BEYOND DISBANDMENT OF ISLAMIST ORGANIZATION: EXAMINING THE ADAPTIVE RESISTANCE OF HIZBUT TAHRIR INDONESIA (HTI)

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ABTRACT. The disbandment of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) in 2017 marked a significant shift in the dynamics of Islamist movements within Indonesia's political landscape. Although officially banned, the HTI continued to operate in the shadows, employing various camouflage methods. This article analyzes how political dynamics led HTI to its outlawed status and how it adapted in pursuit of its goals amidst the challenges faced. By adopting a political opportunity structure and Islamist ideology as the theoretical framework with the case study as the method, this study scrutinizes HTI's post-disbandment endeavors at the national level and delves deeper into cases in West Java, Yogyakarta, and East Java. The primary findings of this study reveal that the disbandment of HTI reflected the peak of incongruence between the anti-system ideology they embraced and Indonesia's political structure. HTI's ideological drive to exploit electoral events in 2016-2017 eventually put them at a threshold that the ruling authority perceives as a severe threat. HTI struggled to maintain its movement, mixing overt and covert operations, and facing significant pressures and constraints. Its strength is rooted in an Islamist ideology that integrates political and religious beliefs, supported by a disciplined structure. This resilience, seen as adaptive resistance, leverages tactical ingenuity and militancy in response to external pressures and the socio-cultural context in which they operate. Nevertheless, the disbandment has rendered it nearly impossible for HTI to reestablish its expansion in Indonesia's political arena.

Keywords: Political Movement; Islamist; Elections; Political Islam; HTI

ABSTRAK. *Pembubaran Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) pada tahun 2017 menandai perubahan signifikan dalam dinamika gerakan Islam dalam lanskap politik Indonesia. Meski telah resmi dilarang, HTI tetap beroperasi secara sembunyi-sembunyi dengan menggunakan berbagai metode kamuflase. Artikel ini menganalisis bagaimana dinamika politik membawa HTI ke status terlarang dan bagaimana mereka beradaptasi untuk mencapai tujuannya di tengah berbagai tantangan. Dengan mengadopsi struktur peluang politik dan ideologi Islam sebagai kerangka teoritis dengan metode studi kasus, penelitian ini mengkaji upaya HTI pasca pembubaran di tingkat nasional dan menggali lebih dalam kasus-kasus di Jawa Barat, Yogyakarta, dan Jawa Timur. Temuan utama penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pembubaran HTI mencerminkan puncak ketidaksesuaian antara ideologi anti sistem yang dianutnya dan struktur politik Indonesia. Dorongan ideologis HTI untuk mengeksploitasi pemilu pada tahun 2016-2017 pada akhirnya menempatkan mereka pada ambang batas yang dianggap oleh otoritas yang berkuasa sebagai ancaman besar. HTI berjuang untuk mempertahankan pergerakannya, memadukan operasi terbuka dan rahasia, dalam menghadapi tekanan dan kendala yang signifikan. Kekuatannya berakar pada ideologi Islamis yang mengintegrasikan pandangan politik dan keyakinan agama, didukung oleh struktur gerakan yang disiplin. Ketahanan ini, yang dikonsepsikan sebagai perlawanan adaptif, memanfaatkan kecerdikan taktis dan militansi dalam menanggapi tekanan eksternal dan konteks sosio-kultural di mana mereka beroperasi. Namun demikian, pembubaran tersebut membuat HTI hampir tidak mungkin melanjutkan ekspansinya di kancah politik Indonesia.*

Kata kunci: *Gerakan Politik; Islamis; Pemilu; Politik Islam; HTI*

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Suharto era in 1998, Indonesia's political scene has witnessed the rise of Islamist movements. Jamaah Tarbiyah transitioned into the influential Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS), eventually involved in democratic system. In contrast, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) remained steadfast in its advocacy for re-establishing the Caliphate. Despite Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) facing restrictions in many countries, its Indonesian counterpart, HTI, enjoyed considerable freedom. Established in the 1980s and officially registered in 2006, HTI expanded its influence significantly. From academic campuses to rural areas, their reach, particularly among

educated youth, signified their growing prominence in Indonesia's socio-political landscape (Arifianto, 2019; Muhtadi, 2009; Osman, 2018).

Since 2014, under the leadership of Jokowi from PDIP, the government adopted a more aggressive stance towards Islamist movements. Amidst the political turbulence caused by the rise of conservative Islamic powers in 2016-2017, the government disbanded HTI (Mietzner, 2018). Following this, HTI was compelled to renounce various attributes such as its name and symbols. Its members faced pressure from both state officials and nationalist groups. The HTI and its caliphate ideology have since been consistently characterized as enemies of the state (Aswar, Yusof, & Hamid,

2020; Heriansyah & Rofii, 2023; Heriansyah, Rofii, & Imdadun, 2022). However, the repression on HTI members was not fully imposed. Its members were not systematically arrested or persecuted, unlike in Uzbekistan or Egypt, for example.

The covert activities by HTI members remain persisted. Their activists diligently disseminated contents about their activities and propaganda through blogs, social media, and YouTube. Magazines and tabloids they produced continued to be regularly distributed, albeit under alternative names. The subjects they discussed remained consistent, covering areas from teenage life and national politics to the status of the Muslim community from an Islamist viewpoint. HTI resumed its recruitment efforts, targeting new members through diverse informal institutions and social groups, particularly the youth. Face-to-face activities were discreetly held in private settings (Almi, Al-Amin, & Umam, 2020;Inayah, 2020).

