

## [Abstract]

### The Political·Religious Significance of Islamic Revivalism

A comparative study of Malaysia's 1980s and 2000s

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This study aims to understand the fundamental characteristic of Islamic Revivalism occurred in Malaysia. Islamic Revivalism is a movement which has been actively spread all over the world. Samuel Huntington has mentioned that it is one of the historical movements which can be compared to American Revolution, French Revolution and Russian Revolution.

The views explain Islamic Revivalism is controversial. One sees it as a religious movement to realize the Islamic order and teachings. The other sees it as a political movement expressing the secular matter in a Islamic package. The purpose of this study is to closely examine whether the Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia was a purely religious movement or a political movement with religious characteristic.

For that, this study focused on 'changes in time' and 'subject of the movement' variables. Previous studies examined Islamic Revivalism in just one time period or did not divide the government and public which are the subject of the movement. Therefore, this study classified 'needs of the public' and 'reaction of the government' in 1980s and 2000s. It tried to understand the

fundamental characteristic through examining the background, development, and characteristic of Islamic Revivalism in a boundary of one nation state.

The result was first, the needs of the public who participated in Islamic Revivalism was very political. The religious aspect, the assertion of following Islamic doctrine and principle, was viewed in both two time periods but there was expression of discontent towards Malay government such as Malay nationalism and democratization. It is rather understood that Islamic aspect of the movement was a channel to deliver those needs. Second, the reaction of the government was clearly different in both times. Although the leader of the state in both two time periods was Mahathir, it reacted with admission and contriving policy in 1980s and oppression and exclusion policy in 2000s. Thus, the needs of the public in Malaysia's Islamic Revivalism was "political" and the government reacted in two different policies which was "selective admission" and "complete oppression."

This result shows that Islam does not always accepted as a religious value in Malaysia. People used Islam as a channel to express their political needs and the government used Islam to maintain regime and the legitimacy. The politicization of Islam can be explained only in Malaysia's domestic context. Islam can be a tool to define identity and express the interest in multi-ethnic society of Malaysia. This was the reason why Islam was used in as a political tool.

It is interesting that this result contradicts some studies of Western scholars who explain Islamic Revivalism in a international context and as a clash of civilization. This urges to avoid understanding Islamic Revivalism in a monotonous view but to understand it with a balance.

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