

**THE RISE OF SHI'ISM IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA:
ORIENTATION AND AFFILIATION**

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy

The Australian National University

07 March 2012

Acknowledgments

There are many people and institutions which help me to complete my thesis. Without their help, it would have been impossible for me to finish. I cannot mention all of them here, but I must single out a few.

First, Professor Greg Fealy, chair of my thesis committee and academic adviser during my graduate studies here at the Australian National University. With his expertise, foresight, and strong background on Indonesian Islam, he has given me support and encouragement and in many different ways has been helpful in improving the overall organization of my thesis and in clarifying my ideas.

Professor James Fox is my *kiai* and *mursyid* (Sufi teacher). This thesis would not be possible without his enthusiasm, endless patience, and tireless efforts. His deep understanding on Sufism and Shi'ism has given me an opportunity to explore many facets of Shi'i culture and rituals.

My sincerest appreciation also extends to all friends and staff of the Australian National University; Maxine McArthur, Harriette Wilson, Jo Bushby and Penelope Judd, for their helpful cooperation during my candidature.

My particular thank also goes to Hussein Shahab, the chairman of Baitul Muhibbin Foundation, Jakarta, who has introduced me to many Shi'i figures in Indonesia during my fieldwork.

Finally, my thesis would have never been completed without the support of my wife, Chadidjah Aljuned and family in Jakarta. They make this life so wonderful.

Abstract

This thesis examines the general developments of the Shi'a as a newly emerging religious minority in contemporary Indonesia, focusing on key Shi'i institutions across the country, particularly important *pesantren* and their relations with local and international institutions. During the 1980s, the Shi'a along with other trans-national Islamic groups have taken root in the country, becoming especially active on campuses. This rise of Indonesian Shi'ism was attributable not only to global Islamic revivalism but also, more specifically, to the impact of the 1979 Iranian revolution.

I argue that the Shi'i community in Indonesia is not as monolithic as is often assumed. It is divided on the details of doctrine, international orientation, relations with other sections of the Muslim community, and leadership. This study shows there to be serious fissures within the Shi'i community's elite which have spread downwards into the community, creating sharp internal rivalries. The discord is clearly discernible in the cleavage between what I call the 'campus circle' and the *ustadh* (Islamic scholars) group. The split was present but not publicly visible during the New Order era but became far more prominent after the student-led *reformasi* of 1998, which ushered in a democratic system in Indonesia.

This thesis further claims that the split of Shi'i leaders in Indonesia is due to disparities in their sociological background and intellectual formation. In order to analyze the matter, I develop two analytical approaches from Hubert Blalock, besides applying the 'minority theory' as an over-arching framework. At the end, it reveals that, on one hand, the 'campus circle', of former campus activists and intellectuals educated in secular universities display an attitude of openness in their leadership and can adapt to local-style structural organization. On the other, the *ustadh* group, which was trained in Shi'i seminary schools overseas, exhibited conservative social and religious attitudes and behaviour.

In contemporary Indonesia, the minority Shi'i community faces mixed public reactions from other religious groups, ranging from cooperation and tolerance to vilification and occasionally violence. For this reason, this study discusses the reactions from the government, the Council of Indonesian Ulama (MUI) and major Islamic organizations like NU and Muhammadiyah.

Glossaries

‘Adl	Justice
Ahl al-Bayt	The Prophet’s Household
Alawiyyin	The descendants of the Prophet
Al-amr bi-al-maruf wa-	
Al-nahy an al-munkar	Commanding right and forbidding wrong
Ashura	The anniversary of the martyrdom of the third Imam Hussein commemorate on the tenth of the first month in the Islamic calendar.
‘Aqida	Foundation of Islamic faith
Ayatollah	Proof of God, the honorific title bestowed to a high- ranking cleric
Bakin	Badan Kordinasi Inteljen Indonesia (The Indonesian Intelligence Body)
Balitbang, Depag	Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Departemen Agama (Research and Development Body of the Ministry of Religious Affairs)
Batin	Esoteric meanings
Bid’ah	Innovation in religious teachings
Bay’ah	Allegiance
Caliph	Spiritual and temporal leader of the global community of believers
DDII	Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (the Indonesian Islamic Missionary Council)
DPR	The House of Representatives
Dzikir	Religious recitation

FAJAR	Forum Ahlibait Jawa Timur (East Java Ahl al-Bayt Forum)
Fatwa	Non-binding religious ruling on a matter of law
Ghulat	Deviant group
Habib	An honorific title given to males accepted as descendants of the Prophet
Hijriah	Islamic calendar
Haul	Death anniversary
Hawza ‘ilmiyya	The College(s) of Learning
IAIN	Institut Agama Islam Negeri (State Institute for Islamic Studies)
IIQ	Institute Ilmu Qur’an (Institute Al-Quran Knowledge)
ICC	Islamic Cultural Center
ICIS	International College of Islamic Sciences
IJABI	Ikatan Jamaah Ahlul Bait Indonesia (Indonesian Council of Ahl al-Bayt Associations)
‘Ilm	Knowledge
Imamate	God-assigned leadership
Intizar	Expectation, waiting
IPABI	Ikatan Pemuda Ahlul Bait Indonesia (Indonesian Association of Ahl al-Bayt Youth)
ITB	Institute of Technology Bandung
Ithna Ashari	Twelver (one of Shi’i variants)
Fikih	Islamic jurisprudence
Khums	Annual alms
KIBLAT	Ikatan Ahlibait Wilayah Jawa Barat (West Java-branch Ahl al-Bayt Association)
Kyai	Leader of <i>pesantren</i>

MUI	Majelis Ulama Indonesia, the Council of Indonesian Ulama
MMI	Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (The Council of Indonesian Fighters)
Mukernas	Musyawarah Kerja Nasional (the National working conference)
Mustasyar	Religious Advisory board
Madhhab	Islamic school of law
MAHDI	Majlis Ahlulbait di Indonesia (the Council of Indonesian Ahl al-Bayt)
Mahkamah Konstitusi	Constitution Court
Mashhad al Hussein	The shrine in Karbala, Iraq that is Hussein's tomb
Maulid	The Prophet's birthday ceremony
Marja Taqlid	A cleric who reaches the apex in the hierarchy of theological rank and become a source of emulation
Marjaiyyat	The office of Marja Taqlid
MRA	Ministry of Religious Affairs
Muharram	The first month in the Islamic calendar year
Muhadharah	Speech competition
Mujtahid	Higher rank cleric
Muktamar	Congress
Mullah	Cleric
Mustad'afin	Oppressed people
Muqallid	Followers
NU	Nahdhatul Ulama (the Awakening of the Ulama)
PBNU	The Executive Board of Nahdlatul Ulama
Pengajian	Religious meetings
Perkumpulan	Association
Pesantren	Islamic boarding school

PERSIS	Persatuan Islam (the Islamic Unity)
PPW-LIPI	Puslitbang Politik dan Kewilayahan, Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (the Development and Research Center for Politics and Region of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences)
Pondok	See: <i>Pesantren</i>
Qiyam	Insurrection or rebellion
Santri	Students of <i>pesantren</i>
Sayyid	(plural: <i>sādah</i>) literally means mister, an honorific title given to males as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad through his daughter Fatima.
Silatnas	<i>Silaturrahmi Nasional</i> (National working conference)
STAI	Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Agama Islam (Islamic Institution of Higher Education)
STIE	Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi (Economic Institution of Higher Education)
Tahlil	Special religious ceremonies which are held on the 3rd, 7th and 40th nights after a person's passing away
Tafsir	Exegesis
Tanfidziyah	the Executive Council
Taklid	The practice of following the decisions of a religious authority without necessarily examining the scriptural basis or reasoning of that decision
Ta'ziyah	A form of Iranian musical pageant that is the theatrical expression of religious passion; based on the Battle of Karbala and performed annually
Tarekat	Sufi Order
Taqiyyah	The principle of dissimulation
UI	University of Indonesia

Ummah	Islamic community
UNPAD	Universitas Pajajaran, (Pajajaran University) in Bandung, West Java
Ukhuwah Islamiyah	Islamic brotherhood
Ustadh	Religious teacher
Velayat Faqih	Clerical authority
Wilayat al fikh	Clerical authority
YAPI	Yayasan Pesantren Islam: Islamic <i>Pesantren</i> Foundation
Yayasan	Foundation
Zahir	External matters

List of Tables

Table 1: Characterization of Shi'i leaders in Indonesia.....	167
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List of Illustrations

Figure 1: A boy with his father.....	54
Figure 2: Some prominent ulama of Jakarta with a Shi'i cleric.....	86
Figure 3: The writer interviewing Jalaluddin Rakhmat and Furqan Buchari.....	104
Figure 4: The chest beating (<i>Ma'tam</i>), Iranian style Shi'i culture	112
Figure 5: The Fifth National Working Conference.....	119
Figure 6: Ahmad Baraghbah and a teacher at Pesantren al-Hadi.....	123

Notes on Transliteration, Spelling and Referencing

The system of Arabic transliteration used in this thesis follows that of the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. The table from Arabic to English and Indonesian is listed as follows:

b = ب	z = ز	f = ف
t = ت	s = س	q = ق
th = ث	sh = ش	k = ك
j = ج	s = ص	l = ل
h = ح	d = ض	m = م
kh = خ	t = ط	n = ن
d = د	z = ظ	h = هـ
dh = ذ	ʿ = ع	w = و
r = ر	gh = غ	y = ي

Vowels:

Short: a = ' ; i = ; u =

Long: a< = ; i> = و = ; ي

Diphthong: ay = ي ; aw = و

All references use the footnote system guided by the *Chicago Manual of Style*.¹ Starting with the name of the author and then followed in order by the title of the work, the place of the publication, the name of the publisher, the date of publishing, and page number. The three elements before the last are given in brackets, as shown here:

Michael R. Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 120.

Reference to a work that has already been cited in full form, but with intervening references, uses the author's last name, a shortened title of book and page, that is: Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought*, 25.

¹ Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Thesis, and Dissertations* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments
Abstract
Glossaries
Notes on Transliteration, Spelling and Referencing

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1. Early Growth of Shi'a in Indonesia	1
2. Concept, Aims and Methodology.....	9
3. Aims and Significance	16
4. Methodology.....	17
5. Literature Review.....	22
6. Structure of The study.....	26

CHAPTER II SHAPING SHI'I IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA

1. Introduction	28
2. Historical Background.....	29
3. Religious Identity	37
4. Community Formation.....	41
5. Modes of Conversion.....	45
6. The Shi'a and NU	53
7. Conclusion	56

CHAPTER III SHI'A DURING THE NEW ORDER ERA

1. Introduction	57
2. Government Attitude	60
3. The rise of Campus Circle.....	66
4. The rise of the <i>Ustadh</i> Group	80
5. Conclusion	92

CHAPTER IV
MAPPING CONTEMPORARY INDONESIAN SHI'A

1. Introduction	94
2. IJABI.....	98
3. Other Shi'i Organizations	110
4. Pesantren al-Hadi.....	121
5. Conclusion	127

CHAPTER V
MIXED REACTIONS

1. Introduction	130
2. General Public Attitude	134
3. Government Responses.....	141
4. The MUI Responses	144
5. Major Islamic Organizations	157
6. Conclusion	161

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION	163
1. APPENDIX A: PUBLISHING COMPANIES AND SHI'I BOOKS	170
2. APPENDIX B: THE CONSTITUTION OF IJABI	187
BIBLIOGRAPHY	190

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Early Growth of Shi'a in Indonesia

The emergence of the minority Shi'a¹ in predominantly Muslim Sunni Indonesia did not attract significant academic attention until the eruption of the Iran revolution in 1979. Much of the scholarship on the early growth of this minority focused on the political impact of the revolution.² In doing so, it assumed that the Shi'i community is homogenous and closely tied to Ayatollah Khomeini's revolutionary movement with an Iran-oriented culture. Too often, coverage of the Shi'a, not only in Indonesia, but also in other parts of the world, concludes that this group believes, feels, thinks and acts as one. Such an impression has permeated the works of many Western, as well as Muslim, scholars as they analyzed the Shi'a in general. This was noted by Graham E. Fuller

¹ In this thesis, those who follow and adhere to Shi'ism will be referred to as Shi'a (plural) or Shi'i (singular and as adjective). I use the term Shi'ism to denote the denomination as opposed to Sunnism.

² Interesting research on this subject was done by some Indonesian scholars under the funding of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI). To examine the political impacts of the Iran revolution in Indonesia see further: A. Rahman Zainuddin and Hamdan Basyar, ed., *Syi'ah dan Politik di Indonesia: Sebuah Penelitian* (Bandung: Mizan, 2000). A series of comparative studies on the impacts of the revolution in some Islamic countries was done by western scholars; Fred R. von der Mehden, "Malaysian Indonesian Islamic Movements and the Iranian Connection" in *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impacts*, ed., John L. Esposito (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1990); Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam: Interaction between Southeast Asia and Middle East* (Florida, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993).

in his *The Arab Shi'ism: The Forgotten Muslims*. According to him, scholars look at this group stereotypically as marked by religious zeal and violence.³ Similarly, other scholars like Fred R. von der Mehden and Etan Kohlberg shared a similar view.⁴ John L. Esposito and James P. Piscatori in their book, *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impacts*, also affirm that Western understanding of the Iranian revolution was hampered by misconception; it was narrowly seen as a Shi'i revolution. A professor in History of the University of California, Nikki R. Keddie, holds that the world's image of Shi'a today has been built mainly upon political events in Lebanon or Iran, and consists of short, dramatic oversimplifications. She goes on to say it is widely perceived that the Shi'a are inclined to fight holy wars (*jihads*).⁵ Therefore, it is not surprising that a majority of studies describe a monolithic community and fail to understand differences among the Shi'a in terms of religious views and cultural interaction with other groups. As a result, many scholars have ended up with only a partial or a simplistic grasp of this community.

In this thesis, I argue that the reality of Shi'a in contemporary Indonesia is much more complex than commonly understood. It is a community holding a great diversity of views, not only in terms of their social activities but also, more importantly, in their religious attitudes. In fact, the group has internal cleavages resulting from significant differences of opinion among its elite leadership. The split clearly indicates divergent dynamics among the group members. This thesis

³Graham E. Fuller and Rend Rahim Francke, *The Arab Shi'ism: The Forgotten Muslims* (Hampshire and London: Macmillan Press, 1999), 11. See also, Mehden, "Malaysian Indonesian Islamic."

⁴Etan Kohlberg, "Western Studies of Shi'a Islam" in *Shi'ism, Resistance, and Revolution*, ed., Martin Kramer (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987).

⁵Nikki R. Keddie, *Iran and the Muslim World: Resistance and Revolution* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 174.

will examine the two main Shi'i groups in Indonesia: the Iran-oriented faction which I will call the '*ustadh* group'; and the Lebanon-aligned 'campus group'. The '*ustadh* group' is the smaller of the two, and tends to be more locally based. It has established numerous foundations across the country, often linked to schools, which are usually led by Iranian-trained Islamic scholars, many of whom are also *sayyid* (descendents of the Prophet Muhammad). The 'campus group' is more intellectually and culturally diverse, and is also more inclusive. Its main organization is IJABI, *Ikatan Jamaah Ahlul Bait Indonesia* (the Indonesian Council of Ahlulbait Associations), which has branches all over the country.⁶ The split between the *ustadh* and campus groups was only publicly evident from 1998, when the post-Soeharto *reformasi* process led social movements such as the Shi'a to become more open in their activities.⁷

Reflecting the main argument, the thesis further contends that the internal rivalry among Shi'i elites is due to differences in their sociological context and intellectual formation. This means that their leaderships emerged from different social conditions, educational backgrounds and ideological orientations. The campus circle members, on one hand, are former campus activists, educated in secular universities, displaying an attitude of openness in their leadership and able to adapt to local styles of structural organization. On the other, the *ustadh* group has been trained in foreign Shi'i seminary schools, showing conservativeness in their social and religious points of view.

The Shi'i community took root in Indonesia from the late 1970s along with other trans-national Islamic movements, such as Hizbut Tahrir, Tarbiyah

⁶More discussion about IJABI will be presented in Chapter IV.

⁷*Reformasi* was marked by the fall of an autocratic regime under the leadership of Soeharto in May 1998.

Islamiyah, Jamaah Tabligh and Darul Arqam, when the spirit of Islamic revivalism swept across the globe. These movements were mostly pioneered by young Muslim intellectuals, spreading their influence through campus activism. They created a sphere that became the fertile ground for the early development of these Islamic movements.⁸ Religious activism was especially intense on secular campuses. Due to political pressure from the New Order regime, some of these movements initially took the form of underground movements.⁹ On this matter, Azyumardi Azra asserts, one of the most important factors behind this phenomenon was the expansion and spread of Islamic literature in Indonesia.¹⁰ A boom in religious publications included translations of numerous works of leading Islamic thinkers, like Muhammad Iqbal, Abul 'Ala al Maududi, Fazlur Rahman and several Iranian thinkers like Ali Shari'ati, Sayyid Tabataba'i and Ayatollah Muthahhari.

In the corresponding period, the Iran revolution in 1979 resonated across the globe, carrying a message of Islamic victory to Muslims elsewhere. As one of the momentous events in modern Muslim history, the revolution attracted close attention from Indonesian Muslim scholars. For them, this revolution was unique, because not only was this revolution led by an Islamic cleric (*ulama*) but also its ideological foundation was strongly rooted in the theological principle of Shi'ism. However, there is still a question around this case: why is it that Shi'ism was so

⁸James J. Fox, "Currents in contemporary Islam in Indonesia" (paper originally presented at the annual Asia Vision 21 conference and research forum, Cambridge, Massachusetts: 2004).

⁹Rosyad A. Rifki, *Quest for True Islam, a Study of the Islamic Resurgence Movement among the Youth in Bandung, Indonesia*, (Canberra: Australia National University E Press, 2006), 4.