The HTI disbandment and their subsequent resilience indicate a shift in the relationship between the state, politics, and Islam in contemporary Indonesian democracy. This article attempts to elucidate the political conditions that led to HTI's disbandment and how HTI adapted its strategy within the confines of a restrictive political landscape. The case underscores the significance of this study. Firstly, the organization, which carries a radical ideology, had enjoyed a prolonged period of relatively freedom— about 19 years since its semi-open emergence or 11 years since its formal legal establishment. Since the post-New Order era, this was the inaugural instance where the government moved to dissolve and ban an Islamist organization. Secondly, what makes the Indonesian case intriguing and possibly unique compared to other countries that have banned HTI is the transformation in the political structure closely associated with the rise of conservative Islam and the electoral contestations from 2014 to 2019 (Mietzner, 2018; Mietzner, Muhtadi, & Halida, 2018; Mujani & Liddle, 2021; Najib Burhani & Nadzir, 2021).

To explain the trajectory of the HTI movement and their responses to political changes this article assumes that political opportunity structures and the movement's ideology are pivotal. This study uses the theory contextualized within Islamist movements to delve deeper into this aspect. This theory, as mentioned by various scholars like Diwan (2021), Eyre (2021), and Meyer (2004) suggest that the progress or regression of a movement is contingent upon the available political opportunities, which could be systemic changes or shifts in the balance of power. A crucial aspect of this theory is how responses from the government or elite bodies significantly determine the outcomes of a movement. Negative or

repressive actions can diminish these opportunities, whereas positive or tolerant responses can augment them (Jima-González & Paradela-López, 2021; Ludigdo & Mashuri, 2021; Moghadam, 2020).

Several previous studies have addressed the interplay between political processes and the fate of Islamist movements. The role of HT in other Muslim-majority countries typically transpires within political systems that exhibit an authoritarian disposition or are restrictive towards Islamist movements. Take Jordan as an example; during the 1950s and 1960s, the HT movement was tolerated as a strategic means to counter the shared threat posed by communist groups. However, between the 1970s and 2000s, the organization was banned, leading to the apprehension of numerous HT activists. The HT's staunch opposition to the monarchical system inevitably put it in confrontation with state authorities. Nevertheless, the organization managed to persist and amass support in Jordan. Consequently, the government adopted a dualistic approach, oscillating between punitive measures and persuasive tactics to alleviate tensions (Mungur, 2009).

The trajectory of the HT movement in Turkey was notably shaped by shifts in the nation's political landscape. During the reign of secular regimes, especially in the 1980s to 2000s, HT was a prohibited organization accused of promoting terrorism and jeopardizing national integration. However, with the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the 2000s, there was a palpable easing of restrictions on HT. However, even the AKP, which accommodated many Islamist activists, eased restrictions on HT, they remained cautious, considering it a radical group with the potential to undermine national stability (Baran, 2006). The increase in HT activities under Turkey's AKP regime has heightened concerns regarding the fervor of radical movements within the country (Bulut, 2017).

While HT is renowned for its commitment to non-violence, the movement has faced consistent repressive actions in countries such as Egypt and Uzbekistan. In Egypt, the tumultuous relationship between the militaristic regime and the Muslim Brotherhood negatively impacted the maneuverability of HT, leading to consistent repression by security forces. Meanwhile, in Uzbekistan, since the 1990s, President Karimov has banned HT on the grounds of threatening state stability and acting as a catalyst for terrorism. Thousands of HT members were arrested and incarcerated. There were numerous reports of detainee torture involving HT members. However, after the repressive reign of Karimov ended, they reportedly continue to operate clandestinely (Ilkhamov, 2001).

Across all instances where HT has been banned, whether in countries with a wholly repressive or limited political system, HT has consistently maintained its movement's existence. Key factors bolstering their continued existence include their robust ideological framework and extensive network. As Osman (2018) highlighted, ideology plays a pivotal role in shaping collective identity, enabling HT members to foster resilience and dedication in pursuing a movement fraught with challenges. However, while it's a widely accepted assertion that HT faces movement restrictions due to repressive political structures and that their strong ideological foundation facilitates their endurance, there remains an absence of explanations regarding how the shift in Indonesia's political structure curtailed the freedom of movement for HTI and how they adapted to this new political configuration.

To understand the influence of political transitions on the HTI movement, the political opportunity structure theory illustrates how the electoral scenarios from 2014 to 2019 presented various avenues for HTI to shape its strategic directions. Political opportunities often play a crucial role in amplifying or diminishing the momentum of a movement. These opportunities encapsulate the intricate dynamics between movements and their allies and adversaries, as pointed out by Meyer (2004). A movement intending to transform the political setting tends to arise when the incumbent regime is seen as unfavorable or lacking in popularity. Such perceived negative governmental actions can spark dual reactions: they can open doors for groups wishing to instigate change via institutional pathways, but they can also pose threats, especially when the government counters with its measures (Tarrow, 2011).

