was the *Aksi Bela Islam III* (December 12th, 2016) and popularly known as "212" movement. Watson notes that the series of demonstrations were "the ad hoc coalition of Muslim groups splintered once more into its various factions" (Watson 2018:15). This confirms Bowen's argument in the first place that as a world religion, the understanding of Islam might be varied from one Islamic community to another (Bowen 2012:9). Islam embedded in the way of living and in the way of thinking of the particular Islamic community.

Those who get involved in the series of *Aksi Bela Islam* considered the demonstrations on the street (rally march) as a part of *da'wah* and *jihad*. In this context, the concepts of *da'wah* and *jihad* are intertwined because it brought Islamic values and it had a tendency to

⁴ In some mainstream media, some Islamic figures stated the 'de-islamisation' term openly, see, for instance, <https://kumparan.com/felix-siauw/de-islamisasi-indonesia>, accessed on September 23rd, 2019.

⁵ For the summary of the events (212 And 212 Reunion Movement), see <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/12/02/anti-ahok-protesters-opposition-camp-mark-212-rally-anniversary.html>, accessed on September 25th, 2019.

call people to do the kindness or goodness (*amar ma'ruf*) as well as avoiding or fighting the evil (*nahi munkar*). For them, what Ahok did was bad, a serious blasphemy to the sacred text of the Qur'an, so that the government should take an action immediately to "punish" Ahok. Such kind of action, for the Muslims, is a form of goodness since it is considered a way of protecting Muslims and defending the religion through which the name of the demonstrations derived from. The reason why the demonstrations were held in a series of action is because the government (specifically pointed President Jokowi) did not have any interest on the movements, he even did not appear to meet the mass (Watson 2018:15). From the Muslims point of view, who actively engaged as the participants of the "212" movement, the president tended to "protect" Ahok, prejudiced that Jokowi are not pro-Islam. Here where the campaign of "anti-Jokowi" through social media, websites, magazines, newspapers, and books initiated by the alumni of the "212" movement as a form of *jihad*, and therefore *da'wah bil qalam* has begun. There are two forms of *dakwah bil qalam*, one is texts in the literatures which include creative writings, articles, articles in edited books, magazines, newspapers, online (through website) and posts in social media, including statuses and memes.

First, since some members of Islamic organisations affiliated to the "212" movement, trust to the president Jokowi is absent, more and more critics are published. Islamic websites, for instance, always published provocatively the downside of Jokowi's regime, such as the import policy⁶ and increasing Indonesian debt from Chinese government⁷,

⁶See for instance <https://www.portal-islam.id/2019/09/akhir-yang-menyebabkan.html> (The Bad Ending)(accessed date, September 25th 2019)

⁷See <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/ekonomi/makro/17/07/31/otyh1a377-utang-ri-ke-cina-melonjak-di-era-jokowi-ini-kata-pemerintah> (The Significant Increase of Debt to China in Jokowi Era: What Government Said?) (accessed date September 25th 2019).

which are considered not pro-Islam since those policies tormented people in general (tormenting is an evil deed), and the *ummah* in particular. Thus, because of protecting the *ummah* is the priority (protecting is a good deed), spreading the writings became the obligation of the Islamic writers as a form of their *jihad*.

Moreover, critics also come from creative writings. Books such as *212: Cinta Menggerakkan Segala* (212: Love Moves Everything) written by Rosa and Arnas (2018) is a novel with the "212" movement as the background in spite the fact that both of them are members of Forum Lingkar Pena (Rosa is one of the founders of this Islamic writers community in 1997). It is a novel which criticising the government policy. At some points, Islamic writers have not moved on from their traditional way of *da'wah bil qalam*, like what they did in the New Order, where every kind of critic was covered in a beautiful-Islamic way.

Second, the *da'wah bil qalam* in social media (such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Whatsapp) are extremely different from *da'wah bil qalam* mentioned previously. *Da'wah bil qalam* in this form are more massive and difficult to control since it is a new form of media-scape and Muslims in particular (Nisa 2018:27). One of the interesting cases was the hashtag #2019GantiPresiden (2019 change the president) initiated by the alumni of "212" movement. Some reports revealed that the movement was successful in a form of resistance not only because this hashtag became the trending topic in social media, such as Twitter and Instagram, but also because Jokowi responded the movement as his way of treason and dethroning. The case of #2019GantiPresiden and the street protests that attract Jokowi's attention is similar to Castells' argument that internet has a powerful capacity to mobilise movements and revolutions (Castell 2012:229).

Some of anonymous Islamic accounts and those who oppose Jokowi, such as @mahadewi161 (Instagram account) and Muslim Cyber Army (Facebook account) becomes buzzers to criticise all of Jokowi's policies and attack Jokowi's supporters in extremely impolite manners: mocking, cursing and posting nasty words. Based on this phenomenon, I argue that the form of *jihad* or *da'wah bil qalam* in this context is not only far out from its normative concept, but also from "Islamic way" of resistance that the movement tried to build (Rijal 2005; Arnez 2009) since mocking or writing nasty words are considered as evil deeds, despite Jokowi supporters also did the same.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Taking everything into consideration, it is now clear that for the Islamic writers, media such as magazines, newspapers, social media, are their arena of *jihad* as a way of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* for the sake of the God (*fillah*) and the "pen" as a symbol of writing is their weapon instead of guns. It can be described that this phenomenon becomes the way of Muslims to find out what is the most effective way of *da'wah*. Moreover, the form of *da'wah bil qalam* is different in each era since each period shapes different way of *da'wah bil qalam*. While *da'wah* or *jihad* through writings in the New Order tended to be more "secretive" due to the oppression by the government, *da'wah* or *jihad* through writing in the contemporary era not only becomes more open, but also becomes more "creative" due to the presence of the internet and social media. Nevertheless, the point is still the same: it can be considered as a form of resistance to the government. Therefore, the term "beautiful way" of writing is similar to a term that is known as the "Islamic way". It is a concept to explain the form of creative writings penetrated by Islamic values such as using very polite words, avoiding mentioning the incumbent governments, and

preferring to use metaphorical words. Up to this point, it is clear that in Indonesian society, religion is still functional not only for the sacred rites to fulfill human needs in terms of spirituality, but also for political purposes, proven by the presence of Islam in every situation of political matters in every period of Indonesian history after independence.

Further research in social sciences, especially in anthropology is needed to explore more about the notion of *da'wah bil qalam* since research related to this topic is quite rare to find. In Indonesia, research discussing this topic is sometimes considered belong to those who are in religious department in Islamic university. However, in the field of Anthropology and in the scope of very diverse country, such as Indonesia, religion becomes a very sexy topic to study, especially if it is related to political issues. Thus, anthropological research approach to Islam could help scholars to understand more about how people perceive their faith as well as help governments to minimise conflict related to religious issues, such as radicalism or intolerance.

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