¹⁰Azyumardi Azra, *Indonesia, Islam and Democracy: Dynamics in a Global Context* (Jakarta: Solstice, 2006), 186.

attractive to young Muslims, especially given Indonesia's strongly Sunni tradition?

In order to answer this question, it is worth examining the views of some scholars. The Muslim scholar, Dawam Rahardjo maintains that young educated Muslims were fascinated with the Iran revolution because they saw how Iran tried to develop new cultural values based on Islamic teachings as a means of freeing their country from the economic and political domination of capitalism and socialism at the international, national, and regional levels.¹¹ Obviously, this fact generated curiosity among local scholars seeking to know more about the ideological foundations of the revolution. In a heuristic process, they found the works of Iranian thinkers, like Ali Shariati, who developed views based on not merely Shi'i concepts, but more importantly, an egalitarian Muslim society. Beyond the political impact of the revolution, the penetration of Shi'i ideas was inescapable as an intellectual influence on Indonesian Muslim discourses.¹² As a result, some local thinkers were drawn to Shi'ism.

Another attractive point of Shi'ism for many students was the 'rational' nature of Shi'ism. This was admitted by Mehden, who believes that Shi'ism was perceived to have a more rational theological analysis in comparison to other schools of Islamic thought.¹³ Also, a prominent Muslim intellectual, Nurcholish Madjid, in an interview with *Panji Masyarakat* described the strength of *takwil* (metaphorical interpretation of religious teachings) in the traditional characteristics of Shi'i intellectualism as one factor behind flourishing Shi'ism. The

¹¹Nasir M. Tamara, *Indonesia in the Wake of Islam: 1965-1985* (Kuala Lumpur: the Institute of Strategic and International studies, 1986), 15.

¹²Martin van Bruinessen, "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in post-Suharto Indonesia," *South East Asia Research*, vol. 10, no. 2, 117-154.

¹³Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam*, 89.

main point, Madjid added, is that Shi'ism is more speculative than Sunnism,¹⁴ which might consequently lead to more open thinking.¹⁵

A number of Indonesian students, mostly graduates from local and western educational institutions, showed their inclination towards Shi'ism.¹⁶ They also endeavored to spread the influence through seminars, discussions, book translation and publication of Shi'i thinkers' works. They tended to use philosophical approaches by initially exploiting public admiration for Khomeini's success in their bid to promote Shi'ism.

One such major player was Jalaluddin Rakhmat, a lecturer at UNPAD (Universitas Pajajaran, Pajajaran University) in Bandung, West Java. He was widely recognized as the most active intellectual in the spread of Shi'ism among students on campuses and among the educated. Besides his lectures, he also produced numerous writings on Shi'i related issues. Feener's assertion that one of the most important means by which aspects of modern Iranian Muslim thought entered into the Indonesian conversation was through the work of Rakhmat, is undeniable.¹⁷

Other academics who tended towards Shi'ism at the early stage were Dimitri Mahayana, a lecturer at Bandung Institute of Technology-ITB, Hadi Swastio, a lecturer at the Communication College, and Yusuf Bakhtiar, currently a political activist in the National Mandate Party founded by Amien Rais. There were also Indonesian students who were clearly inclined towards Shi'ism, such as

¹⁴ The term Sunni denotes a follower of Sunnism and can be used as an adjective as well. Its plural is Sunnis, while Sunnism means the Sunni schools of law.

¹⁵ Madjid's interview was quoted in *Indonesian Reports-Culture & Society Supplement* 25 (August 1988), 2.

¹⁶ Michael R. Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 120.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Sayuti Asshatri, former Member of Parliament from the National Mandate Party, and Agus Abu Bakar (UI)¹⁸, Zulvan Lindan, former Member of Parliament from the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle Indonesian-PDIP, and Haidar Bagir, founder of a leading Islamic publishing company, Mizan. For the rest of the discussion in this thesis, they are termed the campus circle.

In a related development, as indicated by Mehden, the revolution's impact was clearly seen in the early resurgence of Islamic youth movements, although what inspired them was a revolution of the Shi'a Muslims. Interestingly, he added, regardless of differences, Indonesian Sunni Muslims accepted the Shi'i revolutionary ideas.¹⁹ The impact of this event, described by Rifki Rosyad, could be seen in three aspects.²⁰ First, it gave Muslim activists the idea of an Islamic revolutionary movement and that Islam could become a radical ideology which could challenge established ideologies. Second, the revolution motivated them to imitate the Islamic movement led by Khomeini in Iran. Third, the revolution also influenced the way local Muslim females wore clothes or at least reinforced the teaching of the veil (*kerudung, jilbab*). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, these influences could be seen clearly. Besides that, there was a kind of admiration toward Khomeini as the leader of the revolution. The portrait of Khomeini was hung in rooms and offices of students and youth Muslim organizations.

¹⁸ Agus Abubakar Aarsal Al-Habsyi, born in Makassar, South Sulawesi, on 6 August 1960, to a Hadrami migrant family, a Shi'i student well known in the early 1980s, was active at the Arif Rahman Hakim Mosque of UI. In 1979, he was enrolled at the Physics Department. He cites his intensive learning of Shi'i teachings at the university, plus a familiarity with Shi'ism (before the Iranian revolution), due to the existence of some Shi'a in a village in South Sulawesi, as factors in his conversion. See further Zulkifli, "The Struggle of The Shi'is In Indonesia" (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2009).

¹⁹ Mehden, *Malaysian Indonesian Islamic*.

²⁰ Rifki, *a Quest for True Islam*, 22.

Unsurprisingly, some others were even determined to pursue further studies of Shi'ism in Qom, Iran.²¹ Those going down this path for education, have usually been of a conservative religious bent.²² On their return to Indonesia after several years of overseas studies, these Indonesian students became the leading preachers of Shi'ism. Some influential members of this group include Ahmad Baraghbah, the founder of a Shi'i boarding school, Al Hadi in Pekalongan, Central Java, Hussein Shahab, the Chairman of Baitul Muhibbin Foundation, Jakarta, and Abdurrahman Bima, elected member of the 2009-2014 Parliament from the Susilo Bambang Yudoyono-led-Democrat Party.²³

Their return at the beginning of the 1980s helped to consolidate the growing Shi'a movement in Indonesia. Directly engaging in informal gatherings such as Shi'i rituals and religious meetings (*pengajian*), they held these meetings in select locations where they were attended by a limited circle. These preachers provided a great contribution in shaping the diversity of religious tendencies among the local Shi'a.²⁴ In society, they have been viewed as having gained a basic level of Islamic knowledge because their education took place at institutions of Islamic learning where various branches of Islamic knowledge are taught, especially at Islamic learning centers in Iran, Syria and Egypt. They were definitely oriented towards

²¹There are a number of Shi'i seminaries throughout Middle East, such as in Iraq, Iran and Syria. *Madrassa Hujjatiyya* in Qom, 150 km south of Tehran, was the most frequented by Indonesian students. This *madrassa*, founded in 1946 by Ayatollah Muhammad Hujjat Kuhkamari (1892-1963), follows the traditional system of education by generally offering basic up to advanced knowledge of Shi'i teachings. Most recently, another seminary coming to prominence among Indonesian students is Hawza Ilmiyya Zainabiyyah, some kilometres away from the Holy Shrine of Sayyidah Zainab in Damascus, Syria.

²² Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam*, 82.

²³ Partai Demokrat: The political party that the president belongs to.

²⁴ Syamsuri Ali, "Alumni Hawza Ilmiyah Qom, Pewacanaan Intelektualitas dan Relasi Sosialnya Dalam Transmisi Syiah di Indonesia" (PhD diss. the State Islamic Institute of Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2002), 186.

traditional jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and rigidly adherent to the Shi'i Islamic school of thought. In this thesis, they are classified as the *ustadh* group.

2. Concept, Aims and Methodology

a. The Shi'a defined

To analyze the emergence of Shi'a in Indonesia, one should have a comprehensive idea of their ideological foundation. The term Shi'ism indicates a doctrine or a set of teachings based on the Islamic legal school of law (*fiqh*), which was established by Ja'far al Sadik (d.756 CE),²⁵ and this school is known as the *Ja'fariyyah Madhhab*. Its central belief is that the succession of the caliphate after the death of Muhammad should go to the Prophet's family through his bloodline and, in this case, as represented by Ali ibn Abi Talib, the son-in-law of the Prophet and his paternal cousin. In fact, Ali was denied the role of Caliph three times in the era of Abu Bakr, Umar and Othman but eventually become the last caliph. During his rule, Ali faced the mutiny of Muawiyah Ibn Abu Sofyan, who declared himself Caliph and founded his dynasty in Damascus by appointing his son, Yazid, as his successor. Yazid later assassinated the son of Ali, Hussein. Many historians noted

²⁵Ja'far al Sadik, a descendent of the Prophet family, was born in Medina. Amongst the Shi'a, he is regarded as one of the greatest of the *imāms* and as the teacher of *fiqh* par excellence. The Twelver, when referring to themselves as a *madhhab*, call themselves the *Ja'fariyyah*. To Ja'far, there have been ascribed numerous utterances defining Shi'a doctrine, as well as prayers and homilies; he has been given credit, by both Sunnis and Shi'a, for numerous books, probably none of them authentic, dealing especially with divination, with magic, and with alchemy. He is regarded as the chief teacher of the alchemist Djabir b. Hayyan (who did in fact revere him as a religious teacher). He is also regarded as a master Sufi. See further: Hodgson, M.G.S. "Jafar al-adi" *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, edited by: P. Bearman; Th. Bianquis; C.E. Bosworth; E. van Donzel; and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill 2011, Australian National University, available online: http://www.brillonline.nl.virtual.anu.edu.au/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-1922 (accessed on 28 April 2011)

that Hussein's death was the beginning of the theological Shi'a. It also began to become a distinct religious sect and the schism began to widen.²⁶

Like Sunnism, which is afflicted with internal differences in its schools of thought resulting in divisions such as Shafi'i, Hanbali, Maliki and Hanafi, Shi'a has also suffered major fractionalization.²⁷ Currently, there are three main variants: Zaydis, Ismailis and Twelver (Ithna Ashari).²⁸ As a religious group, the Shi'a comprises the second largest branch of Islam after that of the Sunni and currently account for about 10-15% of Muslims in the world.²⁹

Etymologically, the word Shi'i, comes from the Arabic term "*Shiat*", meaning 'followers' or, also, 'party'. Thus, this word can be formed into a phrase to indicate the followers or supporters of a particular person, like Shiat Mohammed or *Shiat* Moses, for instance. In the case of schism in Islam, a Shi'i definitely means the 'followers of Ali' or 'the party of Ali'. Theoretically, a Shi'i is a person who believes in the fundamental principle of Shi'ism regardless of how he/she implements the doctrinal practices in daily life. Every practicing Shi'i without sufficient Islamic knowledge, the so-called *muqallid* (follower), has to follow the directives of one or more *mujtahid* in almost every aspect of their life.

²⁶H.A.R. Gibb, *Islam: A Historical Survey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 82; Azyumardi Azra, "Islamic Thought: Theory, Concept and Doctrine in the Context of Southeast Asian Islam" in *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, edited by Nathan, K.S. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), 3-21.

²⁷Four Sunni jurists are Nu'man Ibn Thabit ibn Zuta ibn Marzuban, "*Imam Hanafiy*" (80/702-148/767), Malik ibn Anas ibn Malik ibn Amr Al-Asbahi, "*Imam Maliky*" (93/711-179/795), Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Idris Al-Shafi'i, "*Imam Shafi'i*" (150/767-204/820) and Ahmad Ibn Hambal, "*Imam Hanbaly*" (164/780-241/855).

²⁸The majority of the Shi'a today belongs to the Twelver; they account for some 80 per cent of all Shi'a (notably in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, India, and Pakistan and most recently in Indonesia). The Twelver is also called as Ithna Ashari, which is popularly called as Shi'a Immamiyah or *Ja'fariyyah*. Others are Zaydis (in Yemen), and the Ismailis (in India, Pakistan, Syria, and Yemen).

²⁹*The Columbia Encyclopedia* (Columbia University Press: 2000).

The most prominent clerical position of *mujtahids* is *Marja Taqlid* (source of emulation).³⁰ Practically, it is difficult to identify all Shi'a, especially those who are living in predominantly Sunni countries like Indonesia, as they might apply dissimulation to mask their beliefs (*taqiyyah*).³¹

Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study, it is important that we have a defined concept of Shi'a. Defining Shi'ism has created considerable debate among observers and scholars. For instance, Jalaluddin Rakhmat maintains that a Shi'i is a person who upholds the Shi'i teachings of *Ja'fariyyah*, meaning that he/she implements them in his/her daily religious practices. In a broader perspective, he defines a Shi'i as a person who has been influenced by the thought of Shi'ism.³² The difference might be seen on the level of obedience to practical teachings; the former is more active than the latter.

³⁰Those clerics who reach the apex in the hierarchy of theological rank in the centers of Twelver learning become *Marja Taqlid* (supreme legal authorities). They have authority to provide religious interpretations on matters of law and ritual and they are often referred to by their followers with the honorific title of *Ayatollah Al-'Uzma* (Grand Ayatollah). Among the functions of the *Marja Taqlid* is the collection and distribution of religious taxes (*zakat* and *khums*). Most of them live in Iraq and Iran. So far there has no report of any *Marja Taqlid* who resides in Indonesia. For more accounts about this issue, see: Calmard, J. "Marj'a-i Taklid." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman; The Bianquis; , C.E. Bosworth; , E. van Donzel; and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill 2011, Australian National University, available online: http://www.brillonline.nl.virtual.anu.edu.au/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-0684 (accessed on 28 May 2011)

³¹The word "*at-taqiyyah*" refers to "concealing or disguising one's beliefs, convictions, ideas, feelings, opinions, and/or strategies at a time of eminent danger, whether now or later in time, to save oneself from physical and/or mental injury." A one-word translation would be "Dissimulation." Khomeini in his book, "Islamic Government," also presents his view on *taqiyyah*. He believes that *al-taqiyyah* is permitted only when one's life is jeopardized. Whereas in cases where the religion of Allah (SWT), Islam, is in danger, it is not permitted even if it leads to one's death, see online: A Shiite Encyclopedia Chapter 6b on *taqiyyah*. <http://www.al-islam.org/encyclopedia> (accessed on 19 April 2011)

³²Jalaluddin Rakhmat, "Dikotomi Sunni-Syi'ah tidak relevan lagi" in *Syi'ah dan Politik di Indonesia: Sebuah Penelitian*, ed. A. Rahman Zainuddin, and Hamdan Basyar (Bandung: Mizan, 2000), 145.

The complexity of this issue was also acknowledged by Graham E. Fuller and Rend Rahim Francke. They tried to give a definition of a Shi'i from the understanding of Shi'ism itself, arguing that "the definition of Shi'ism is a compound of religious, cultural, historical, and social attributes, usually acquired by circumstance of birth, and it is ultimately a definition determined by the individual."³³ Some scholars may give emphasis to the religious component, while others may stress cultural and social components. According to this view, therefore, a Shi'i as an identity is "inseparable from adherence to religious faith, and it is the active practice of Shi'ism that expresses identity."³⁴ If we consider such a definition, we may observe how the Shi'i community in Indonesian expresses their identity through so-called "active practices"³⁵ that differentiate them from followers of other Islamic strands, like Sunnism.

b. The campus circle and the *ustadh* defined

The propagation of Shi'ism in Indonesia from the 1970s to 1998 was carried out by two different groups, namely, the campus circle and the *ustadh* group.³⁶ To define these groups, it is important to reflect the role of academic background and socio-religious environment for its crucial impact on someone's ways of thinking about religion and its interpretations. Scholars such as Rober W. Hefner, Dale F. Eickelman, Akhmad Muzaki,³⁷ have argued that the educational background has

³³ Fuller, *The Arab Shi'ism*, 17.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Active practices could mean theological and doctrinal devotion, which can be implemented through daily practices (ibadah).

³⁶ Hussein bin Shahab, Chairman of Baitul Muhibbin Foundation, during an interview I had with him in late July 2009 in Jakarta, suggested Qummiyyin and Non-Qummiyyin while Zulkifli has suggested the use of *ustadz* and intellectuals for these two groups.

³⁷ Robert W. Hefner, "Islam, state, and civil society: The ICMI and the struggle for the Indonesian middle class", *Indonesia*, 1993, 56:1-35; Dale F. Eickelman, "Mass education and the religious imagination in contemporary Arab societies", *American Ethnologist* 1992, 19-4:643-55; Akhmad

led to the fragmentation of interpretations of Islam and to ensuing competition for Islamic religious authority and the control of Islamic religious institutions and organizations. This argument is confirmed by the developments of the Shi'a in Indonesia. However, in analyzing the Shi'i groups, it is necessary to add another factor, besides the academic background: the choice of *Marja Taqlid*.

The campus circle, on one hand, consists of Shi'i leaders who have come from local universities. They mostly graduated from secular higher education institutions inside the country or overseas. Before graduating from their universities, they were usually involved in Islamic activities on their campus. On the other hand, the *ustadh* group is Shi'i elite who graduated from Middle East-based educational institutions, especially in Iran, Syria and Egypt.³⁸ They were educated in seminary schools. Their position also is seen as religious teachers,³⁹—those who teach religious knowledge in traditional institutions of Islamic learning (*pesantren*), formal Islamic schools (*madrasa*) or at religious gatherings (*pengajian*).⁴⁰

Each group has different characteristics in educational background and orientation. For instance, the campus circle members are characterized as inclusive in nature, they tend to use rational approaches, putting aside religious fanaticism while upholding non-sectarianism. In contrast, the *ustadh* group is traditionally *fiqh*-oriented and is strictly obedient to the Shi'i Islamic school of thought.

Muzakki, "Contestation within contemporary Indonesian Islamic thought: Liberalism and anti-liberalism" (MA thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 2005).