Several scholars studying political opportunity structures emphasize the importance of external factors. These include the extent of public participation, significant political shifts, failures of the state to dispense justice or basic amenities and growing public discontent with the administration (Jima-González & Paradela-López, 2021; Ludigdo & Mashuri, 2021; Moghadam, 2020). Within the purview of this research, these structural determinants can either bolster Islamist movements or impede their progress (Aminudin & Masykuri, 2015; Fouad, 2021). This study narrows its focus on the electoral dynamics between 2014 and 2019, which were instrumental in leading up to the government's decisive action against the HTI.

When examining HTI's resilience, it's pivotal to highlight that their rigid ideological framework insinuates a consistent attitude toward the political system, regardless of the available political avenues.

Such a steadfast stance indicates that HTI's members are profoundly anchored in their convictions, making them less inclined to employ strategies synonymous with more moderate Islamist movements. This perspective contrasts with the premises of the inclusive-moderation theory. This theory postulates that the availability of political opportunities can steer moderate Islamist movements towards enhanced political participation (Craiutu, 2017; Somer, 2014). Consequently, these movements adopt a multifaceted approach, encompassing tactics such as mass outreach, educational initiatives, formal and informal political engagements, societal activism, media campaigns, and sometimes, resorting to violence. The choice of these strategies often reflects the political ambience of their host nations (Wiktorowicz, 2004). In the long run, active participation through established institutional pathways can curtail their extremist tendencies (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019; Mietzner, 2021). While this theory has been applied to decipher the behaviors of Islamic parties in countries like Tunisia, Turkey, Egypt, and notably Indonesia's PKS (Hadiz, 2016), it's crucial to differentiate HTI because of its uncompromising ideology. Consequently, this research departs from the predictions of the inclusive-moderation theory. It seeks to unearth HTI's reactions to the tightening political scenario, specifically assessing alterations in the militancy or adaptability of its members and supporters post-HTI's disbandment.

Delving into HTI's ideological reactions and adaptive strategies is paramount for decoding the intricacies of Islamist movements within the Indonesian political spectrum. Furthermore, this study aims to refine a theoretical paradigm that delineates the dynamics of Islamist movements navigating within a democratic setup, exhibiting tendencies of suppression towards radical religious entities. By scrutinizing HTI's strategy post-disbandment, this research aspires to fathom their flexibility in the face of political upheavals. This underlines the importance in examining the trajectory of the HTI movement and its future impact on political processes in Indonesia.

METHODS

This research adopted a case study approach focusing on HTI's strategies in bringing political actions after its disbandment. The study was conducted in three regions: West Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta, chosen for their notable HTI activities, distinct Islamic movements, and sociocultural characteristics. West Java is a hub for Islamist and puritanical Islamic movements with a soft Sundanese culture. The HTI flourishes in West Java's urban areas and campuses, making it the central location for HTI

activities and leadership. East Java is recognized as a stronghold for the NU and holds an "overt" Javanese culture. At the same time, the Special Region of Yogyakarta is predominantly a Muhammadiyah base with a "soft" Javanese culture.

Data collection employed literature reviews, document analysis, observations, and in-depth interviews centered on the political context surrounding the HTI's disbandment in 2017, including its implications on the movement's adaptation and strategies. Several HTI members and sympathizers from various regions, representing diverse demographics, were interviewed, and delved into their perspectives on political events from 2014 to 2019 and their activities post-disbandment. Additionally, interviews were conducted with some Islamic organizations' activists for they knowledges and experiences about the HTI activities. They are NU, Muhammadiyah, Persis, and MUI. The literature review explored the political opposition towards HTI, and the observations scrutinized HTI member activities' online political propagation, with platforms like Facebook and YouTube being monitored. These observations also extended to media content that broadcasted HTI ideologies.

The analysis process is conducted thematically, emphasizing textual and contextual examinations. All data are converted into text and subsequently categorized based on themes. After data reduction, several themes are then developed, including electoral politics related to the involvement of HTI actors and members, frictions and collaborations with other Islamic organizations, opposition from NU towards HTI and its implications for governance politics, the ideological responses of HTI members to the disbandment, and the range of HTI members' activities post-disbandment. From these themes, the next step is to scrutinize inter-theme relationships, with analysis topics such as the implications of changes in HTI's political propagation strategies on ideology and recruitment, the impact of electoral politics on HTI's movement patterns, and the post-disbandment Islamist movement model of HTI.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

HTI in Indonesia's Political Landscape

The global rise of HT can be traced back to its foundation by Taqiyyudin An-Nabhani in Jerusalem in 1952 as an anti-Western imperialism political organization. Their main objective is to re-establish the Caliphate that had fallen in 1924. Their ideas centered on the caliphates as political ideology, consisting religious interpretations of the Islam as political institutions and constitutional norms (Heriansyah & Rofii, 2023). The movements gained acceptance in various Muslim communities. HT branches established in other countries like Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon. However, their movement has allegedly threatened national institutions and controversially associated with terrorism, having connections with entities like Al-Qaeda or Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) without substantial evidence (Rubin, 2003). Due to resistance in the Middle East, many countries prohibited HT's activities, prompting its activists to relocate to Western nations, notably the UK and Australia, where they initiated the establishment of new branches in other parts of the world.

HT's introduction to Indonesia was pioneered by Abdurrahman Al-Baghdadi, a Palestinian-born activist that lived in Australia. Collaborating with Abdullah bin Nuh in the early 1980s, Al-Baghdadi initiated the dissemination of HT ideas in Indonesia. They started to systematically build a movement outside religious institutions, targeting university campuses as prime recruitment venues. Utilizing two intensive training methods, *halaqah* and *daurah*, their teachings became popular among students, leading to study groups being set up covertly to discuss HT's ideas and ideologies while avoiding political risks (Najib Burhani & Nadzir, 2021). Several of the early-generation students recruited emerged as pivotal figures in HTI post-reformation, including Ismail Yusanto, Muhammad Al-Khathath, Fahmi Lukman, and Hafidz Abdurrahman.

In the face of the repressive stance of the Suharto regime, HTI employed the networks of student missionary groups, which largely operated under the radar of the authorities. A considerable portion of HTI's recruitment infrastructure was deeply embedded in the Lembaga Dakwah Kampus (LDK) — a student body devoted to Islamic educational pursuits. Concurrently, another faction was drawn towards the ideologies of Ikhwanul Muslimin (IM), finding motivation in the teachings of Hasan Al-Bana. These students manifested an inclination for a more measured approach to social reforms. They emphasized an education rooted in Islamic tenets, setting them apart from HT's advocacy for radical political shifts.

Supporters of IM later laid the foundation for Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia (KAMMI), which subsequently served as a precursor to the emergence of the PKS in the early stages of the reformation period (Muhtadi, 2009). The growth trajectories of HT and IM within campuses cultivated a compelling contest of ideologies and recruitment strategies. Their relationship, though intriguing, is marked by profound disparities; broader society might view them as congruent, but at their core, they maintain distinct postures. The chasm between their philosophical underpinnings seems almost

insurmountable; while HT remains resolutely anti-democratic, IM perceives democracy as an essential conduit to realize its goals.

Following the end of Suharto's regime in 1998, HTI began to disseminate its ideas more openly, using various mediums, including publications and seminars. The international Caliphate conference held in Jakarta in 2000 marked HTI's official declaration of establishment. Their growth culminated in 2007, with their conference attracting around 100,000 attendees. It is estimated that HTI had 30,000 members with hundreds of thousands of sympathizers. Even though they were integrated within the international Hizbut Tahrir, HTI organized itself in a pyramid structure, including the Central Executive Board (DPP), the Regional Executive Board (DPW), and the District Executive Board (DPD). The spokesperson for HTI, Ismail Yusanto, held his position from the 2000s until its disbandment in 2017 (Muhtadi, 2009).

The distinctiveness of HTI lie in its ideological system that intertwines Islamic teachings with political norms. They regard the Caliphate as an integral component of Islam, making it a duty for every Muslim to advocate for its establishment. In their view, Muslims who do not adhere to this belief are deemed non-believers. They believe that the various turbulences and sufferings experienced by Muslims worldwide stem from the implementation of democracy, a system they perceive as being designed by Western non-believers to perpetuate dominance over the Islamic communities. They argue that no Muslim can wholly practice their faith until the Caliphate is established. In their endeavors, HTI emphasizes non-violent tactics, aiming to transform societal mindsets (*gawzul fikr*) to accept the Caliphate framework. They are convinced that once most of society embraces the concept of the Caliphate, power will naturally transition to HTI. They see no need to form or train a military force. Instead, their strategy focuses on influencing military leaders to adopt the Caliphate ideology, assisting in the transfer of power to HTI (Rasyid, 2016).

HTI's struggle is revolutionary, aiming to establish a new political system. For them, various activities, and efforts, including peaceful protests, seminars, and public discussions, must all align with the overarching goal of establishing the Caliphate. Because of their belief that democracy and its various derivatives are forbidden, HTI's members and sympathizers are not interested in participating in elections. They even attempt to persuade the public not to partake in elections, arguing that doing so is a sin that could lead one to hell. This conception is vital in understanding HTI's stance within Indonesia's democratic realm, where they show no interest in electoral or formal political endeavors. Any collaboration they engage in with various social and political groups is purely geared towards facilitating their Caliphate agenda.

While its transnational Islamist vision is often deemed radical and at odds with Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, HTI faces opposition from several organizations. This includes major Islamic entities like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, both of which view HTI's beliefs as inconsistent with Indonesian national principles (Arifianto, 2020). Despite such challenges, HTI has strategically broadened its influence, capitalizing on campuses for recruitment and penetrating various institutions to gain backing from national and local politicians, civil servants, and security personnel. Influential individuals, including Hari Moekti (R.I.P) and Ustadz Felix Siaw, have been brought under their umbrella. HTI's activists consistently propagate their beliefs to religious institutions, encompassing mosques and major Islamic groups like NU and Muhammadiyah. Their growth into rural regions, traditionally dominated by NU, has heightened the latter's animosity towards HTI. As a result, NU has called upon the government to dissolve HTI, citing its contradiction to state ideology (Arifianto, 2021).

The Limiting Opportunities

It is essential to emphasize that HTI is neither interested nor, more accurately, allowed to engage in formal politics, including elections. Nevertheless, their ideological mandates drive them to adopt strategies to influence public opinion, nudging society closer to accepting the caliphate ideology. One of their tactics is to capitalize on issues that resonate with the Muslim community. In these spaces, they delve into public concerns about social, economic, and political matters, offering an Islamist perspective.