³⁸One key Shi'i center of learning in Syria is Hawza Ilmiyya Zainabiyyah, some kilometres away from the Holy Shrine of Sayyidah Zainab in Damascus. While from Egypt, one the alumni of the Al Azhar University, Cairo, Zen Muhammad Al Hadi, was inclined towards Shi'ism and became a prominent Shi'i in Jakarta.

³⁹According to *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, *ustadz* or *ustaz* means *guru agama atau guru besar (laki-laki)* (male religious teacher); available online: <http://pusatbahasa.diknas.go.id/kbbi/index.php> (accessed on 26 April 2011)

⁴⁰Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is".

In a more critical analysis, the distinctions between the campus circle and *ustadh* can be found in a number of ways, particularly their respective competency and understanding of Islamic knowledge (Shi'ism). Characterized with exclusiveness, the *ustadh* group tends to be rigid in interpreting religious discourses and practices. This is due to the fact that their education took place at seminaries and institutions of Islamic learning where various branches of Islamic knowledge are taught. Several *ustadh* even studied at *pesantren* in Indonesia, prior to pursuing their studies at institutions of Islamic learning in the Middle East. So they are considered to have gained a good level of Islamic knowledge but they have never reached the level of *mujtahid*—some one who is able to practice *ijtihad*.⁴¹ For them, what they acquired through the process of learning and education in their *madrasa* is religious doctrine and tradition that ought to be rigorously and literally followed without room for interpretation.

On the other hand, the campus circle members never received in-depth and intensive religious education or learned about Shi'ism at any formal Islamic institutions in Indonesia or abroad. They acquired their religious knowledge in a fragmented and immediate manner, for instance, through, religious training during the holy month of *Ramadhan* (*pesantren kilat*), reading books, religious excerpts, newspapers, magazines, encyclopedia, attending religious seminars and any other kinds of discussion fora. As a result, they tend to be inclusive and support progressive understandings in religious matters and the promotion of pluralism in the society. In other words, their religious knowledge was gained

⁴¹Ijtihad is the capacity to make religious decisions based on rational deduction from traditional sources. The matter of education level among the Shi'a will be discussed later in this chapter.

through non-formal education and training carried out in near-by mosques or Islamic predication institutions.

Apart from that, more importantly, the campus circle and the *ustadh* group are distinguishable generally by their choice of *Marja Taqlid*. In fact, a devout Shi'i can at will choose his spiritual leader from the existing ones. Different *marja* (abbreviation of *Marja Taqlid*) may bring about different religious percepts and societal attitudes, since a *marja* in reality influences a wide range of social activities of his followers. A group of Shi'a, for instance, is most likely to define their relations to the socio-political order in line with the teachings of their *marja*. This in turn can create differences among groups of Shi'a, not only in theological and personal matters, but also on public issues.⁴² Among the campus circle, Rakhmat in an interview disclosed that his *marja* was Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Fadhlallah of Lebanon.⁴³ Obviously, the choice of Fadhallah by the campus circle was not without profound considerations. The ayatollah lives in Lebanon, a pluralistic country similar to Indonesia, and many scholars believe that this social environment has influenced his religious point of view. Moreover, according to a study done by Linda S. Walbridge, the cleric was seen by many Shi'i youngsters and educated people in the United States as the patron of a progressive form of Islam and, therefore, many of them made him *marja*.⁴⁴ The Iraqi-born ayatollah was also perceived as more inclusive and moderate than others.⁴⁵ In contrast, most of the *ustadh* group has chosen Khomeini or Khamenei as their *marja*, while these

⁴²This matter will be further discussed in Chapter IV.

⁴³Rakhmat was interviewed by the writer on July 2009.

⁴⁴Linda S. Walbridge, "A look at differing ideologies among Shi'a Muslims in the United States" in *Arabs in America Building a New Future*, ed. Michael W. Suleiman (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 60-7.

⁴⁵Aziz, Talib, "Fadlallah and the Remaking of the Marja 'iya" in *The Institution of the Marja' Taqlid*, ed. Linda S. Walbridge (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 205-216.

Iran-based clerics are known for their stricter adherence to Islamic or specifically Shi'i regulations.

These differences became the embryo for internal conflict within the Shi'i elite in the next decades. This conflict was not clearly visible when dissimulation applied during the 1980s, but would become public within the *reformasi* era.

3. Aims and Significance

This study examines the internal split among Shi'i elites, the campus circle and the *ustadh* group, in contemporary Indonesia after the fall of the Soeharto regime in 1998. It will identify institutions and organizations that have been established respectively by these two groups across the country. This thesis offers an analysis of the status of their organizations and affiliation. It also looks at the strategies of these respective groups in developing their religious campaigns and propagation (*da'wah*) within the Sunni majority.

Dealing with the current aspects of Shi'ism in Indonesia, especially before and after *reformasi*, this thesis analyses how the Shi'i community has responded to the complex nature of Indonesian society and developed diverse opinions, which have eventually created internal frictions.

This study is significant for several reasons. First, the socio-historical account of Shi'a during the New Order era until 2008 shows a trajectory of rapid development of the Shi'i community numerically, socio-economically and organizationally. This, in turn, delineates the group's creative adaptation and manipulation of their religious orientation in the attempt to gain recognition within the wider society of Indonesia while protecting their distinctive Shi'i doctrine. Second, despite abundant studies on Shi'a in contemporary Indonesia,

examination of their internal split is limited. As this cleavage cannot be regarded as a transient phenomenon, the findings of this study will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of Shi'i movements in Indonesia in the future. Illuminating this matter is particularly valuable in observing how religious minorities fight for their rights among the majority. It is important to emphasize here that, like any other minority religious group, the presence of Shi'a in Indonesia, to some extent, created tension among other Islamic groups. This is due to the fact that Shi'ism is still seen as an exogenous Islamic variant for many Indonesian Muslims who are predominantly adherents of Sunnism.

Thus this study is of practical use in understanding possible issues within the inter-religious group interaction. Apart from that, this study contributes in general to the literature on Islamic studies, particularly the Muslim religious groups in contemporary Indonesia.

The main purpose of this thesis is to answer the question: *How do the divided Shi'i elite adapt and reshape their organization and orientation respectively in a bid to gain public acceptance in the predominantly Sunni country of Indonesia?*

4. Methodology

In conducting this study, I have attempted to see the emergence of Shi'ism in Indonesia as a social phenomenon. That means this study is not concerned with the truth or falsity of the group's teachings. I have gathered evidence from all sides and considered this data dispassionately. My study employs a majority-minority relations point of view. This view enables us to identify, not only the problems, challenges and any social and political obstacles encountered by the Shi'a as a religious minority among predominantly Sunni Muslims of Indonesia,

but also their responses to those problems and challenges. It is important to emphasize here that the use of this approach does not mean that this study deals with distinctive notions held by the dominant group of Sunnism and the minority of Shi'ism, but rather it posits the Shi'a as a subject of analysis.

As a unifying framework, the thesis adopts the minority theory from Wagley and Harris, which was further developed by Vander Zanden (1972).⁴⁶ Zanden admitted, however, that the characteristics and boundaries of a minority group are socially defined on arbitrary grounds. These boundaries, he added, cover, among others, religion, skin color and language.

In fact, not all scholars agree with Zanden. Many definitions have been put forward based on different perspectives. The difference lies in what variables and interests a researcher emphasizes. The difficulty of creating a widely acceptable definition is due to the complex situations where a minority exists. However, the result will be more or less alike. Louis Wirth, for instance, defined a minority as a group of people who, because of their physical and cultural characteristics, are singled out from others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment.⁴⁷

A more universal and plausible definition of minority comes from Francesco Capotorti, Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. He defines a minority as:

⁴⁶James W. Vander Zanden, *American Minority: The Sociology of Race and Ethnic Groups* (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1966), 10-12. His theory says that *a minority is identified by group characteristics, that are socially visible, and that the members of a minority group suffer various disadvantages at the hands of another group.*

⁴⁷ Louis Wirth, "The problem of minority groups," in Ralph Linton (ed.), *The Science of Man in the World Crisis* (New York: Columbia Press University, 1945) , 347-72

A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members—being nationals of the State—possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.⁴⁸

The wordings of “numerically inferior and non-dominant” have made the definition more acceptable. This framing is suitable to apply to the Shi’a, who often represent themselves as minority.

Throughout the history of Islam, the prominent attribute of the Shi’a elsewhere in the world has been their minority status. This status has raised challenges and hardship but, in some circumstances, contributed to maintaining their identity for future generations.⁴⁹

To borrow from Laurence Louer in his book *Transnational Shia Politics*, the Shi’a tend to portray themselves as an oppressed people facing hostility from the majority, especially from their Sunni fellows. Indeed, victimization of themselves is embodied as a central element of their religious identity, through the martyrdom of Imam Hussein.⁵⁰ Being a minority for the Shi’a does not necessarily denote a numerical minority but, more importantly, it signifies suffering due to “minority status”, a feeling of being marginalized. Graham E. Fuller and Rend Rahim Francke confirmed this fact through their analysis of the status of the Shi’a

⁴⁸United Nation Human Rights High Commissioner, *Minority Rights: International Standards and Guidance for Implementation* (New York-Geneva: United Nations, 2010), 2. This book can be downloaded freely from this website:

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/MinorityRights_en.pdf (accessed on 27 April 2011)

⁴⁹Juan Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War: The Politics, Culture and History of Shi’ite Islam* (London: I.B Tauris, 2002), 16.

⁵⁰Laurence Louer, *Transnational Shia Politics, Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2008), 9.

in Iraq.⁵¹ Regardless of their number, he asserted, the dilemma of the Shi'a in many ways is more complicated than being a minority.

For the purpose of this study, the thesis will apply Zanden's theory to analyze the Shi'a in Indonesia, that is the campus circle and *ustadh* group, and consider the reactions of the majority. The thesis proposes two approaches which were put forward by Hubert Blalock⁵². The first is a social psychological approach that takes *the individual* as unit of analysis focusing on ideological and personal theories. The second is a social structure approach that takes *the group* as the unit of analysis focusing on their organization and relationship with other organizations in the country.

These approaches are eclectically used when it comes to analyzing variable responses belonging to each group, such as the structural organization, the personal background and orientation of leaders. The use of these approaches should also assist to identify the particular responses of each of these minority subgroups (the campus circle and *ustadh* group) in the face of the dominant groups.

This thesis relies on two main types of sources: library research and fieldwork, applying a qualitative approach as the only option to data collection. The writer conducted library research through the exploration of relevant written material, in the form of both offline and online sources. Another main source for this thesis was fieldwork. The writer carried out the fieldwork in three regional "Shi'i bases", namely Pekalongan, Bandung and Jakarta, during July and August

⁵¹Fuller, *The Arab Shi'ism*.

⁵²Blalock uses this approach to analyze the responses of Black minorities and their social organizations in the United States of America to economic and political situations. Hubert M. Blalock, *Toward a Theory of Minority Group Relations* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1967), 2-35.

2009. During the fieldwork, the writer interviewed a dozen prominent Shi'i figures to gain accurate information on Shi'i-related developments as well as on the chairpersons of major Islamic organizations.

To maximize the results, however, this study has used the participant observation method. This means that the researcher joined as a participant in Shi'i religious gatherings and events. This method (participant observation) consists of a complex tactical blend of methods and techniques such as observation, informant interviewing, respondent interviewing, and document analysis employed in researching particular types of subject matter. It is also particularly useful for studying relationships among people and events, patterns of behavior, processes, the organization of people, and the activity of members of a particular social group or culture.

In presenting these materials, this study adopts a two-stage time line to demonstrate the chronological order of the development of Shi'ism in Indonesia: the first covering the period before the Iranian revolution, approximately from the beginning of the 1970s until 1998, and the second covering the period after the *reformasi* era until the present. These two periods are set out here in accordance with the way the Shi'a exercised their beliefs and teachings. Firstly, due to the political and social pressure during the Soeharto regime, the Shi'a adopted a secretive pattern, which meant that the sympathizers of Shi'ism did not propagate their beliefs to others or publicly proclaim their teachings. In order to be able to integrate within Indonesian society, the Shi'a kept their beliefs largely to themselves and their family's member only.⁵³ Secondly, the division between the campus circle and *ustadh* group could only be seen in the democratic atmosphere

⁵³Rakhmat, "Dikotomi Sunni-Syi'ah".

that prevailed after the collapse of Soeharto in 1998, when the Shi'a movement became more open and its followers could more confidently promote their beliefs to others and hold religious ceremonies in the public sphere.

5. Literature Review

Shi'ism did not hold much appeal as a research topic for scholars in the Muslim world as well as in the West until Iran's 1979 revolution. Greater attention was paid to Sunnism. According to Kohlberg, a professor of Arabic at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, this caused a lack of understanding that can easily be found in scholarly writings.⁵⁴ Studies conducted by scholars of the Muslim world as well as the West show that the principal goal of Shi'i activism dealt mainly with the improvement of their minority status. On this subject, there are abundant accessible sources such as those by Juan Cole⁵⁵ and Graham Fuller. Some local literature, however, only alludes to this subject marginally, as is the case with Bruinessen⁵⁶, Mehden⁵⁷, Zainuddin⁵⁸, Zulkifli⁵⁹ and Ali.⁶⁰

Cole, in his study on the Shi'i minorities maintains that the struggle of the Shi'a (Twelver) communities in the twentieth century was the problem of coming to terms with being minorities in different nation states. He presents two categories of Shi'a minorities: numerical minorities (like those who live in

⁵⁴Etan Kohlberg, "Western Studies of Shi'a Islam" in *Shi'ism, Resistance, and Revolution*, ed. Martin Kramer (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 31-44.

⁵⁵Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War*.

⁵⁶Martin van Bruinessen, "Gerakan Sempalan di Kalangan Umat Islam Indonesia: Latar Belakang Sosial Budaya", *Ulumul Qur'an*, Vol III no 1(1992), 16-27.

⁵⁷Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam*.

⁵⁸Zainuddin, *Syi'ah dan Politik*.

⁵⁹Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is".

⁶⁰Ali, "Alumni Hawzah".

Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan) and functional minorities, like those in Bahrain. Although Cole does not mention Indonesia, it is safe to say that the condition of Shi'a in Indonesia resembles that of Saudi Arabia or Pakistan (the first category), where Sunni predominate in the country. However, unlike Indonesia, these two countries are Islamic states whose constitutions are based on Shari'a (Islamic law).

Concerning the minority Shi'a in Saudi Arabia, Madawi has examined the Shi'i historical narratives in an attempt to understand their struggle against discrimination in Saudi Arabia. He focuses on the transformation of Saudi Shi'a resistance from one that centered on military confrontation in the 1980s to one which seeks and invokes cultural authenticity in the 1990s. The struggle of the Shi'a for equal status among the Sunni majority draws attention to the attempts of Shi'i intellectuals to write their own regional history. Shi'i intellectuals and opposition leaders deconstruct official representations and provide alternative historical narratives, which anchor their community in Saudi history and society, thus dismissing the suggestions that they are a non-indigenous community.⁶¹

It is interesting to compare the Shi'a in Saudi Arabia with those in Indonesia. Shi'ism in Saudi Arabia has existed for generations and been professed by local populations. Shi'ism can be considered an indigenous belief. In contrast, Shi'ism in Indonesia, despite being embraced by Indonesians, has no such strong historical roots in Indonesia and it is still regarded as a "recently imported

⁶¹Madawi Al Rasheed, "The Shi'a of Saudi Arabia: a Minority in Search of Cultural Authenticity", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (1998), 25(1), 121-138.

commodity” from Iran.⁶² In sum, historically, the Shi’i community in Saudi Arabia is in a better bargaining position than those in Indonesia.

The most significant study of the Shi’i minority status was done by Graham Fuller and Rend Rahim Francke,⁶³ who examined Shi’ism in the contemporary Middle East. They interviewed hundreds of individual Shi’a in the region as well as large numbers of them from outside the region. They explored the dilemma of the Shi’a, both as an oppressed religious minority in a number of states like Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, and as an oppressed majority in two states, Iraq and Bahrain. Financed by the United States Institute of Peace, they proposed, at the end of their study, some policies for the United States government in dealing with the Shi’a in the Gulf countries. In their submission, they maintained that the American experiences with the Iran revolution and the hostages crisis, followed by devastating acts of terrorism by Shi’i affiliated groups in Lebanon through the 1980s, created an image of the Shi’a which is still currently dominant. The Western stereotype of Arab Shi’a portrays them as a monolithic community, ideologically extremist, loyal to Iran and fanatically opposed to the West. In reality, Fuller and Francke asserted that those allegations are fundamentally misleading.

⁶²The existence of Shi’ism in Indonesia in the past was a contentious issue among Muslim scholars. Hamka and Azra reject the idea that Shi’ism pre-existed in the archipelago. They assert that Sunnism was the first branch of Islam to arrive in Indonesia. In contrast, some, including Fatimi, Jamil, Hasymi, Azmi, Aceh and Sunyoto, hold that Shi’ism has been present in Indonesia in the past. See further: Zulkifli, “The Struggle of the Shi’is,” 3. See also: Wan Hussein Azmi, “Islam di Aceh: Masuk dan Berkembangnya hingga abad XVI” in *Sejarah Masuk dan Berkembangnya Islam di Indonesia*, ed. Hasjmy A. (Bandung: Al-Ma’arif: 1986), 174-218. Azyumardi Azra, “Syi’ah versus Sunnah: Biarlah menjadi Sejarah Masa Lampau” *Ulumul Quran: Jurnal Ilmu dan Kebudayaan* 6 (4): 3; Sayyid Qudratullah Fatimi, *Islam comes to Malaysia* (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute Published, 1963); Hasjmy, A., *Syi’ah dan Ahlussunnah: Saling Rebut Pengaruh dan Kekuasaan sejak awal Sejarah Islam di kepulauan Nusantara* (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 1963); Agus Sunyoto, *Sunan Ampel: Taktik dan Strategi Dakwah Islam di Jawa Abad 14-15* (Surabaya: LPLI Sunan Ampel, 1987).

⁶³Fuller, *The Arab Shi’ism*.