Beginning in 2014, there was a noticeable increase in skepticism and hostility from the members and sympathizers of HTI towards the government. This surge in sentiment is closely linked to the leadership of Jokowi and the secular party, PDIP, during the 2014-2019 period. PDIP is renowned for its hostile stance against Islamist movements, including HTI. This hostility frequently manifested on social media, where many opined that the Jokowi administration appeared less supportive of Islamist groups. However, it is essential to recognize that this critical stance towards Jokowi's administration is not exclusive to HTI; other Islamist and conservative groups, such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), echoed similar sentiments. Thus, the deep-rooted antipathy of HTI's members and sympathizers towards the Jokowi administration underscores a personal militancy in expressing their dissent.

However, it is crucial to underscore that opposing the Jokowi regime was never a central agenda for HTI. Their primary objective, promoting the idea of the Caliphate and showcasing their presence through Caliphate symbols, gained significant traction during the Aksi Bela Islam (ABI) protests of 2016-2017. Various grassroots Islamic groups pressured the government to imprison Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (known as Ahok) for blasphemy. Tens of thousands took to the streets in a nationally recognized event, expressing the Muslim community's discontent with the administration. Intriguingly, this protest coincided with the 2017 DKI Jakarta gubernatorial election. At that juncture, an opposition alliance consisting of the Gerindra Party, PAN, and PKS introduced their candidates, Anis Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno, to contest the incumbent team, Ahok and Djarot, who were backed by a pro-central government coalition (Mietzner, 2018).

At least two main factors drove HTI's involvement in ABI 212. First, they sought to educate the public on the Sharia-based duty of Muslims to oppose non-Muslim leaders. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that HTI was not particularly interested in the Jakarta gubernatorial contest, even though Ismail Yusanto appeared alongside other political figures on various protest stages. Their objective was solely rooted in fulfilling a politico-religious obligation. Second, HTI endeavored to steer the discourse evolving in tandem with the protests towards the significance of establishing the Caliphate. Their aim was for the public to recognize HTI as an organization deserving of a legitimate position within Islamist narratives.

Although HTI was not the primary force behind ABI 212, they played a notable role by rallying support, particularly from West Java. On social media, both members and sympathizers of HTI persistently launched aggressive campaigns and framed narratives against Ahok, emphasizing the rejection of non-Muslim leaders. While not directly affiliated with partisan political forces, HTI's efforts inadvertently benefited the Anis-Sandi coalition. The 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, which Anis-Sandi won against the strong incumbents Ahok-Djarot, sparked concerns among pro-government elites about HTI's militancy and mobilization capabilities, fearing they might disrupt their electoral interests in the 2019 general elections.

HTI's increasing assertiveness in political contests provided the government with a pivotal moment to take decisive action against them. Even though HTI had operated relatively unimpeded in the post-Suharto era, it is not to say the government had not noticed the potential threats posed by them. However, the government had previously lacked a compelling reason to dissolve them. HTI's involvement in large-scale protests throughout 2016-2017 convinced the government to act swiftly, citing concerns for national security and political stability. An important factor behind the government's decisive action was the fact that 10 ex-HTI members had joined terrorist organizations. This indicated that, although HTI fore fronted a non-violent stance, it became a breeding ground for radicalism, potentially supplying human resources to terrorist groups. Furthermore, their sectarian, intolerant, and anti-pluralistic narratives, such as "reject non-Muslim leaders," echoing in public spheres, posed a significant threat to national integration.

The push for HTI's disbandment also stemmed from NU. Since 2007, NU has openly opposed HTI, urging the MUI (Indonesian Ulema Council) to declare a commitment to nationalism as conclusive. During Jokowi's tenure, when NU's influence in the government was substantial, the demand to dissolve HTI intensified. Jokowi's administration strategically leveraged NU to counter opposition from the ABI 212 movement. Prominent NU figures, like its chairman Said Aqil Siroj, made statements opposing Islamist narratives. For instance, a competent non-Muslim leader is preferable to a corrupt Muslim leader. Other counter-narratives aimed at the opposition included being anti-Pancasila, anti-nationalism, and intolerant. This strategy successfully dispelled notions that the government leaned towards being anti-Islam, and further marginalized Islamist factions as divisive threats to the country.

In alignment with the growing demands from NU and other nationalist organizations, several governmental agencies overseeing security began plotting measures for HTI's disbandment. Ultimately, on July 19, 2017, the Indonesian government officially banned the HTI organization through the enactment of Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (Perppu) No. 2 of 2017 concerning Community Organizations. In this decision, HTI was perceived as a threat to national security and the Pancasila ideology (Aswar, Bin, Yusof, Binti, & Hamid, 2020). Opposing this move, HTI, represented legally by Khozinudin, brought the case to the Administrative Court (PTUN). They argued that the disbandment lacked a legal foundation as it sidestepped court processes. Nonetheless, on May 7, 2018, the PTUN dismissed HTI's lawsuit, backing the government's decision based on the organization's anti-Pancasila teachings and the potential for societal unrest (Burhani & Nadzir, 2021).

Interestingly, Perppu No. 2/2017 did not prohibit HTI's activities but only revoked the legality of its organization. As a result, HTI offices in many regions continued to operate without official identification.

They carried on with activities such as da'wah, religious gatherings, and seminars with left out HTI's name and symbols. Regarding such conditions, they argued that they had been operating 'underground' since the beginning. When the Jokowi government shut down their organization, they carried on with their activities as they did during the Suharto era.

Certainly, the activities and movements of HTI are no longer as free as before. Apart from being limited by legal decisions, their activists are constantly monitored by NU activists, especially in the regions. When an event suspected to be conducted by HTI activists takes place, GP Ansor swiftly acts to disband it, as happened in Pasuruan, East Java in 2020. Many members or sympathizers get silence and hidden their HTI identity for conducting normal social life. This situation is in line with the design of government agencies, where the disbandment of HTI is intended to dampen their ideological narratives in public spaces to make national politics become more conducive.

Adaptive Resistance of HTI

The disbandment of HTI could not halt or weaken their ideology. Our data indicate that almost all members remain steadfast in their view. The core message of these activities remained consistent, albeit with subtler references to the caliphate. They still worked to raise public awareness of perceived political ailments and proposed the implementation of Sharia law as the remedy. Their activists, especially the doctrinaires, remained optimistic, believing their da'wah activities could still proceed and resonate with the public with some limitations.

In the face of significant restrictions, HTI adapted its strategies to avoid confrontation and scrutiny, which could put its activists at risk while still advocating the caliphate. By leveraging digital technology, especially the internet, social media, and YouTube, they consistently distributed contents that supported the establishment of a caliphate. This approach is seen as the most effective strategy given the external pressures from both the state machinery and NU activists. While cyberattacks on HTI's social media accounts, mostly orchestrated by NU affiliates, are frequent, HTI members and supporters continuously create new accounts, ensuring that their digital movement remains alive. The table below lists some of the websites, social media, and YouTube channels used by HTI for their post-disbandment propaganda. Some channels and accounts have been shut down, but they constantly replace them with new ones. (Table 1)

Another strategy that characterizes HTI's adaptive resistance is using a bait tactics in recruitment. They focus on public studies that address various issues faced by Muslim communities, especially among the youth. In these studies, participants who show a deeper interest in topics presented from an Islamic perspective are selected. These chosen participants are then invited to attend more specific studies, where discussions about the caliphate openly begin. This process continues until the selected participants can be inaugurated as official HTI members. Another strategy is to prioritize the individual activism of members and potential members. They are given the flexibility to engage in various activities aimed at garnering sympathy for the idea of the caliphate. Through this approach, they can infiltrate various social groups and communities without risking detection by security forces.

Table 1. HTI affiliate websites and social media accounts

Website	Account
al-wa'ie.id	hilafah Channel Reborn
buletinkaffah.id	Fokus Khilafah Channel
mediaumat.news	News Khilafah Channel
shautululama.co	Multaqa Ulama Aswaja TV
tintasiyasi.com	UIY Official
pojok-aktivis.com	Media Umat
trenopini.com	Pusat Kajian dan Analisis Data
fokusmedia.xyz	Peradaban Islam ID
lbhpelitaumat.com	LBH Pelita Umat
wakafquran.org	Wakaf TV
cintaquran.or.id	Cinta Quran TV
muslimahnews.com	Muslimah Media Center
Yukngaji.id	YNTV
Gemapembebasan.or.id	Gema Pembebasan 1924
RoyatulIslamkarim	Kaffah Channel
Islamselamatkannegeri.id	Akhbar Forum
Assalim	Muslim United

Source: (Heriansyah et al., 2022) *updated by the authors.*

However, the bait tactic and individual activism do not necessarily make it easier for them to recruit new members. People have already been influenced by narratives from the government, media, and various nationalist organizations about the dangers of HTI. Moreover, many potential members decide to become inactive in HTI activities for fear of the government's repressive actions. They are worried that their careers or their parents' careers will be ruined if they are detected as being affiliated with HTI. As a result, it becomes increasingly difficult for HTI to expand its recruitment. Furthermore, their various clandestine public activities are not ideal for their ideological goals, where labeling HTI as a means of Islamic struggle is crucial in their agenda.

Despite the increasingly restrictive sociopolitical environment for their movement, HTI activists continue to persevere. Their strong ideological beliefs, bolstered by systematic secret network cells, are the pillars of HTI in sustaining their movement. The adaptive measures of HTI's movements are

intricately linked to the prevailing socio-cultural and political conditions in the regions where they operate. This includes the culture of the community, the approach of other Islamic organizations towards HTI, and the position of the government or security forces. The following sections delve into the varied ways they have adjusted post-disbandment, providing a more contextual in regions.