Graham Fuller's findings are important for the thesis because not only do they serve as a backdrop to the global political constellation of the Shi'a in the 1980s, they also establish "a string of red thread" between the Western stereotype of the Shi'a and Soeharto's suspicion of the newly emerging Shi'a group in Indonesia during the 1980s. This image stigmatized the Shi'a all over the world, including in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, studies on Shi'ism reflect similar trends, with the Sunnism as the majority that has been widely studied by scholars. The reality of Shi'ism in Indonesia is scarcely recognized even by the majority of Muslims themselves. However, following Iran's revolution, curiosity in studying Shi'ism in Indonesia has been growing steadily.

A study conducted by a research team at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) led by Hamdan Basyar only deals with the relationship of Shi'ism and domestic politics in Indonesia, under the title *Syi'ah dan Politik di Indonesia* (Shi'ism and Politics in Indonesia).⁶⁴ This study attempts to explore the impact of contemporary Shi'i thought on the political life of Muslims in Indonesia.

A study conducted by Ali Syamsuri for his doctoral dissertation in the State Islamic institution (IAIN) Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, focuses on the intellectual discourse and social relations among the Indonesian alumni of *hawza 'ilmiyya* ('college of learning') of Qum, Iran. He examines how Indonesian alumni of Qom are involved in the transmission of Shi'ism in Indonesia. He provides us with important information on the educational institutions and figures that send students to Qum. His focus is on Qum alumni only. As a result, he does not examine the dynamic nature of the Shi'a in Indonesia.

⁶⁴Zainuddin, *Syi'ah dan politik*.

The most recent study of Shi'ism was conducted by Zulkifli for his doctoral degree at Leiden University. He examined a wide range of issues relating to Shi'ism and the nature of the Shi'i denomination in Indonesia—its leading figures, beliefs and practices as well as its institutions. In this study, however, he did not make any substantial analysis of the causes of the internal friction among Shi'i in Indonesia nor did he identify the fact that the friction already existed in the 1970s.⁶⁵

This chapter has been devoted to elaborating on the genesis of the Shi'a in Indonesia by providing information on the socio-political background of its early development in the country. It discusses the thesis main argument and illuminates some other issues relating to the thesis. Besides discussing the internal division among the Shi'a elites, this chapter also reveals the theoretical and empirical framework developed for this research. The theoretical framework includes a definition of the key concepts which will appear throughout the thesis, an explanation of the methodology used in this research and a literature review. The chapter ends with the structure of the study.

6. Structure of The study

This thesis will be divided into six chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction, literature review and outlines the methods of the research. In this chapter, readers will get a preliminary picture of Shi'ism as well as other related matters pertaining to their socio-political condition in Indonesia. Chapter Two discusses the formation of the Shi'i community in general as well as in Indonesia and offers some historical background on the Shi'a in contemporary Islam.

⁶⁵Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is".

Chapter Three examines Shi'ism in Indonesia from the 1970s to 2008. Chapter Four makes an inventory of Shi'i institutions, for both the campus circle and the *ustadh* group. Chapter Five considers the mixed reactions to the Shi'a, including the standpoint of Indonesian government as well as some major religious mass organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah. The last chapter concludes the thesis.

CHAPTER II

SHAPING SHI'I IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA: Concepts and Praxis

This Sunni reaction, in itself, has been defining Shi'a identity, because in many ways Shi'a identity in the Middle East works somewhat like Jewish identity did in Europe. You might have a lot of diversity in between Shi'a groups—the diversity of language, tribe, economics, class; even religious orientation.

Vali Nasr⁶⁶

1. Introduction

As noted in the preceding chapter, the Shi'i community in Indonesia comprises various factions and groupings, and is far from the homogeneous community that is commonly believed. This chapter will reveal that Shi'i identity in Indonesia constitutes elements of religious beliefs and cultural lore that create a sense of community among them. As a newly emerging religious community, they develop a complex set of beliefs and practices based on *Ja'fariyyah*, which set them apart from Sunnism. This chapter deals with Shi'ism as it is understood and practiced by the Shi'i community in Indonesia — the religious aspects that

⁶⁶Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Shia revival: How conflicts within Islam will shape the future* (New York: Norton, 2006).

determine the Shi'i identity in Indonesia. Understanding these aspects enables one to distinguish the Shi'a from Sunnis in terms of basic religious teachings and traditions.

The chapter will examine the reality of the Shi'i community in Indonesia and the role of their elites in the formation of their identity among a predominantly Sunni society. Moreover, this account delineates their social structure and modes of conversion to Shi'ism in the region. It argues that the contours of the Shi'i community in Indonesia are complex due to the wide range ideological, socio-economic, intellectual and cultural backgrounds of adherents.

The chapter begins with a discussion on the history of Shi'ism in Indonesia, exploring a range of scholarly arguments. Some scholars speculated that Shi'ism played major role in Indonesia's Islamization but the majority of writers hold a contrary view.

In general, the purpose of the chapter is to provide an overview of historical developments of the Shi'a together with an analysis of their religious beliefs and practices. Especially in the Indonesian context, the chapter focuses on the interaction between the emerging Shi'a community and major religious organizations such as the Nahdhatul Ulama (NU: the Awakening of the Ulama).

2. Historical Background

a. Political Competition

The presence of Shi'ism during the early period of Islamic history in Indonesia has always been a subject of sharp debate among historians and scholars. The controversy arises because of different historical perspectives and approaches employed to view the Islamization process in the archipelago, coupled

with a lack of reliable early sources. The following account is intended to focus on the question: which branch of Islam came first to Indonesia, Shi'ism or Sunnism?

As a part of the debate, scholars have established two conflicting theories: first, Sunnism came first and played a crucial role in the introduction of Islam in Indonesia. This concept, supported by Hamka and Azyumardi Azra,⁶⁷ contended that Sunnism was the first to arrive in the region and continues to predominate until now. The second speculation, supported by Mangaraja Onggang Parlindungan, Yunus Jamil, Sayyid Qudratullah Fatimi and A. Hasymi,⁶⁸ argued that Shi'ism played a major role during the Islamization period in Indonesia. The Shi'a not only arrived in the early days of Islamization but had significant political power in the archipelago.⁶⁹

Parlindungan argues that Shi'ism had its moment of success in Indonesia as early as 1128-1285 AD at the time the Sultan Shahbandar of Daya-Pasai in Aceh, supported by Fatimid Shi'a in Egypt. The last Shi'i Kingdom of Daya-Pasai was destroyed 1285 by the Sunni *Mamluk* dynasty, which succeeded the Fatimid in Egypt.

In line with Parlindungan, a Malaysian scholar, Fatimi, also believes that Shi'ism came to the Malay-Indonesian region before Sunnism and became the most influential power in the region. Shi'ism was introduced to Southeast Asia in

⁶⁷Hamka, *Antara Fakta dan Khayal 'Tuanku Rao'* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974); Azyumardi Azra, "Syi'ah di Indonesia: Antara Mitos dan Realitas", *Ulumul Quran: Jurnal Ilmu dan kebudayaan* 1995, Edition: 6 (4): 4-19.

⁶⁸Mangaraja Onggang Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao* (Jakarta: Tanjung Harapan, 1964), 107-109; Jamil. M Yunus, *Tawarikh Raja-raja Kerajaan Aceh* (Banda Aceh: Iskandar Muda, 1968) as cited by Azyumardi Azra in "Syi'ah di Indonesia: Antara Mitos dan Realitas"; Sayyid Qudratullah Fatimi, *Islam comes to Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963); Hasymi, A. *Syi'ah dan Ahli Sunnah Saling Rebut Pengaruh dan Kekuasaan Sejak Awal Sejarah Islam di Kepulauan Nusantara* (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu 1983).

⁶⁹For a further account about the civil war between Sunnis and Shi'a during the tenth century in Indonesia, see at Azra "Syi'ah di Indonesia: Antara Mitos dan Realitas."

the mid-eighth century by a group of Muslim Shi'a coming from the kingdom of Champa, South of Thailand. Fatimi did not mention details about the name of kingdom but his view was supported by Anthony Reid, who identified Shi'ism in Ayutthaya in the south of Thailand during the corresponding period. However, it is not certain whether Fatimi and Reid refer to the same kingdom. In his analysis, Reid discovered some Shi'a traders in the area, arguing that the interaction between these Muslim traders and local people not only had an impact on the local financial sector, but also on the socio-religious discourse in the region.⁷⁰ During that period, Muslim Shi'a had great impact on the local kingdom, which was ruled by Prasad Thong. In related analysis, Ibn Muhammad in his book *The Ship of Sulaiman* also states that these Muslim traders helped King Prasad Thong's son, Narai, in organizing the annual Hasan-Hussein feast during the Islamic month of Muharram, which is considered holy in Shi'ism.⁷¹

Similarly, Hasjmy claims that the first Islamic kingdom established in the archipelago was *Kerajaan Peureulak (Perlak)*, which, was founded in 840 AD, by Muslim merchants from Persian, Arab and Gujarat who first came to the region to Islamize local people. This Shi'i kingdom lasted for about 300 years. The first king was Sultan Saiyid Maulana Abdul Aziz Syah, who reigned from 840 until 864. Most of the merchants had Shi'i political orientation and, through their political power, Shi'ism spread out across the region. However, the Shi'i political power encountered resistance from local Sunnis who obtained support from the Sunni Abbasid dynasty in Baghdad. After facing a two-year long rebellion, the third Shi'i

⁷⁰Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680* (Chiang Mai, Silksworm Books, 1988), 212.

⁷¹Ibrahim Muhammad Rabi ibn Muhammad, *The Ship of Sulaiman* (New York: Columbia University Press 1972).

Sultan, Ala Al-Din, Maulana Sayyid Abbas (888-913) was overthrown and Sunni followers installed their first king, Sultan Makhdum Ala 'al-Din Abd al-Qadir.⁷²

In contrast, Hamka and Azra rejected the theory of the existence of Shi'ism gaining political power during the process of the Islamization of Indonesia. Describing the view as baseless due to the absence of convincing evidence and any reliable references, both scholars believe that Sunnism was the first branch of Islam to arrive and it continues to prevail in the Muslim community. In response to Hasjmy's assumption that the first Islamic kingdom in Indonesia was Shi'i, Azra pointed out that, the concerned scholar was not able to reveal the sources of historiography as the basis for his argument. Should Hasjmy use local sources, he must verify them, test their validity and even compare with the available sources, both local and foreign sources, Azra went on to say.

In line with Azra's point of view, I suggest that the notion from Hasjmy and his colleagues needs to be carefully scrutinized because they used their old manuscripts and folklore for their studies. If their views are plausible, then we have to face some great consequences in the history of Islam in Indonesia, which would make us reconsider our understanding of the course of Islamic thought and practices in the early period as well as contemporary Islam in Indonesia.

b. Cultural Aspects

Despite the widely accepted concept that Sunnism played the crucial role in the introduction of Islam into Indonesia, certain traditions and culture, like *Bubur Suro* in Java and *Kanji Asuro* in Aceh, *Tabuik (Tabot)* in Bengkulu, South Sumatera, were obviously Shi'i-inspired feasts and still require an explanation.

⁷²Hasymi, *Syi'ah dan Ahli Sunnah Saling Rebut Pengaruh*, 45-46.

The tradition is generally celebrated throughout Indonesia with the cooking of porridge (*Bubur Suro*) and in the west coastal area of Sumatra; especially in Bengkulu and Pariaman, local people organize a *tabot* festival. This ceremony is meant to honor Hussein, the second imam who was cruelly killed in Karbala. No strong written evidence provides information when this tradition began to be known in some parts of Indonesia like Bengkulu and West Sumatera. There has been, however, an opinion that the ritual was introduced by British soldiers called *Sipahi* or *Sepoy* (soldiers of Indian native). Most of them were Muslim, hired by Sir Stamford Raffles, to fortify British rule in the region.⁷³

The word, *tabot*, is derived from the Arabic word “*tabut*” which literally means “wooden box” or “case”. This box is a symbol of Imam Hussein’s tomb. In Indonesia, this box is made of bamboo, rattan, and paper. The 10-day long ceremony consists of street parades and some reenactments of the battle of Karbala. For their parade, people make and decorate *bouraq* or winged horses with the face of a woman. The procession ends at the cemetery known locally as “Karbala” where the *tabot* is dismantled.

Admittedly, over the past three centuries the *Ashura* tradition has blended with various local elements in its observance and the festival, in contemporary Indonesia, has attracted tourist interest and even been viewed as a part of the regional identity for the city and surrounding province of Bengkulu.

For many scholars, this is a challenging task to find more traces and influence of Shi’ism in traditional culture like *tabot*. With public acknowledgement from policymakers that the *Ashura* tradition has currently become popular

⁷³Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, Volume I, translated by A.W.S. O’Sullivan (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906). For more about this tradition, see: “Tabut dan Peranannya dalam Masyarakat” (Padang Proyek Pengembangan Permuseuman Sumatera Barat, 1982).

carnival in Indonesia, some scholars maintain the views that this is a proof of the existence of Shi'i religious doctrine during the early Islamic history of the country. This is particularly the case when it comes to the discussion of possible relation between Shi'i elements and local culture.

In this regard, Azra holds a different view, asserting that the Shi'i inspired-festivals in Sumatera currently have lost their religious meanings. Citing Van Ronkel, he emphasizes that the tradition does not signify the influence of Shi'ism in the archipelago.⁷⁴ According to him, unlike those rituals in Iran, *tabot* festivals in Indonesia no longer reflect a religious perspective: they are merely popular celebrations. Nonetheless, I argue it is clear that this festival in Indonesia, like *Ta'ziyeh*⁷⁵ in Iran, originally derived from the religious tradition that is uniquely found in Shi'ism. Comparison of *Tabot* ceremonies performed in Indonesia with those in other countries such as Pakistan, Lebanon and Iran, show clearly that both ceremonies have the same cultural roots.⁷⁶

Besides examining the *Ashura* tradition, many historians also strive to establish the relationship of Shi'ism with Malay classical literature in a bid to prove the existence of Shi'i influence in the region in the early period. Baroroh Baried, a professor in history from the University of Gajah Mada, Yogyakarta, has investigated 17 Malay stories encompassing Shi'i elements.⁷⁷ At the conclusion,

⁷⁴Phillippus Samuel van Ronkel,"De Hassan-Hoessein fessten in Nederlandsch Indie," *TBG*, 56,334, as cited by Azreyumardi Azra in "Syi'ah di Indonesia: Antara Mitos dan Realitas."

⁷⁵*Ta'ziyeh* is a form of Iranian musical pageant that is the theatrical expression of religious passion; it is based on the Battle of Karbala and performed annually.

⁷⁶It is true that the *Tabot* festival in Indonesia has undergone a socio-cultural transformation, which has loosened its religious meaning, but as a cultural festival it is still popularly performed by local people.

⁷⁷Baroroh Baried, "Shi'a Elements in Malay Literature" in *Profiles of Malay Culture, Historiography, Religion and Politics*, edited by Sartono Kartodirdjo (Jakarta: Departemen P & K, 1976), 59-65.

she argues, despite rough and imperfect data, as “they constitute only fragments of stories about Ali and his family”, in some limited numbers, those stories clearly indicate Shi’i elements. A similar study was also undertaken by a German researcher, Professor Edwin Wieringa of the University of Cologne. He attempted to further trace the Shi’i elements in traditional Malay literature, focusing on the stories about Ali and his wife, Fatima, in *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah*⁷⁸ or *Hikayat Banjar*.⁷⁹ Interestingly, at the end of his analysis, the scholar found a wider background of a “*de-Shi’itization*”⁸⁰ in local Islamic literature. As the majority of these manuscripts date from the nineteenth century, he believed it would be only natural to find the remnants of Shi’i aspects in the *hikayat*, which have survived. But, in fact, those aspects have been erased. While elements of culture inspired by Shi’ism, such as *Ashura* porridge in Java and Sulawesi; and *Asan’ Usen* in Acehnese, survive in contemporary Islam in Indonesia, some Shi’i characters in local literature are no longer associated with Shi’ism. Accordingly, another western scholar, L.F. Brakel, spent nine years researching this subject. His analysis

⁷⁸*Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah* is a Malay literary work that recounts the story of Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, half-brother of the martyrs of Shi’a Imam, Hasan and Hussein. The story revolves around the aftermath of the battle of Karbala and Muhammad’s role in an uprising against Yazid, the caliph of Umayyad Caliphate. *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah* was one of the *Hikayat* mentioned in the Malay annals read by the Malay warriors to raise their fighting spirit during the siege of Malacca by the Portuguese Empire in 1511.

⁷⁹Edwin Wieringa, “Does Traditional Islamic Malay Literature contain Shi’itic Elements?: Ali and Fatima in Malay Hikayat Literature”, *Studia Islamika*, 3.4 (1996): 93-111. For more about Ali and Fatimah see Wendy Mukherjee, “Fatimah in Nusantara”, *Sari*, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, vol. 23 (2005) 137 – 152. *The Hikayat Banjar* is the chronicle of Banjarmasin, Indonesia. This text, also called the History of Lambung Mangkurat, contains the history of the kings of *Banjar* and of Kota Waringin in southeast and south Borneo respectively.

⁸⁰This term refers to an effort to erase gradually any typical element of Shi’ism from the Malay literature. In some of his studies, Wieringa found Shi’i elements in Indonesian Islam, affirming those traces of Shi’ism were gradually expunged over time (particularly from the nineteenth century onwards), due to close contacts with Middle Eastern Islam (Saudi Arabia). He regards this as “a de-Shi’itization process” of Malay *hikayat* literature.

found Shi'i texts were apparent in local culture even since the pre-colonial period. His findings were also supported by Marrison and Milner who, after their examination on *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay history), indicated that the Shi'i belief mixed with Indian culture, was clearly recognizable in the region.⁸¹

Weiringa's finding about the de-Shi'ization phenomenon in the Malay literature, to my opinion; still requires more analysis in the future in a bid to prove it as a systematic process. To that end, it is necessary to apply the same approach to other texts of Malay literature, not only *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah* or *Hikayat Banjar*, looking for useful sources for further studies, especially regarding the assumed process to phase out Shi'i elements in the regional classical manuscripts. In Feener's description, "the fact that such elements survived transmission through manuscript copies of the nineteenth century seems to suggest that any 'purge' was not pursued in a comprehensive or totalizing manner."⁸²

In general, while much has been discovered by previous studies, a question of the relation of Shi'i aspects in literature or local traditions with the spread of religious political ideology of Shi'ism in the archipelago, still remains. This was due to a lack of historical evidence to support their assumptions. Thus, while cultural aspects of Shi'ism were present in some parts of Indonesia centuries before the Iranian revolution in 1979, those aspects did not automatically prove the presence of Shi'i religiosity in Indonesia. In sum, there is hardly any evidence to maintain that Shi'ism has ever been a strong religious or political orientation in

⁸¹ Marrison, G.E. "Persian Influences in Malay Life: 1280-1650", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 28, 1995, p 52-69.

⁸² Micheal R. Feener, "Tabut: Muharram observances in the history of Bengkulu", *Studi Islamika*, 1999, 6 (2) 87-130.

Indonesia in the past. Even though Shi'i cultural traditions may have been popular among local people since the fifteenth century, Shi'ism as an Islamic school of thought or religious doctrine was not as well accepted as Sunni teachings in Indonesia.⁸³ Admittedly, Shi'ism underwent "a stage of quietism" until the Iranian revolution in 1979 erupted and the global Islamic revivalism began.

In addition, however, it is clear that the spread of Shi'ism in the forms of cultural or textual influence across the Malay and Indonesia region during the early period as well as contemporary times has been always an interesting subject of research. In this regard, it is necessary to emphasize here that any attempt to investigate this subject should review the available references and prevailing valid historical sources. Once a reliable concept has been established, such academic research has to provide solid ground and opportunity for the Shi'i minority to search for cultural authenticity in the country.

3. Religious Identity

a. People of the House: Ahl Bayt

The rise of Shi'a in the late 1970s has subsequently formed a new religious minority in the predominantly Sunni Indonesia. Their religious traditions and doctrines exhibit different patterns of behavior and beliefs from those of the majority of the Indonesian Muslim population. This array represents the complexity of Shi'i identity that not only includes religious concepts but also culture and traditions.

⁸³Ironically, many propagators of Islam in Indonesia in the past who have made use of Shi'i-inspired doctrine, like Hamzah Fansuri and his students and Siti Syekh Jenar, were accused of promoting deviant Islamic teachings and were prosecuted and burnt alive.

During the Soeharto administration, the Shi'i movement was suspected of bringing about an Islamic revolution in Indonesia because Shi'ism was perceived as an "Iran-inspired revolutionary movement" and a threat to national stability. Since then, the term, Shi'a, carries a negative connotation in Indonesia and has been associated with political notoriety. For this reason, the Shi'i community in Indonesia prefers to use *Ahl al-Bayt*, or more precisely the *Madhhab Ahl al-Bayt*. The phrase *Ahl al-Bayt* literally means the People of the House.⁸⁴

In a series of interviews I conducted during fieldwork in Indonesia, some Shi'i followers certainly showed their preference to use *Ahl al-Bayt* to denote their group because, according to them, the term is considered a neutral Islamic concept to all Muslims. They are convinced that *Madhhab Ahl al-Bayt* (the *Madhhab* of the Prophet's Household) would be more attractive to Indonesians than Shi'a, which refers to the official *Madhhab* of Iran.

In this respect, Madhi Alaydrus, a lecturer at the Shi'i University of *Madiltul Ilmi* in Depok remarked, "The word Shi'a has been politically smeared by anti-Shi'ism sentiment, while the word of *Ahl al-Bayt* is present and clearly mentioned in the Qur'an." The word Shi'a has been misunderstood and wrongly related to the Islamic Revolution of Iran, which toppled the US-supported Pahlavi regime. This political stereotyping has described Shi'a as a bloodthirsty denomination: "In Indonesia, the word of *Ahl al-Bayt* is much more welcome than the word Shi'a despite the fact there is no difference in this term," he said. Another Shi'i

⁸⁴ *Ahl al-Bayt* literally means people of the house, or family referring the family of the Prophet. There are differing interpretations about the scope and importance of *Ahl al-Bayt*. In Sunnism, *Ahl al-Bayt* includes his wives, his daughter (Fatimah), her two children as well as his cousin and son-in-law, Ali. Any Muslim has the obligation to love the *Ahl al-Bayt*. While in Shi'ism, *Ahl al-Bayt* includes only Fatimah, Ali, Hassan and Hussein and imams, descendants of Fatimah whom they consider to be divinely chosen leaders of the Muslim community.

informant, who declined to identify his name, told me that the phrase *Ahl al-Bayt* is considered more acceptable among Indonesian Muslims.

Unavoidably, the use of this term by the Shi'a, however, has generated the widely heard accusation that Shi'i leaders in Indonesia use the term *Ahl al-Bayt* as a strategy to encourage the Sunnis in Indonesia to more readily accept the Shi'a presence by concealing their distinctiveness from the dominant group, while at the same time seeking to attract followers from the Sunni group. However, Mahdi rejected the accusation, saying that the use of *Ahl al-Bayt* was not meant to exploit the Sunni passion for the Household of the Prophet. Another controversy is that the attribution of *Ahl al-Bayt* by the Shi'a, in this case, has indeed created contention among *Ba'alawi* (the descendants of the Prophet) who also claim to have the right to this term rather than any other Islamic denomination⁸⁵. *Ba'alawi* families immigrated from Hadramawt and settled in Indonesia from the eighteenth century. They consider themselves as the first rank in social stratification among the Hadrami community based on their illustrious ancestral descent.⁸⁶ They claim to have been favored by God and they therefore enjoy social privileges, such as social respect and nobility in Indonesia.⁸⁷ For this reason, they believe that the term of *Ahl al-Bayt* should be applied exclusively to them and not any other social group, like the Shi'a. They refer to one famous verse of the

⁸⁵ See further Ismail Fajrie Alatas, "They are the Inheritors of the Prophet: Discourses on the *Ahl Al-Bayt* among the Bā alawi in Modern Indonesia" (paper for workshop on Shi'ism and Beyond: "Alid Piety" in Muslim Southeast Asia by Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore January 2010).

⁸⁶ Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami Awakening, Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies 1990-1942* (New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1999), 25.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 97.

Qur'an, 33:33, which states: "Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, ye Members of the family and to make you pure and spotless."⁸⁸

b. Shi'i Communal Rituals and Identity

In term of religious identity, one could not easily recognize Shi'i adherents in Indonesia through their physical appearance. Their distinctiveness has to be placed either at an abstract or a conceptual level because it is much more embodied in the forms of a series of religious doctrines.⁸⁹ A Shi'i character in Indonesia, in many cases, is not be linked to ethnic background or social status; simply, because there is no Sundanese, Javanese or Balinese Shi'a, for instance.

As parts of the religious doctrines of Shi'ism, communal rituals and gatherings are among key practices. Muhammad Hussein Taba'taba'i in his book *Shia* notes that certain religious practices besides the basic rituals are specifically Shi'i, stressing some of those rituals might be also familiar to Sunnism.⁹⁰ Other scholars, like Vali Reza Nasr and Graham E. Fuller, share the view and maintain that what sets Shi'i followers apart from their fellow Sunni counterparts is "the great feast of mourning, remembrance and atonement (*Ashura*)."⁹¹ This central belief is concerned with the Karbala tragedy where, Hussein, the third Imam of Shi'ism, was brutally killed by Yazid of the Umayyads. This happened on 10 October 680 CE (10 Muharram 61 AH). At the time, Yazid was in power, seeking *bay'ah* (allegiance) from Hussein. This tragedy was one of the defining turning points in Islamic history and in the formation of Shi'i identity.

⁸⁸The Qur'an: Al Ahzab, Verse 33.

⁸⁹ Jalaluddin Rakhmat, *Catatan Kang Jalal, Visi Media, Politik, Dan Pendidikan* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 1998), 433-460.

⁹⁰Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Taba'Taba'i, *Shia*, (Qom: Ansyanian Publication, 1981)

⁹¹ Graham E Fuller and Rend Rahim Francke, *The Arab Shi'ism: The Forgotten Muslims* (Hampshire and London: Macmillan Press, 1999). See also: Nasr, *The Shia Revival*.

In Indonesia, the Shi'i community marks the anniversary of this event every year. As a sad episode, they wear mourning attire, mostly black in color, refraining from music because it is a time for sorrow and self-reflection. They express their mourning by weeping as well as by listening to poems about the tragedy. All of these activities are intended to connect them with Hussein's suffering and his sacrifices in keeping Islam alive. This battle serves as a religious model for behavior among those who are expected to struggle on the path to God, even if they face oppression and persecution from dominant rulers. This sort of ceremony usually takes place in indoor buildings, like mosques and community centers, and, for some reasons, has never been held in open spaces. In Jakarta, for instance, the Islamic Culture Center (ICC) of Al-Huda⁹² in cooperation with other Shi'i institutions usually organizes the national commemoration of such great event. This occasion provides the local Shi'i community with a space to express their religiosity.

4. Community Formation

By the mid-1980s, the newly emerging community of Shi'a began to take shape among the middle class following the rapid expansion in urban wealth and an infusion of Western and East Asian consumer styles into the elite sphere.⁹³

As a typical urban community, the Shi'i members live in cities both in Java and outside Java, all over the country. They concentrate around the areas where

⁹² ICC is one of the major Shi'i foundations in Indonesia. Located in Warung Buncit, South Jakarta, it is highly dependent on Iranian authority and responsibility as well as financial resources. The Islamic center has functioned among others as a coordinating body in the celebration of Islamic festivals. It also plays a crucial role between local Shi'i institutions with its Iranian counterparts.

⁹³Robert W. Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian middle class" *Indonesia*, No. 56 (October, 1993), 1-35.

most of their leaders live and their activities take place, sticking together for the support of their institutions. Nevertheless, there is also a small number in rural areas, perhaps because of the influences from the urban Shi'i community. In rural areas, they are generally only individuals and very rarely communal. Some, for instance, are villagers in Garut, Kuningan, West Java, Lampung, South Sumatra and some in South Sulawesi.

Despite living in cities with relatively high income and better educational background, the Shi'i community has a series of religious rituals including the annually commemoration of the dead (*khaul*), the seven day commemoration of the dead (*tujuh harian*), *tahlilan* (collective recitation that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger), requests for prayer to Islamic spiritual figures (*mohon do'a dari kiai*), and visits to Islamic spiritual burial or shrine (*ziarah ke kuburan kiai atau wali*).⁹⁴

In term of the current number of Shi'a in Indonesia, it is difficult to estimate, as there are no reliable statistics. But there are a number of estimates that might be cited. For instance, Muhammad Andy Assegaf, Chairman of Yayasan Fatimah, a Shi'i-affiliated foundation in Jakarta, estimated that the number of Shi'a reached one million people. In 2000, another estimate quoted by local media put the number at approximately three million people; more recently, the same source mentioned a figure of five million.⁹⁵ The information released by Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, from the US Department of State in its

⁹⁴Saiful Mujani, "Religious Democrats: Democratic Culture and Muslim Political Participation in Post-Suharto Indonesia" (PhD diss. the Ohio State University, 2003).

⁹⁵"Mumpung Gus Dur Jadi Presiden", *Gatra*, July 2000.

<http://www.gatra.com/cari.php?cari=ijabi&lingkup=all> (accessed 02 January 2009)

International Religious Freedom Report 2008, stated that there were an estimated one million to three million Shi'i followers among the majority Sunni in Indonesia.

The Shi'i community also built a number of mosques in some cities in Indonesia. Some prominent mosques are Masjid Al Mahdi, Kranggan, East Jakarta, Masjid Alhusin, Sawangan, Depok, Al Muntazor, Tangerang, and Masjid Al Falah, Bandung. Those mosques attract worshippers not only from among Shi'i but also from the Sunni community. "Some of the mosques offered services in accordance with Sunnism," one of my informants asserted.

In term of their socio-religious practices, the Shi'i community in Indonesia is indeed facing a complicated problem, especially in relation to the pattern of center and periphery.⁹⁶ This pattern was established as the result of theological ties between Shi'i adherents with their *Marja Taqlid*. The center is the country where the office of *Marja Taliq* is located. The periphery is the country where there is no *Marja Taqlid* at all. As most of the clerics live in Middle East, like Iran, Iraq and Lebanon, these countries eventually emerged as the center while a country, like Indonesia, becomes the periphery because no Indonesians have ever reached such a position. The absence of such a cleric in Indonesia has indeed created a certain challenge for the Shi'i community in Indonesia especially in dealing with their religious practices. Despite the advantages of current technology, like the internet and direct telephone lines which enable them to contact the office of *Marja Taqlid* abroad, they still have problem because of insufficient language competence in Arabic or Farsi (Persian language). Some informants, I interviewed, expressed a feeling of discouragement about the difficulty to contact the office in foreign

⁹⁶For more information see: Laurence Louer, *Transnational Shia Politics Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

countries, like Iran and Iraq. Although some *maraji* (plural of *marja*) provide their religious guidance and fatwas in English through the internet, this does not offer any good solution because, to get an answer from the office in Iraq or Iran for instance, takes a relatively long time. In this case, I noticed during my fieldwork that many Shi'i individuals, who need religious advice or fatwa on their daily religious practices, would rather contact some *ustadhs* who worked for ICC in Jakarta or those, who were considered as leaders among them.

5. Modes of Conversion⁹⁷

Embarking upon the notion that Shi'ism began its influence in Indonesia within the last three decades, one may regard all of Shi'a in the country as converts. They have shaped the first-generation of Shi'a in the country following a complex process of conversion from Sunnism during the corresponding period. How and why do Indonesian Sunnis convert to Shi'a?

In order to answer that question, it is necessary to draw our attention to the arguments of some scholars about conversion, like Lewis Rambo⁹⁸, Richard W Bulliet⁹⁹ and John Lofland.¹⁰⁰ They suggest that a conversion is a complex process, because it is a dynamic that varies according to place and time. Rambo believes

⁹⁷Conversion can be defined as a cultural passage and a deliberate change with definite direction and shape, showing responsive to particular knowledge and practices. To be converted is to re-identify, to learn, reorder, and reorient, see more at: Diane Austin-Broos, "The Anthropology of Conversion: An Introduction" in *Anthropology of Religious Conversion*, edited by Andrew Buckser and Stephen D. Glazier (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003). According to Zulkifli, a conversion takes place when a person or a group finds a more reasonable and a correct set of religious teachings. The term religious conversion is a complex phenomenon, which involves both intellectual and emotional aspects. See Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is".

⁹⁸Lewis Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (London: Yale University Press, 1993).

⁹⁹Richard W Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1979).

¹⁰⁰John Lofland and Norman Skonovd, "Conversion Motifs", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Dec 1981, 373-385.

that it depends on situations, strategies and tactics. Converts have different motives at different times. In line with that view, Bulliet argues that first converts to a new movement are likely to be different in motivation and demographic profile from those who convert when a movement is already spreading out and successful. For instance, the first converts to Islam were different from those who followed over a long period of time. However, these scholars agree that the form and structure of conversion are universal and, in many cases, conversion is a cumulative process involving not just a single motivation and consequences.

A sociologist from University of California, Professor John Lofland and his assistant, Norman Skonovd, provides the classification of conversion motifs as the result of their long research. Both propose the notion of conversion motifs, arguing that differing perceptions and descriptions of conversion are not merely the result of various theoretical orientations but are, in fact, descriptions of qualities that make conversion experiences substantially different. In this account, I am going to highlight some of the motifs which are relevant to my study: mystical, intellectual and affectional conversion. As each of the types is not an entirely clear-cut phenomenon, it is important to emphasize that these typologies may overlap one another, representing a continuum of processes.

a. Mystical Conversion

Mystical conversion is generally related to an emotional sense of insight, induced by visions, voices, or other paranormal experiences. The American professor attempted to define the term, mystical, as a common feeling among converts that "the experiences cannot be expressed in logical and coherent terms that, in short, is mystical experiences." In the case of Shi'i converts in Indonesia, this

type of conversion might be understood, for instance, in the context of the growing urban Sufism with its various short courses, recently rampant among the middle class in big cities, and this sort of training can be instrumental in the process of conversion to Shi'ism.

In order to put the case into the context, I will analyze a series of exclusive Sufi training programs in Indonesia, organized by *Tazkiya Sejati*, one of the Shi'i institutions in Jakarta. I attempt to relate the courses with "mystical experiences" gained by participants who had been exposed to a certain situation during the training sessions. In fact, there are many other Shi'i institutions, offering similar activities but I have singled out this institution because this institution was established with the support of Sudarmono, ex-Vice President of Indonesia during the New Order era, and his family. This institution was also listed as one of the Shi'i foundations and the most active agent in attracting Jakarta's urban upper-middle class to Shi'ism.¹⁰¹

This happened, in the mid-1980s, during the period of the country's most rapid economic development under the New Order government. Sufism had inspired new enthusiasm, even in the segment of society most intensely engaged in modernization and globalization: the urban middle and upper classes.¹⁰² Captivated with spiritual philosophy, urban middle and upper classes, less politically inclined but, instead, interested in piety and morality, were increasingly keen to participate in the newly growing institutions in some cities in Indonesia

¹⁰¹Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is", 149.

¹⁰²Julia Day Howell, M.A. Subandi and Peter L. Nelson, "New Faces of Indonesian Sufism: A Demographic Profile of Tarekat Qodiriyyah-Naqsyabandiyyah, *Pesantren Suryalaya*, in the 1990s," *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, 2001, 35, 2:33-6.

that offered formal studies in *tasawuf* (Sufism). This phenomenon was well captured in an analysis by an Australian researcher, Julia D. Howell.