HTI in Yogyakarta

In the case of Yogyakarta, before the disbandment in 2017, local HTI had faced pressure, especially from nationalist groups and NU. Several alumni of the protest action carried out a national spotlight at the Indonesian Institute of Arts (ISI) in Yogyakarta concerning the growing influence of HTI on that campus. There were also several instances of raids against HTI activities in the 'peripheral' areas or districts that are NU strongholds. Post-disbandment, various universities in Yogyakarta began 'screening' suspected HTI members or sympathizers among their faculty, as was seen at UGM and UMY. Professors suspected of being HTI members or sympathizers were given a choice: resign from their academic positions or leave HTI. Oversight was also extended to student bodies. The Universities' board evaluated campus mosques to ensure no student body was infiltrated by HTI activists. Although HTI networks on campuses, like Gema Pembebasan, are suspected of still being active, their presence is virtually undetected. They have shifted their activities off-campus, like holding closed study sessions in dormitories.

However, the activism of HTI members persists. Beyond the campuses, HTI activists continue their outreach, advocating for the caliphate or an Islamic governance system. With the prohibition against using HTI's identity and symbols, members have strategically integrated themselves among other Islamic personalities and activists who either resonate with their views or, at the very least, do not oppose them. A noteworthy step taken by HTI activists was their alignment with the Muslim United (MU) community. Collaborating with activists from the Jogokaryan Mosque, they have organized a plethora of Islamic events emphasizing unity. Notable MU events, such as the proselytizing festivals held in Yogyakarta in October 2018 and October 2019, featured a diverse range of preachers from varying organizational affiliations. This includes Hanan Attaki of Pemuda Hijrah, Adi Hidayat from Muhammadiyah, Felix Shiaw representing HTI, Abdul Somad of NU, Bachtiar Natsir from MIUI, celebrity Arie Untung, preacher Ali Jaber, and several others.

The MU festival, besides attracting numerous Muslims due to its renowned preachers, also featured a Muslim Expo and door prizes. However, the MU festival faced opposition from the authorities. The Yogyakarta Sultanate rejected the 2019 event, initially planned for Masjid Gede Kauman, due to its potential to cause public discomfort in a political year. The MU activists eventually 'settled' in a shop-house converted into a mosque named Real Masjid. They managed this mosque professionally and held regular religious-social events. The mosque also houses a Quranic boarding school, and they routinely provide free food for worshippers. Another distinct feature of the Real Masjid is its youth outreach. The mosque's ornamentation caters to the younger generation, regularly hosting discussions attended by teenagers and encouraging them to strengthen their moral fiber. With professional and creative management, the Real Masjid has been developed rapidly. They continue to expand the mosque area and have a special theatre dedicated to showing Islamic movies. They organize credible study events and have invited popular ulemas like Abdul Somad and Buya Yahya. Meanwhile, HTI figurehead Shiddiq Al-Jawi regularly delivers sermons there.

The more open activism is evident from Narko Abu Fikri, who is fervently campaigning for the caliphate. Narko leads the Nurul Qowwy boarding school and the Badan Wakaf Alquran (BWA) branch in Yogyakarta. Through BWA, HTI activists reached out to rural areas and attempted to gain public sympathy, which they then directed towards the ideological framework of the caliphate. Ustadz Narko frequently delivers sermons on the importance of the caliphate in various webinars, with the broadcasts available on YouTube.

The various events described above indicate that HTI continues to operate with adjustments. Socio-cultural factors also influence their ability to do so. The dominant Islamic organization in Yogyakarta, Muhammadiyah, does not adopt a repressive approach towards HTI. Although Muhammadiyah undertook internal purges of employees affiliated with HTI, they chose not to take further action. Additionally, culturally, the people of Yogyakarta emphasize harmony and the avoidance of conflict. Being a tourist city and home to the Yogyakarta Sultanate, stability is prioritized by all stakeholders. In such a cultural environment, HTI in Yogyakarta has relative freedom to conduct its activities. By "relative," it means that key figures can organize open studies and seminars, albeit without using the HTI identity. However, due to public antipathy, their cells still face challenges in holding regular study sessions in community mosques.

HTI in West Java

In West Java, the development of HTI after its disbandment faced several challenges. Before the disbandment, HTI in West Java rarely experienced pressure from the government or Islamic mass organizations like NU. However, in post-disbandment, they became acutely aware of the central government's scrutiny, which could be detrimental. One reason for this was HTI's involvement in the ABI 212 actions that caused political anomalies leading up to the 2019 general election. That is why although West Java is a stronghold for HTI, its proximity to the capital, Jakarta, has made its members exercise utmost caution when conducting their activities. They tend to avoid drawing attention from both the government and security agencies.

The sociopolitical of West Java remains supportive for the HTI after its disbandment. While the NU through their youth wings like GP Ansor and Banser, keep a close watch on HTI in West Java, other prominent Islamic organizations like Muhammadiyah and Persis are less concerned with HTI's activities. Both reject HTI's caliphate idea but adopt a different approach than NU in responding the HTI. While NU tends to be confrontational, Muhammadiyah and Persis prioritize persuasive approach. Interestingly, NU's stance in West Java is relatively more relaxed than in East Java or Yogyakarta. Even though GP Ansor of West Java detected HTI's activities, they refrained from taking matters into their own hands, prioritizing regional stability. The government and security forces also eschewed from taking repressive actions against HTI, possibly because many HTI activists went 'underground' after the disbandment. HTI sympathizers in government circles no longer exhibited tendencies towards the caliphate ideology, fearing job terminations and ostracization.