In her examination, she explained that, in a bid to response to the surge interest of urbanites and educated elites in Sufism, *Tazkiya Sejati* offered scholarly discourse of this subject in formal, university-style courses.¹⁰³ Some Muslim lecturers involved in the representations, such as Jalaluddin Rakhmat, Zen al Hadi, Haidar Bagir and Agus Abu Bakar. These teachers also facilitated access to “other religious resources” for those interested in cultivating some forms of Sufi spirituality, beyond the preliminary lessons. These institutions, according to Howell, helped de-couple Sufism from the Sufi orders, the tareqah, and the old-style *pesantren* with which many cosmopolitan Muslims have had negative associations.

Tazkiya Sejati was founded by Rakhmat with financial support from Sudharmono and his family. This institution organized more than 20 courses particularly on Sufism, which was able to attract a great number of Jakarta’s upper-middle class, including business persons, executives, and retired functionaries.¹⁰⁴ Although there are some other institutions with similar courses on Sufism in the city, that belonging to Rakhmat was distinctive. It presented Sufism, not only at theoretical level but also along with practical daily ritual observations, such as *dhikr* (remembrance of God), and guidance from teachers in order to perform prayers correctly. During these ritual activities, Rakhmat used a book of Sufi prayers, *Mafatihul Jinan* (*Keys to Heaven*).

¹⁰³ Julia Day Howell, “Seeking Sufism in the global city: Indonesia’s cosmopolitan Muslims and depth spirituality”, (paper presented at the symposium: “Islam in Southeast Asia and China: Regional Faithlines and Faultlines in the Global *Ummah*” 2002, University of Hong Kong).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

Howell's elaboration explained only some parts of the reality of this training while the rest could be understood through the context of the newly growing community in Indonesia, that is, the Shi'a. In this regard, I suggest that some scholars who deal with Shi'ism in Indonesia, like Zulkifli and Syamsuri Ali, would unsurprisingly view this training as instrumental in propagating Shi'ism among the middle class.¹⁰⁵

Analyzing the session provided in *Tazkiya Sejati*, I would argue that the training was meant to promote Shi'ism for the following reasons. The book of Sufi prayers, *Mafatihul Jinan (Keys to Heaven)* is in fact a famous Shi'i book containing religious rituals, such as recommended prayers and *do'a* (supplications), rules and procedures applied within the Shi'i tradition.¹⁰⁶ There is no doubt that materials presented in the training, were derived from Shi'i teachings and doctrine. In the class, some lecturers even encouraged debate among students on the relationship between Sufism and Shi'ism on purpose to introduce aspects of Shi'ism, particularly to the participants.

In daily ritual observations, *dhikr* and prayers, the lecturers, who were well known Shi'i leaders,¹⁰⁷ endeavored to develop a situation where the participants would be absorbed in the rhythmic repetition of the name of God or His attributes. This situation can be described as an example of what Professor Lofland calls as "Mystical Conversion".

b. Intellectual Conversion

¹⁰⁵ Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is", 73.

¹⁰⁶ *Mafatih al-Jinan* by Shaikh Abbass Qumi is a Twelver Shi'i compilation of selected chapters from the Qur'an, acts of worship after prayers and supplications narrated from the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

¹⁰⁷ More discussion about these lecturers can be found in Chapter III.

This type of conversion, according to Lofland and Skonovd, can be identified when a person seeks knowledge about religious issues via books, television, articles, lectures, and other media that do not involve significant social contact. The person actively seeks out and explores alternatives for his original faith. For Indonesian Shi'i converts, this type of conversion occurred among the campus circle and other university students the first time they made contact with Shi'ism. Self-conversion among them occurred as a result of reading Shi'i literature and joining study clubs and religious training. This type of conversion was also applicable to the *ustadh* group who went to local and overseas *pesantren* (Iran, Egypt and Syria).

Since the mid-1980s, Shi'ism has become a new brand of Islam attracting students at Indonesia's major universities across the country. Like other Islamic movements, the Shi'a embarked upon activities, such as discussion groups, seminars and dialogue, involving young Muslim activists in formal and informal meetings to discuss Indonesian and Islamic issues in a broad context. Some of these activities brought Shi'i figures to discuss Islamic and general issues and to lead the discussion, introducing the students to Shi'ism.

This sort of study group was observable not only in campuses around Bandung, West Java, but also in Jakarta, particularly at the University Indonesia (UI), Depok. In 1985, for instance, some UI students initiated a religious discussion group, reviewing some works and books by Islamic scholars like Ali Shariati and Morteza Muthahari and several other articles published in the *Ulumul*

Quran Journal. They named the group *Kajian Islamika Abu Dhar*.¹⁰⁸ They held discussions at the mosque of UI campus only but later moved from mosques to houses of the group's members. This was because of political pressure of the incumbent government. According to Reslawati, a researcher from the Research and Development Agency, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), the students who were involved in the group did not initially realize that they were discussing Shi'i-oriented materials.¹⁰⁹ They often invited Rakhmat as a speaker and moderator. This discussion group became increasingly attractive for young students, especially UI students and other universities in the surrounding area.

Reslawati has also shown that a study group located in Bekasi, some kilometers west of Jakarta, was organized by Adi Gunardi, a former activist of Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI). Routinely, they perform *do'a Kumayl*¹¹⁰ every Friday night. The study group, named the Independent Forum for Islamic Studies, was initially among 10 youths, but later on attracted more participants.

Besides operating through discussions or study groups, intellectual conversion could also take place through the influence of reading literature on Shi'ism. There is a sufficient example for this phenomenon; like Rakhmat's conversion to Shi'ism, which was greatly influenced by the Shi'i works that he read. He acknowledged that his understanding of Shi'ism, for instance, was a direct result of his intensive reading of Shi'i books.

c. Affectional Conversion

¹⁰⁸Reslawati, "Menelusuri Jaringan Syi'ah di Jabodetabek", *Harmoni*, volume IX, nomor 36, Puslitbang Kehidupan Keagamaan Badan, Kementerian Agama RI, Oktober-Desember 2010, 62-85.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*

¹¹⁰This prayer is typically Shi'ism, associated with Ali ibn Talib.

The last but not the least is affectional conversion that traditionally takes place in very pragmatic ways such as marriages and communal gatherings. , Professor Lofland has defined this type of conversion in such phrases as "interpersonal bonds are the fundamental support for recruitment" and personal attachments or strong liking for practicing believers is central to the conversion process. This classification creates a broad theoretical framework for the inclusion of any conversion from Sunnism into Shi'ism. This means that the role of family, leaders, the campus circle, the *ustadh*, Khomeini and Shi'i imams, would be determining factors for the conversion process.

The most interesting phenomenon of all Shi'i conversion in Indonesia is affectional conversion. It can be broadly defined through on fondness, love, liking, attachment, friendship. Each of these words might provide different reasons for the conversion to take place.

For instance, a number of members from a dissident group background, particularly DI/NII (*Darul Islam/Negara Islam Indonesia*, the House of Islam/the Islamic State of Indonesia) and *Islam Jama'ah*, were converted to Shi'ism.¹¹¹ Shi'i groups are found in Jakarta, Palembang, Malang, Makassar, South Sulawesi, and in West Java, particularly in Bandung, Cianjur, Sukabumi, Garut, Serang, and Tangerang. The question is: for what reason are the members converted?

In order to answer this question, some studies by Zulkifli, Ali and Reslawati have been dedicated to this subject. Their studies have revealed that in many cases, conversion among the dissident groups had varied reasons. For example, as Zulkifli describes, ex-members of DI/NII and *Islam Jama'ah* were

¹¹¹DI/NII (Darul Islam/Negara Islam Indonesia (House of Islam/Islamic State of Indonesia); a dissident political movement, which in 1948 declared the Islamic state of Indonesia.

converted to Shi'ism because they found the doctrine of imamate in Shi'ism similar with that of their former groups. Ex-members of *Kelompok Islam Isa Bugis* (Islamic Group of Isa Bugis) also provided the same reason.¹¹² Furthermore, most of them felt "attachment" with Shi'ism because they thought that Shi'ism is the only religious school of thought that has a clear concept of imamate, which is similar to the doctrine of their former group.¹¹³ In a more specific case, Adi Gunardi (AG) is a former high-ranking NII KW 9 in the Jakarta area who joined the Shi'a early in 2000 due to his affection for the leader of Iranian revolution, Khomeini.

He used his personal relationship and friendship to recruit former members of NII into Shi'ism — as many as 3,000 people around the Greater area of Jakarta (JABODETABEK).¹¹⁴ This case certainly signaled strong indication of affection, attachment and friendship.

However, in a broader scope, if this theory is relevant in these cases just for the reason of a feeling of affection and attachment, there would be a hypothetical question about possible conversion among NU members into Shi'ism. Reasonably, this is due to the fact this organization is not only culturally similar to Shi'ism but, more importantly, it also defends the admiration of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (the Prophet's family), like the Shi'a do.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is," 48.

¹¹³ Syamsuri Ali, "Alumni Hawza Ilmiyah Qum".

¹¹⁴ Reslawati, "Menelusuri Jaringan Syi'ah".

¹¹⁵ For more discussion, this idea will be presented below

6. The Shi'a and NU

Although this research is intended to examine the Shi'a in Indonesia within the last decade, it is important that it also explores the relationship between the group and NU. Distinctive in upholding the four Sunni schools of law (*madhhab*), NU is characterized as moderate and more flexible in implementing various religious doctrines and teachings than other Muslim groups.¹¹⁶ As such, NU is more open-minded toward other communal or religious groups. With its moderate policy, NU is the largest religious mass organization in Indonesia, claiming to have more than 30 million members throughout the country.



Figure 1: A boy with his father participated in the commemoration of the Karbala Tragedy in the Complex of Sindoro Tawangmas, Semarang. Besides the struggle through intellectual discourse,

¹¹⁶Fealy, “Divided Majority”.

the Shi'a in Indonesia also flourishes through kinship link. (Courtesy of Suara Merdeka, photo was taken in February 11, 2006)

Despite an anti-Shi'i sentiment among a few of NU's religious leaders (*kyai*), the most prominent figure of NU, the late Abdurrahman Wahid, well known as Gus Dur, showed a lenient attitude towards Shi'ism. On many occasions, he asserted that Shi'ism is culturally similar to NU. He strongly believed that a major part of the religious traditions practiced by NU members was derived from Shi'i literature. This lenient attitude was interpreted as a "welcoming gesture" to Shi'ism, as many NU members across the country rely on his statements in judging Shi'ism. Gus Dur's statements have certainly opened up an inquiry for possible similar elements, either culturally or doctrinally, between Shi'ism and NU.

Seemingly, Gus Dur was not alone. Another prominent NU figure, Said Agil Siradj, who has spent 15 years studying in Mecca, shared Wahid's views. He insisted that the difference between Shi'ism and NU was not significant, only pertaining to some minor matters. He insisted, "NU is Shi'ism less the "Imamah" meaning that there was no difference between NU and Shi'ism except in issue of Islamic leadership that is the main pillar of Shi'i teachings. His statement widely quoted by the local media, has certainly changed the way NU members perceive Shi'ism. The efforts of both Gus Dur and Said Agil to emphasize similarities rather than differences have given a boost to the development of Shi'ism in Indonesia.

With regard to the cultural relationship between Shi'ism and the traditional Islamic community in Indonesia, there has been an ongoing debate about the influence of Shi'i teachings on some cultural events in Indonesia in general.

Traditionalists have also shown a greater degree of flexibility in legal interpretation. They commonly celebrate certain religious events especially in association to the dead, like visiting tombs, honoring the dead, *Haul*, *Tahlil* and *Maulid*. These traditions practiced by Muslim traditionalists indeed have similarities with those of Shi'ism. By contrast, Muslim modernists reject these practices as "*bid'ah*"¹¹⁷ or even heretical.¹¹⁸

7. Conclusion

The chapter has painted the picture of the Shi'i community in Indonesia, focusing on their complex social structure due to a wide range of upper-middle class member with different backgrounds and interests. Nowadays, all of them are bonded together with the Shi'a identity. Apart from that, it highlights the crucial interaction between the newly growing Shi'a and a major religious organization, NU in the formation of Shi'a identity. As an urban-based movement, the Shi'i movement could be categorized as a modernist group, like Muhammadiyah. On the other hand, in term of religious practices, the Shi'i movement could be categorized as a traditionalist group, similar to NU. This interrelation of characteristics, intertwining modernist and traditionalist in a single movement, has made Shi'i identity distinctive. The Shi'i community has, however, become similarly divided into modernist and traditionalist groups.

¹¹⁷Innovation in religious teaching that is against or not in line with the true and original doctrine of Islam.

¹¹⁸James J. Fox, "Currents in contemporary Islam in Indonesia", (paper originally presented at the annual Asia Vision 21 conference and research forum in 2004, Cambridge, Massachusetts).

CHAPTER III

SHI'A DURING THE NEW ORDER ERA:

Repression and Expansion

1. Introduction

Like other Islamic movements during the New Order regime,¹¹⁹ especially from the mid-1980s, the Shi'i minority was constrained by political pressure and suspicion from the government. They were closely scrutinised by the government for fear that they would bring the Islamic revolution to Indonesia.¹²⁰ Martin van Bruinessen suggested that the growing influence of Shi'i thought in Indonesia was a matter of concern to the government because it perceived the Shi'a as a potential source of opposition.¹²¹ Therefore, the Shi'a movement pursued clandestine activities, meaning that its sympathizers did not publically propagate their beliefs to others nor openly express their teachings. They kept their beliefs to themselves or confined them to their inner circle of family and close friends. In this

¹¹⁹New Order Era (*Era Orde Baru*) is the term coined by former Indonesian President Soeharto to characterize his regime as he came to power in 1966. Soeharto used this term to contrast his rule with that of his predecessor, Soekarno (dubbed the Old Order or *Orde Lama*). The term "New Order" in more recent times has become synonymous with the Suharto years (1965–1998).

¹²⁰Fred R. von der Mehden, "Malaysian and Indonesian Islamic Movements and the Iranian Connection", in *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impacts*, ed. John L. Esposito (Miami: Florida International Press, 1990), 233-54.

¹²¹Martin van Bruinessen, "Indonesia's ulama and politics: caught between legitimising the status quo and searching for alternatives", *Prisma — The Indonesian Indicator* (Jakarta), No. 49 (1990), 52-69.

circumstance, they applied *taqiyyah*, a Shi'i religious doctrine that permits concealment of their faith.

Nevertheless, despite the mounting political pressure from the Soeharto regime, the 1980s was a crucial period for the Indonesian Shi'a because of two historical milestones. First was the rise of Indonesian young Muslim scholars in secular campuses, the 'campus circle', who earnestly promoted Shi'ism in the public domain. The other was the return of Indonesian students from Shi'i learning centers in the Middle East, the *ustadh* group, who further consolidated religious teachings for the growing Shi'i community in the country. Both the campus circle and the *ustadh* group provided Shi'i leaders in the community with different characteristics. These differences eventually caused friction among them and over next decade would result in divergent organizational directions.

This chapter discusses the historical background of the Shi'a during the New Order era from the late 1970s up to 1998, focusing on the sociological context and intellectual formation of Shi'i leaders. The sociological context refers to the social conditions under which these two types of leadership emerged in the community and the intellectual formation indicates their educational background and ideological orientation.

The chapter argues that differences in sociological context and intellectual formation of these two types of Shi'i leaders had significant implications for their respective personal and religious perceptions of leadership.

For instance, the rise of the campus circle has to be seen, at least in part, as inspired by the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the Islamic revivalism of the late 1970s. Members of the campus circle were mostly graduates from state secular universities, characterized by being inclusive, tending to support a progressive

understanding in religious teachings and interested in the promotion of pluralism in the society. They showed great suppleness and adaptability in establishing relationships with other religious groups, including various dominant groups. As for the *ustadh* group, a sociological examination reveals a context of long and traditional interaction between Islamic scholars in Middle East and their counterparts in Indonesia. The intellectual background of the *ustadh* group was mainly based on their studying in Islamic boarding schools. In contrast to the campus circle, this group tended to be traditional in interpreting religious discourse and practices and was more exclusive and conservative in their attitudes. For them, what they acquired through the process of learning and education in Shi'i schools in Iran was a set of religious doctrines seen as a "closed text," i.e. a text that leaves very little room for a free interpretation of meaning.

Methodologically, this chapter examines the *individual* as a unit of analysis by focusing on the ideological and personal perspective. For the campus circle, despite a number of influential members, like Dimitri Mahayana, Hadi Swastio, Yusuf Bakhtiar, Sayuti Asshatri, Agus Abu Bakar, Zulvan Lindan and Haidar Bagir, the role of Jalaluddin Rakhmat in promoting Shi'ism to the public was pivotal. The chapter, therefore, will sketch the contours of his life story and explore his intellectual, spiritual and social engagements during the New Order era. For the *ustadh* group, this chapter will undertake an analysis on Hussien Alkaf's ideological and personal perspective as well as his educational background. He is a good representative of his group due to his notable achievement in the leadership of Al Jawad foundation in Bandung, West Java.

This chapter begins with a brief history of several Shi'i-related events in Indonesia during the first decades of the New Order period as background to highlight the attitude of the Soeharto regime towards the growing Shi'i minority.

2. Government Attitude

a. Domestic political outlook

The emergence of a Shi'i minority in early 1980s made the secular Soeharto regime fearful of the dangers of influences exported from Iran. For this reason, the Shi'i minority was constantly under government scrutiny. For Soeharto, a series of short dramas in Lebanon or hostages taken in the American embassy in Tehran in relation to Iran's revolution served as a pretext to justify the crackdown on and suppression of the emergent Shi'i minority, by linking them to the image of extremism and intolerance. The government described the group as having subversive or "deviant" religious ideas that sought to destroy true Islam.¹²² The government also used the Council of Indonesian Ulama (MUI) to contain the growth of Shi'a in the country. Probably under pressure from the government, the MUI issued a fatwa in 1984, warning the Islamic community against the danger of Shi'ism.¹²³ This fatwa created a major problem for the Shi'a, as in the first instance, it cast a negative image of them, and it was also an obstacle for the Shi'a to conduct practices of their beliefs. Although the fatwa did not explicitly describe the Shi'a as infidels, one easily comes to the conclusion that this group lay outside the mainstream.

¹²²Mehden, "Malaysian Indonesian Islamic", 244.

¹²³This MUI fatwa will be further discussed in Chapter V.

To understand the Indonesian government's attitudes towards the emergence of Shi'a in the country, it is necessary to observe domestic political developments in Indonesia during this period. The 1970s up to the early 1980s saw a strained relationship between the government and Islamic activists. The tension appeared when the Islamic activists showed dissatisfaction with the government's policies. They perceived the Soeharto regime as un-Islamic and, in response, some Islamic militants even resorted to violence against the government under the Islamic banner. In the face of this domestic situation, the authorities attempted to weaken the Islamic political posture in the country by repressing and punishing those preaching seditious religious attacks on the government. In addition, the government sought to use the MUI as a semi-official religious body to underscore and warn the people against the danger of 'deviant' interpretations of Islam. The tension reached its peak when the government escalated its ideological campaign requiring all social and political organizations to acknowledge the "Five Principles" (*Pancasila*) as their "sole foundation" (*asas tunggal*). This campaign caused great dismay among opposition Muslims because they saw the policy as having a devastating impact.

Muslims responded in different ways to the policies of Soeharto's authoritarian regime. Some major Muslim organizations, such as NU and Muhammadiyah, reluctantly accepted *Pancasila* as their sole foundation. However, some other organizations especially Islamic youth organizations, openly rejected the government policy and turned into "underground" movements.

b. Several Cases

Along with other Islamic movements, the Shi'a movement took up a clandestine pattern in the 1980s as a response to the New Order repression. In that

situation, both individuals and organization avoided Shi'i symbols or statements in public. Nevertheless, in fact, some cases concerning Shi'ism still came to the surface.

The first case that came to public prominence occurred in 1982 when Abdul Qadir Bafaqih (83 years old), who ran *Pesantren* Al Khaerat in Bangsri Village, Jepara, Central Java, publicly declared that his Islamic thought was Shi'i.¹²⁴ His statement sparked concern from the Muslim community and prompted the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) to investigate the case.

A preliminary report by the Ministry identified Bafaqih as an Indonesian of Hadramawt origin who was initially a Sunni follower but later converted to Shi'i *Ishna Asyariah* (Twelver) after 15 years of reading Shi'i books, which were sent by a friend from Kuwait. Media coverage reported that Bafaqih had successfully spread his ideas, expanding his influence through direct dialogue and recorded cassettes. He also dispatched his *pondok* alumni to other regions such as Surabaya, Bandung and Yogyakarta so that the ideas of Shi'ism became widely spread across the country. However, it was said that the influence of Bafaqih was limited to his students, who numbered around 75-100 pupils.

The story about Bafaqih gained headlines for weeks in some local media. It was a major story for those who were concerned about Shi'ism. "My father could not sleep for a week, not only because many officials visited him; it is also a real nightmare for him," said Ali, a son of Bafaqih, as quoted by *Tempo*. However, according to *Tempo*, the relationship between the Bafaqih's boarding school and the local people went on as usual. "There is no problem at all with the local people

¹²⁴Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan Kehidupan Beragama Jakarta, "Studi Kasus-Kasus Keagamaan: Mazhab Syi'ah", a report prepared by Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Agama Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia 1985-1987.

especially concerning the teachings of Bafagih,” said Rahmat Rusli, the chief of the Municipal Religious Office (*Kantor Urusan Agama*) in Jepara, as quoted by *Tempo*.¹²⁵

Understandably, the Bangsri case triggered reactions from a variety of Muslims for two reasons. First, Bafagih declared on many occasions in his speeches that those who did not follow Shi’ism were infidels. Second, there was a suspicion on the part of the government of possible Iranian involvement in the Bangsri case.

In this regard, the MORA team investigating the Bangsri case eventually produced three recommendations for the government: firstly, from a religious point of view, there was no legal basis that Shi’ism could be forbidden because it is widely recognized in the Islamic world; second, the government should take immediate action to withdraw and prohibit further distribution of recordings of Bafaqih’s religious preaching among adherents of Sunnism; and third, the Provincial Office of Religious Affairs should approach and guide members of this new Islamic group in order that they adapt to the religious life of the majority Sunni community.¹²⁶

These recommendations provide important clues for those who want to understand the attitude of the government towards Shi’ism. First, the recommendations did not give any certain religious opinion about whether Shi’ism was a true Islamic sect or not. Seemingly, the government was reluctant to enter theological debate in judging Shi’ism because it wished to avoid political implications in its bilateral relations with the new Khomeini-led Iranian

¹²⁵“Khotbah Bilfagih Dari Desa Bangsri”, *Tempo Magazine*, 20 November 1982.
<http://majalah.tempointeraktif.com/id/arsip/1982/11/20/AG/mbm.19821120.AG47694.id.html>
(accessed on 29 April 2009)

¹²⁶Zulkifli, “The Struggle of the Shi’is In Indonesia” (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2009), 272.

government.¹²⁷ However, in view of the domestic political situation, the government was fully aware of possible social unrest due to the spread of Shi'ism, a possibility that might disturb religious harmony among Islamic groups in the country. For this reason, the government preferred to use persuasive rather repressive approaches in dealing with local Shi'a.

Another major case in the early 1980s involved the *Yaumul Quds* magazine, which was published monthly by the Iranian Embassy in Jakarta. This periodical was released by the information section of the Iranian Embassy and distributed free to the people who wanted it. Although the stated purpose of the magazine was to strengthen *Ukhuwah Islamiyah* among the Islamic community in Indonesia, it carried political propagation of Shi'i teachings. MORA expressed concern about its publication, which was suspiciously without a proper permit from relevant institutions. The publication of *Yaumul Quds* magazine highlights efforts on the part of the Iranian government to spread Shi'ism in Indonesia and to discuss the attitude of Indonesian government towards it.

Yaumul Quds magazine came to the government's attention when the police found it in a raid on the office of Irfan Suryahadi, the editor of the Muslim youth magazine *Ar Risalah*, who was later sentenced to thirteen years imprisonment for subversion. He is currently better known as Irfan Awwas and is a prominent figure in the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI). During 1981-1985, the magazine *Ar Risalah* was published monthly by the Mosque Youth Association in Yogyakarta and was judged by the court to be subversive. Its contents accused the

¹²⁷ Ahmad Syafi'i, "Profil Ustadz Abdul Qodir Bafaqih: Studi tentang Perkembangan Faham/Aliran Syi'ah di Desa Bangsri Kabupaten Jepara Prop. Jawa Tengah" in *Agama dan Perubahan Sosial di Indonesia*. Vol. II (Proyek Penelitian Keagamaan Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Agama Departemen Agama RI, Jakarta 1983/1984).

government of being infidel, while asserting the concept of the Islamic revolution of Iran as supported by Imam Khomeini. It was reported that, in the raid on 4 October 1983, in Yogyakarta, the police found at least 202 copies of the Iranian Embassy publication of *Yaumul Quds*.

Several weeks after the findings in Yogyakarta, the Department of Foreign Affairs sent the Iranian Embassy in Jakarta a warning letter asking them to cease publication of the magazine.¹²⁸ The reasons for the objections that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs raised in its letter was the fact that the magazine regularly published the articles which attacked interests of another friendly country, namely Saudi Arabia. Although the government at that time did not explicitly implicate Iran in domestic political situation inside Indonesia, there were widespread allegations that some local Islamic radicals sought to implement an Islamic state patterned on that of Iran.

A more explicit concern of the government about the Shi'a was expressed by the Minister of Religious Affairs, Munawir Sjadzali, in the opening of a national workshop of the MUI in March 1984. In the presence of more than 150 ulama from across the country, the minister described the Shi'i denomination as "a group or a country...that endeavored to export its revolution, including to Indonesia". He emphasized that Iran's Embassy in Jakarta (without mentioning Iran) distributed a free magazine with revolutionary propagation.¹²⁹

¹²⁸“Risalah Kucing Dari Yogya”, *Tempo Magazine*, 22, October 1983.

<http://majalah.tempointeraktif.com/id/arsip/1983/10/22/NAS/mbm.19831022.NAS44962.id.html>
(accessed on 13 March 2010)

¹²⁹“Teguran Buat Tamu”, *Tempo Magazine*, 29 October 1984.

<http://majalah.tempointeraktif.com/id/arsip/1983/10/29/NAS/mbm.19831029.NAS46159.id.html>
(accessed on 13 March 2010)

From these cases, one can see that while seeking normal diplomatic relations with the Khomeini administration, the Indonesian government, at the same time, was worried about possible impacts on its political and religious stability that could potentially become domestic issues. The government actively contained the potential consequences of the revolution within the local Muslim community, without damaging bilateral ties.

However, beyond political control, it was futile for the government to try to contain the intellectual and religious interaction of Shi'i thought as one of the most significant impacts of the revolution. As a result, the penetration of Shi'ism as a new vision of Islam began to enter Islamic discourse in Indonesia. The ideas of some Iranian thinkers were discussed among young academicians and students.¹³⁰ For young Muslim scholars, Shi'i ideas were particularly attractive because they provided possible alternative visions to the socio-political situation under the New Order regime.¹³¹

3. The rise of Campus Circle

a. Sociological context

While the government was taking actions to contain the political impact of Iran's revolution, some students found attractive elements in Shi'ism, and came forward to be pioneers of Shi'i scholarship. They introduced the concept to the local Muslim community, especially those who lived in urban areas. Their emergence as Shi'a leaders in upper-middle class Indonesian society was as a part

¹³⁰Fred R. von Der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam: Interaction between Southeast Asia and the Middle East* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1993), 88.

¹³¹Micheal R. Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 120.

of the flowering of Muslim youth movements on campuses across the country during the 1980s. The main features of their movement, among other things, involved putting aside religious fanaticism, developing an attitude of openness, being non-sectarian and striving for religious pluralism.¹³²

An analysis of this movement is in fact inseparable from the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the Islamic revivalism of the late 1970s, which was marked by a significant surge in Islamic consciousness that swept across the Muslim world. The spirit of revivalism encouraged the emergence of various Islamic groups, such as Hizbut Tahrir, Tarbiyah Islamiyah, Jamaah Tabligh and Darul Arqam and the Shi'a.

These Islamic movements spread their influence through academic discussions on campuses. Academics and other educated individuals formed a sphere that became the fertile ground for the early development of these movements.¹³³ Religious discussions were held on secular campuses of major universities in Bandung, Jakarta and Ujung Pandang. These campuses served as fertile breeding grounds for almost all of the Islamic movements during this

¹³² It was in the booming metropolitan regions of Indonesia, however, that the evidence of Islam's social progress was most visible. In large cities a new middle class was taking shape, even as the gap between rich and poor increased. Not surprisingly, universities were at the forefront of this trend. In the 1950s and early 1960s Indonesia's national universities had been bastions of secular nationalism, and the *santri* community was the weaker of the factions in the student body. But the late 1970s saw a rapid growth of the so-called Salman movement (*gerakan Salman*) and similar Muslim student groups on state campuses. Salman students rejected the scholastic arguments of traditionalist scholars (*ulama*) and the harshly exclusive styles of the modernist elite. They adopted relaxed forms of dress and interaction while encouraging strict adherence to Muslim morality and devotion. See further Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 123.

¹³³ James J. Fox, "Currents in contemporary Islam in Indonesia", (paper originally presented at the annual Asia Vision 21 conference and research forum in 2004, Cambridge, Massachusetts).

period. For instance, ITB's Salman mosque¹³⁴ became the venue for Muslim students to gather and discuss socio-religious issues.¹³⁵

In certain aspects, the campus movement had much in common with the *da'wa* movement that was rapidly expanding across Indonesia at the same time. During this period, a majority of the Indonesian Islamic community no longer regarded political involvement as the only pathway to contribute to the benefit of the nation and their religion. They shifted their attention to cultural interests.¹³⁶ The most significant manifestation of this new era was the flourishing Islamic intellectual discourse among emerging young Muslim intellectuals. The hallmark of this new era was its scholarly Islamic revival, signaling the importance of putting aside a myopic view on various religious matters and instead developing an attitude of openness. It showed a critical respect to others' thought with a popular motto of being non-sectarian.¹³⁷

A Japanese researcher, Dr. Ken Miichi, has suggested that young Muslim students organized discussion groups on campuses, concerning not only religious matters but also modern values such as democracy, civil society, human rights, and equality of women. Beside Western-educated Muslim intellectuals such as

¹³⁴The Salman Mosque was an important venue for Muslim student activities that were described as the Salman movement (*gerakan Salman*). Under the guidance of Imaduddin Abdulrahim, a charismatic intellectual, Salman students rejected the scholastic arguments of traditionalist scholars (ulama) and the harshly exclusive styles of the modernist elite. They adopted relaxed forms of dress and interaction while encouraging strict adherence to Muslim morality and devotion. The Salman's devotional movement became the model of other campuses of other state universities across the country. See further; Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 123.

¹³⁵Rifki A. Rosyad, *A Quest For True Islam, a Study Of The Islamic Resurgence Movement Among The Youth In Bandung, Indonesia* (Canberra: Australia National University E Press, 2006), 3-5.

¹³⁶Dedy Djamaluddin Malik and Idi Subandi Ibrahim, *Zaman Baru Islam Indonesia: Pemikiran dan Aksi Politik Abdurrahman Wahid, M. Amin Rais, Nurcholish Madjid, Jalaluddin Rakhmat* (Bandung: Zaman Wacana Mulia, 1998), 31.

¹³⁷The development of Islamic movements during this period has been intensively discussed by Feener. See Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought*, 118-120.

Hasan Hanafi and Mohammed Arkoun, views of some leading secular thinkers from Marx and Gramsci to Foucault were also discussed. The students were often critical of religious authority, striving for a religious pluralism with the aim of spreading a 'transformative and tolerant' Islamic discourse.¹³⁸

Azyumardi Azra asserted that one of the most important factors behind this phenomenon was the expansion of Islamic literature in Indonesia.¹³⁹ A boom in religious publishing included translations of numerous works of Islamic thinkers, such as Muhammad Iqbal, Maududi, Fazlur Rahman and Khomeini. As a part of the translation boom, several Shi'i thinkers like Ali Shari'ati, Sayyid Tabataba'i and Ayatollah Mutahhari also became available. As an indication of the growth in the number of religious books during the 1980s, *Tempo* magazine recorded that of 7241 books published during the period of 1980-1989, some 1949 books had a religious theme. Among these religious books, the Islamic books accounted for 809 books, or 70.5 percent.¹⁴⁰

As with various other Islamic movements in the country that developed on university campuses in Indonesia during the 1970s, Shi'ism also flourished and spread through similar paths. Thus an early proliferation of Shi'ism occurred in universities. The influence of Shi'i thought was seen in a wide variety of intellectual currents in Islamic discourse.¹⁴¹ As a fresh alternative strand of Islamic

¹³⁸Ken Miichi, "Islamic Youth Movements in Indonesia," *IIAS Newsletter*, 32 (November 2003), 22.

¹³⁹Azyumardi Azra, *Indonesia, Islam and Democracy: Dynamics in a Global Context* (Jakarta: Solstice, 2006), 186.

¹⁴⁰*Tempo* indicated that the Islamic books were among the highest number ever published during the 1980s in Indonesia, besides those of other religions such as Christianity/Catholics (26 percent) and Hinduism/Buddhism (3.5 percent). See further: Nico J. Tampi, *Diskusi Buku Agama, Trend Bacaan 1980-an: Cermin Meningkatnya Telaah Keagamaan* (Jakarta: Tempo, 1987).

¹⁴¹Martin van Bruinessen, "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in post-Suharto Indonesia", *South East Asia Research*, vol. 10, no. 2, 117-154.

discourse in Indonesia, Shi'ism seems to have appealed to students across the country. Furthermore, some secular campuses became centers of Shi'ism.

Zulkifli, in his dissertation, indicated that a number of students at ITB, the Institute of Technology of Bandung, converted to Shi'ism in the early 1980s. The most prominent was Haidar Bagir, who was born in Solo, 20 February 1957, to a *Sayyid* family of a Hadrami migrant. Enrolling in the department of industrial technology at ITB and completing his study in 1982, he was involved in the Salman Mosque. Heavily influenced by the popularity of Imam Khomeini, he converted to Shi'ism. Besides Bagir, some student activists also reportedly made similar decisions, including Dimitri Mahayana, a lecturer at ITB, Hadi Swastio, a lecturer at the Communication College, and Yusuf Bakhtiar, formerly a deputy chief of Muthahhari Senior High School and currently a political activist in the National Mandate Party founded by M. Amien Rais.¹⁴²

In the capital city, Jakarta, some Muslim students showed similar trends, taking up the new Islamic orientation after they enthusiastically engaged with religious groups in campus mosques. Such phenomena were also seen in major universities such as in Universitas Indonesia (the University of Indonesia), UNJ (The State University of Jakarta), UNAS (National University) and Jayabaya University. Quoting a media report from *Panji Masyarakat*, Zulkifli noted that a student of Jayabaya University, Mulhandy, admitted converting to Shi'ism in 1983 after studying Shi'ism intensively. At UI, Agus Abubakar Arsal Al-Habsyi was active at the Arif Rahman Hakim Mosque at UI. Using various approaches, he promoted Shi'i teachings and converted a number of students. In recent years, he has been engaged in political activities, becoming a national organizer for the

¹⁴²Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is", 86.