On university campuses, HTI activists no longer have the freedom to recruit and expand their networks. Universities have implemented screenings of both faculty and student organizations to ensure that HTI's ideology does not find a foothold. However, these measures are typically carried out gently. For instance, at Unpad, the administration called in and counseled lecturers who were suspected of being HTI members or sympathizers. Interestingly, IPB, which was seen as an HTI stronghold, did not show any dynamics regarding the group's disbandment. In Bogor, the Gema Pembebasan remains active and showcases various activities on social media, such as leadership training and political discussions. They openly use symbols associated with the caliphate. However, in other regions, HTI activists also adopt covert strategies. Much like in Yogyakarta, HTI in West Java adopts a mix of semi-open and covert strategies, operating with relatively more ease such

as hosting street-side study sessions, reaching out to hijrah communities, and creating biker and K-Pop communities.

The socio-cultural environment in West Java bolsters the relative freedom that HTI activists experience in conducting their activities. The predominant Sundanese culture in West Java, which tends to be conflict-averse and favors persuasive methods over confrontations. While there have been some incidents of persecution against HTI activists, such as the early 2023 event at Al-Jabbar Mosque, West Java remains largely conducive to HTI activism. The traditional Muslim characteristics in West Java, which lean sympathetically towards formalistic Islam, also support HTI's maneuverability. Those who criticize HTI tread cautiously because they can easily be labeled as anti-Islamic.

HTI in East Java

HTI activists faced the most significant challenges in East Java. Given that the region is a bastion for NU, which is known for its open and assertive community culture, this comes as no surprise. In this region, NU holds sway both structurally and culturally. Whenever there is even a whisper of HTI activity, GP Ansor tends to respond promptly, often resorting to confrontations. Key centers of HTI activity in East Java were located on university campuses, notably the Institut Teknologi Sepuluh November (ITS), UINSA, and UNS, and some minor *pesantren*. Nevertheless, after the HTI disbandment, there were no indications that groups affiliated with HTI, such as Gema Pembebasan, continued their operations on these campuses. The university administrations initiated a "clean-up," particularly focusing on campus mosques where Gema Pembebasan had previously been quite active. Much like in Yogyakarta, students who had affiliations with HTI shifted their activities off-campus.

Nevertheless, it should not be inferred that the activities of HTI have altogether ceased in East Java. Intriguingly, they have become quite prominent through the *Multaqo Ulama Aswaja*, a covert organization mirroring the traditions of NU. The term *ulama aswaja* is one of the primary identifiers of NU, which follows a traditional *Sunni* path. The *Multaqo Ulama Aswaja* ostensibly comprises NU clerics, yet these individuals are unrecognized and rejected by authentic NU communities. This approach is suspected of being a tactic to appeal to the traditional NU grassroots, who epitomize the Muslim demographic in the region. To reach out to the student segment, HTI activists also established the *Royatul Islam Karim* community. While *Multaqo Ulama Aswaja* continued to draw NU's attention,

Royatul Islam Karim existed only briefly as NU representatives collaborated with local authorities to ban the movement.

Like in other regions, the primary avenue where HTI had some freedom was through social media platforms, websites, and YouTube. In East Java, they utilized amateur studios at a secret spot in Surabaya to produce YouTube channels, such as Akhbar News, which presented news content packaged with subtle themes of caliphate and Islamic law. HTI members in East Java also showcased their proficiency in setting up a research institution to captivate the public's interest in critical examinations of political affairs and events. The institution is named the Center for Study and Data Analysis (PKAD), headed by Dr. Slamet, a senior HTI figure in the province. This approach involved baiting for recruitment. Activists at PKAD were highly proactive in disseminating their content through WhatsApp. Their target audience ranged from their peers to influential Islamic figures. Those who showed interest were then directed toward the *khilafah* views.

The assertive social and cultural ethos prevalent among the people of East Java has sculpted the resilience of HTI's operations in the region. Despite facing stringent countermeasures from NU, which necessitated the removal of their public exposure, HTI did not wane in its commitment to the cause. On the surface, where NU's structure is dominant, and surveillance is rigorous, there is no visibility of HTI existence or activities. However, on the beneath, and in areas where NU's vigilance is less stringent, the activism of HTI members continues with determination, both in the online sphere and through various covert endeavors.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the disbandment of HTI resulted from the incongruence between its anti-systemic ideology and the prevailing political structure of Indonesia. HTI's ideological drive to exploit electoral events eventually places them at a threshold where the ruling authority perceives them as a severe threat. Regardless of the pace, be it swift or gradual, the ideological agenda of the HTI is destined to bring them into confrontation with the established authorities. In turn, it affected the transformation of Indonesia's political structure, becoming closed off to Islamist movements. This research asserts that the Islamist agenda of HT will never find a decent opportunity in any political system.

HTI persists in executing its clandestine movement amid various pressures and restrictions. Their enduring strength resides in their Islamist ideology, which marries political perspectives with religious convictions and a disciplined cell-based organization. Consequently, HTI's resilience enables it to withstand the impacts of disbandment on the continuity of its movement. This capability is conceptualized as adaptive resistance, characterized by the astute deployment of tactics, measured resistance, and militancy strength tailored to the degree of pressure and the socio-cultural context in which they operate. However, one thing appears certain: the disbandment's repercussions have rendered it nearly impossible for HTI to reestablish its expansion in Indonesia's political arena.

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