Democratic Party (*Partai Demokrat*). In addition, some Shi'i students at UI attempted to make the HMI (Muslim Student Association) a vehicle for the dissemination of Shi'i thoughts. Rudy Suharto of the Faculty of Mathematics and Science, currently editor-in-chief of *Syi'ar*, a magazine of the Islamic Cultural Centre in Jakarta, together with other student activists, under the guidance of their seniors Furqon Bukhori and Zulvan Lindan established a HMI branch in Depok. Through this organization, the Shi'i students of UI undertook various intellectual and religious activities until 1995 when HMI split and the Depok branch was taken over by an anti-Shi'i group.¹⁴³

In Ujung Pandang, South Sulawesi, Shi'a groups took hold at almost all university campuses in the city. A leading Shi'i figure in Ujung Pandang was Surachman, who headed the *Al-Islah* Foundation that provided studies and training on Shi'ism. As in Bandung and Jakarta, the propagation of Shi'ism gained a certain amount of sympathy from other student associations, particularly HMI. Intellectuals like Jalaluddin Rakhmat were frequently invited to give religious lectures on Shi'i thoughts, philosophy and Sufism.¹⁴⁴

Along with the growing number of Shi'i followers among students across the country, some prominent students in leading universities came to the forefront in propagating Shi'i teaching and thought. In their socio-religious outreach, members of the campus circle sponsored seminars on religion and development, and published journals and books. Eventually the campus movement for the Shi'a reached beyond the university and touched the lives of the urban middle and upper class. Some of them even initiated the establishment of a publishing

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

company. This lucrative business greatly supported the role of the emerging campus circle as Shi'i leaders.

The publication of Shi'i oriented books helped the Shi'a to flourish in Indonesia during the 1980s. Mizan Press was established in 1983 by several students and activists of Masjid Salman in Bandung, namely Haidar Bagir, Zainal Abidin Shahab and Ali Abdullah, with the financial support from Abdillah Toha and Anis Hadi. Mizan Press took the initiative to publish a series of translated books on Shi'ism in the early 1980s. In 1983, Mizan Press firstly published *Al Murajaat*, which consists of a dialogue between A. Syarafuddin Al Musawi and Asy Syaikh Salim al Bisyri al Maliki. The title of the book was *Dialog Sunni Syi'ah* (A Dialogue between a Sunni and a Shi'i). This book was informative and very widely read. According to the Director of Mizan Press, Haidar Bagir, the reason for publishing this book was simple, but important: "there was no appropriate and adequate discussion of Shi'ism in Indonesia at that time."¹⁴⁵

Since Indonesia is predominantly populated by Sunni followers, the publication of Shi'i books generated curiosity and suspicion. Consequently, Mizan was accused of spreading Shi'i thought, but Haidar Bagir strongly denied this charge. However, Azyumardi Azra in an interview with *Sinar Harapan* asserted that the efforts to translate books of Shi'i thinkers was more dramatic than those of Arabic thinkers in general and amazingly this had taken place in a predominantly Muslim Sunni country, like Indonesia.¹⁴⁶ In the following years, Mizan was

¹⁴⁵ "Berebut Pasar Dalam Dakwah", *Tempo Magazine*, 02 October 1993.

<http://majalah.tempointeraktif.com/id/arsip/1993/10/02/BK/mbm.19931002.BK4530.id.html> (accessed on 5 September 2010)

¹⁴⁶ "20 Tahun Penerbit Mizan Menawarkan Syi'ah di Antara Dialektika Pemikiran Islam Sunni Indonesia" *Harian Umum Sore Sinar Harapan*, 2003.

<http://www.sinarharapan.co.id/berita/0305/01/nas10.html> (accessed on 10 January 2009)

followed by other companies like Pustaka Hidayah and Lentera. Up to 2002, at least 59 publishing companies in Indonesia actively engaged in publishing Shi'i books that were translated into Indonesian. This number had reached some 373 books.¹⁴⁷

In addition to the boom in Shi'i publications, during the 1980s and 1990s a series of seminars was held that accelerated the growth of Shi'ism in Indonesia. Through these seminars, while discussing Shi'ism and comparing it with Sunnism, there was a dynamic dialectical process among Islamic scholars and intellectuals. This process was seen to have made Shi'ism a much more important academic discourse, thus introducing it indirectly to the public.

In December 1987, the IAIN in Ciputat Jakarta organized a national seminar. No less than 120 people, mostly students, attended to hear Abdurrahman Wahid, Nurcholish Madjid, Ihsan Ilahi Zahir and Harun Nasution discussing the recommendations regarding Shi'ism in Indonesia, which were originally introduced at the end of the MUI national workshop in 1984.¹⁴⁸ Regarding the division of Sunni and Shi'a, both Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholish Madjid maintained that political competition was the main problem, causing schism in Islam. However, Wahid believed that the development of Shi'ism in Indonesia was more cultural than political. Admiration for the Family of the Prophet was manifested in the cultural life of every Sunni follower in Indonesia, "so, culturally, NU...is also [made up] Shi'i followers," Wahid said.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷Safwan, AM, "Ikatan Jamaah AhlulBait Indonesia (IJABI) Sebagai Gerakan Sosial-Keagamaan" (paper for the seminar of Khazanah Keberagaman Islam, Bagaimana Memahami dan Mensikapinya, held at Gajah Mada University, Yogyakarta, 2001). For further discussion of Shi'i publications, see Appendix A.

¹⁴⁸The seminar later intensively discussed the imamate issue.

¹⁴⁹"Titik Timbang Sunah Syiah" *Tempo Magazine*, 12 July 1987.

In the following year (1988), a similar seminar was organized at the Hotel Indonesia in Jakarta. Among the speakers at this seminar, which attracted more than 200 people, were Professor Rasjidi, Chairman of Rabithah Alam Islami, Professor Ibrahim Hosen, Rector of the Institute Al-Quran Knowledge (IIQ) and Chairman of Fatwa Commission of the MUI. Dhofir Hamam, Irfan Zidny, and A. Masyhuri, were discussants and Alwi Shihab and Nurcholish Madjid were among those present at the seminar. This one-day seminar, organized by the Middle-East Alumni Association, was initially meant to discuss ways to put an end to the on-going war between Iraq and Iran but it turned into a venue to attack and condemn Shi'ism. For instance, in response to Professor Ibrahim Hosen who said that the Qur'an of Shi'ism was different from that of the Sunni, Nurcholish Madjid, who was present at that time, came forward and argued for the original Al-Quran of Shi'ism being the same as the Sunni Al-Quran.¹⁵⁰

These seminars and public debates served as a reflection of the ongoing battle in the field of intellectual discourse involving local ulama and scholars who considered Shi'ism as an exogenous Islamic school of law in Indonesia against the pioneers of the new era, like Nurcholish Madjid, Jalaluddin Rakhmat and Abdurrahman Wahid. Inevitably, media coverage of these seminars resonated with the community, making them familiar with the issues.

As a result of media coverage, the Muslim community was exposed to the controversial issue of Shi'ism at that time, along with the complex responses of the majority of Indonesian Muslims, ranging from the harshly negative to the

<http://majalah.tempointeraktif.com/id/arsip/1987/12/19/AG/mbm.19871219.AG33117.id.html>
(accessed on 12 January 2010)

¹⁵⁰“Seminar Mencerca Syiah”, *Tempo Magazine*, 23 January 1988.

<http://majalah.tempointeraktif.com/id/arsip/1988/01/23/AG/mbm.19880123.AG29010.id.html#>
(accessed on 10 January 2010)

moderate. This was a clear indication that aspects of modern Iranian Muslim thought had entered into Indonesian conversation.

b. Intellectual formation: Jalaluddin Rakhmat

Students inclining towards Shi'ism actively introduced the sect ideas to educated middle class people. A major figure in this group was Jalaluddin Rakhmat, a lecturer at UNPAD (Universitas Pajajaran, Pajajaran University) in Bandung, West Java. In 1988, he and his colleagues, Haidar Bagir, Ahmad Tafsir, Agus Effendi and Ahmad Muhajir, established the Muthahhari Foundation in Bandung to promote *da'wa* and publishing activities. In 1992, it expanded its operations to setting up high schools.¹⁵¹ Indeed Rakhmat was widely recognized as the most active intellectual in propagating Shi'ism among students on campuses and among the educated. Besides his lectures, he also produced numerous writings on Shi'ism.

As discussed before, Rakhmat introduced Shi'ism among students not only in campuses around Bandung, West Java, but also in Jakarta, particularly at the University Indonesia (UI), Depok. In 1985, for instance, some UI students initiated a religious discussion group, reviewing some works and books by Islamic scholars like Ali Shariati and Morteza Muthahari and other several articles published in the *Ulumul Quran Journal*.

Born on 29 August 1949 in Bojongsalam, Rancaekek, a district of Bandung in West Java, Rakhmat came from a religious family. His father was a village chief with a Masyumi political background. In this early education, Rakhmat learned

¹⁵¹ Sekolah Menengah Umum Plus (SMU-Plus) Al Muthahhari. This high school is better known as a senior high school plus. The attribute 'plus' is used because its programs combine a number of subjects from the national curriculum with Islamic teachings with a focus on fostering moral conduct. See, <http://www.smuth.net/> (accessed on 18 January 2009).

Arabic grammar (*Nahwu* and *Sharaf*) from a village religious teacher, Ajengan Shidik, who had strong background in the NU tradition. "Until now, *Kyai* Shidik has influenced my life path. The spirit of my teacher to read a lot of literature for example, mastery of Arabic, impressed me very much," Rakhmat said in an interview.¹⁵² Rakhmat considered that his teacher had a great impact on his "liberal view". This was because his teacher developed a non-sectarian attitude with openness to various sects and respect for other faiths. After being in NU, his teacher, Shidik, shifted to Muhammadiyah, going in for Masyumi political activities.

After completing his high school in Bandung, Rakhmat enrolled at the Faculty of Communications Science at UNPAD. During his period as a university student, he was active in some local reformist religious organizations like Persatuan Islam (Persis) and Muhammadiyah. He participated in various religious activities held by these reformist Islamic organizations. His involvement in Persis provided him an opportunity to be acquainted with some modernist thinkers such as A. Hassan, Hasbi Ashiddiqi and Munawar Khalil. Then, after being active in Persis, Rakhmat joined Muhammadiyah because he regarded both organizations as having much in common in terms of religious doctrines. In Muhammadiyah, he was trained at Muhammadiyah's advance leadership training camp. After training, Rakhmat become a fanatic Muhammadiyah cadre and preached in his village on behalf of Muhammadiyah. These experiences, being an activist in two reformist Islamic organizations, to some extent, made a great contribution to Rakhmat's sociological and intellectual formation. Subsequently his involvement

¹⁵²Malik, *Zaman Baru Islam Indonesia*, 40.

in the youth movement on university campuses was a turning point for his academic life.

Some years later, following his appointment as a lecturer at UNPAD, Rakhmat was granted a Fulbright scholarship for further study in Communications at Iowa State University, USA. He finished his Masters in 1982 with a thesis entitled *A Model for the Study of Mass Media Effects on Political Leaders*. In 1994, Rakhmat began a PhD program in political science at the Australian National University (ANU), Australia, but did not complete it.

While studying in America, he was introduced to Imaduddin Abdulrahim, a co-founder of the Salman Mosque at ITB.¹⁵³ Upon his return from America, Rakhmat was asked by Imaduddin Abdulrahim to become an active religious lecturer at the mosque. Rakhmat's presence at the mosque was warmly welcomed by young people. This was not only because Rakhmat preached a new vision of Islam through his attractive rhetoric but also reflected the crisis among Muslim intellectual figures, while Imaduddin himself was still in the U.S. completing his doctoral study. At that time, the major theme of Rakhmat's speeches was about the "marginal and oppressed people", without reference to Shi'ism because Rakhmat had not been exposed to this school of thought yet.

It was 1984 when Rakhmat took on an intensive self-study of Shi'ism. This started after he was invited, together with Haidar Bagir and Endang Saefuddin Anshary, to an Islamic conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka, during which they were introduced to a Shi'i cleric. At that time, the Shi'i cleric gave him a number of books. Upon his return from Sri Lanka, he began reading those books. In an effort to satisfy his thirst for Shi'ism, Rakhmat became involved in discussions with

¹⁵³Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is", 77.

Hussein Al-Habsyi of YAPI Bangil and established links with other several Shi'i clerics in Iran and other parts of the world.¹⁵⁴

Combined with his background in modern academic learning, Rakhmat's exposure to Shi'ism through discussions, reading books and dialogue with several prominent Shi'i ulama certainly affected his intellectual formation. In his journey to seek Shi'i religious knowledge, Rakhmat became known as a prolific writer, producing books, essays, translations on various aspects of Islamic discourse. He wrote many books, not to mention a great number of academic papers and articles, published in magazines, newsletters and journals. In his books, Rakhmat dealt with a wide range of contemporary topics and religious issues. For the purpose of this thesis, I will briefly discuss some of these works with Shi'i-related themes.

Among Rakhmat's works is *Islam Alternatif* (Islam Alternative-1986). Edited by Haidar Bagir, this book is a collection of his lectures at ITB. Containing five chapters, the book discusses different Islamic subjects in each chapter. The themes of this book elaborate Islam as a mercy to the universe (Arabic: *rahmatan li al-'alamin*), putting it into the context of society, especially in relation to the oppressed (*mustadl'afin*), to science and to Shi'ism.

This book offers a different way to view Islam as a religion with the emphasis, not only on personal and ritual matters but more importantly on social and intellectual ones. In this book, Rakhmat argues that, in the last several centuries, Islam has lost its main features of these two dimensions. In fact, it (Islam) obviously accentuates social and intellectual aspects greater than personal and ritual ones. Seeking efforts to redisplay the two sides of Islam, he

¹⁵⁴Malik, *Zaman Baru Islam*, 45.

put forward an alternative point of view to the existing system and conceptions of socio-religious life.

Another book is *Islam Aktual: Refleksi Sosial Seorang Cendekiawan Muslim* (Actual Islam: Social Reflections of a Muslim Intellectual, 1991), a collection of his articles that had been published by some national media, such as *Tempo*, *Pikiran Rakyat*, *Panji Masyarakat*, *Jawa Pos* and *Berita Buana*. In his introduction, he admitted the book was inconclusive and did not present in-depth analysis of each of the topics because it was intended for popular media consumption. Feener, however, has pointed out, that through this book Rakhmat attempts to develop a new, more effective model of Islamic revivalism, drawing on approaches from his formal studies in Communications. In one of the essays entitled, “Para Da’i versus Globalisasi,” for example, Rakhmat not only addresses aspects of the spreading the word of Islam, but also urges preachers to go beyond communication to practice a kind of therapy as “doctors of the soul”. One way of doing this, Rakhmat suggests is for *para da’i* to take a lesson from the methods of Sufism.¹⁵⁵

Rakhmat’s appreciation of a more “spiritualized orientation” in the modern world has been described by Feener as part of a broader movement for a new appreciation of Sufism in Indonesia that has taken place over the past three decades. In line with that, some of Rakhmat’s books also talks about Sufism, such as *Membuka Tirai Kegaiban: Renungan-Renungan Sufistik* (‘Revealing Mystical Veil: Sufi Reflections’, 1994), *Reformasi Sufistik* (Sufi Reform, 1998), and *Meraih Cinta Ilahi: Pencerahan Sufistik* (‘Achieving Divine Love: Sufi Enlightenment’, 1999). In these books, Rakhmat attempts to provide his readers innovative interpretations of certain Sufi teachings by comparing Sufism with psychology. He suggests that

¹⁵⁵Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern*, 122.

the teachings of Sufism can lead to emotional and spiritual intelligence and the key to the Sufi teaching is patience.¹⁵⁶

Another seminal work by Rakhmat is *Dahulukan Akhlak di atas Fikih* (Prioritise Ethics over Jurisprudence, 2002). In this book, Rakhmat criticizes some Islamic figures such as Fazlur Rahman and the Indonesian jurist Ibrahim Hosen for what he called their obsession with the “spirit of the text,” sometimes ignoring its clear external meaning. He could not hide his disappointment over the tendency of some ulama to strongly impose Sharia, which does not necessarily bring a positive impact at all.¹⁵⁷ In my view, this book is his masterpiece where he has expressed his real outlook and vision on religious matters and on his leadership. The book has become the manifesto of his organization, IJABI. It offers strategies to unite the divided Muslim community by upholding the nobility of ethics and respecting differences. Rakhmat sees differences within the community as trivial, pertaining to legal opinions among various schools of Islamic law, which have caused religious conflicts. Therefore, he suggests that one should renounce his or her own adherence to a certain school of law for the greater good of establishing Islamic fraternity. This scholarly work contains genuine ideas that have received credit as well as criticisms from both Sunnis and Shi’a in Indonesia.

These combined contributions along with his academic background have led Rakhmat to become a leader in the Shi’i community in Indonesia. His intellectual formation in both religious and non-religious sciences, in turn, has had an impact on the attitude of openness and suppleness in his leadership.

¹⁵⁶Zulkifli, “The Struggle of the Shi’is”, 87.

¹⁵⁷Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern*, 122.

4. The rise of the *Ustadh* Group

a. *Hawzah* Connection¹⁵⁸

The rise of the *ustadh* group has come about in the context of long and traditional interactions between Islamic scholars in the Middle East and their counterparts in Indonesia. A number of observers, like Azyumardi Azra,¹⁵⁹ Mona Abaza,¹⁶⁰ and Fred R. von der Mehden¹⁶¹ have provided impressive analyses on these interactions. Most of them, however, have focussed on the links among Sunni scholars of the Haramayn or Cairo while the network of Shi'i clerics in the region seems to have been neglected.

The analyses of scholars suggested that one important aspect of these links has been the increased penetration of foreign ideas into the archipelago. Students from the region lived for many years in the Middle East to study Islamic knowledge and upon their return to Indonesia they became leading Islamic preachers in the country.¹⁶² These students created the particular characteristics of Islam in their home country, which was heavily influenced by the guidance of their teachers in the Middle East.

¹⁵⁸The word of *Hawzah* comes from *hawz*, an Arabic word that literally means "the territory of learning". This Arabic expression defines a group of scholars as a body of religious professionals whose main task is to teach and learn. See further: Laurence Louer, *The Transnational Shia Politics, Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 73-77.

¹⁵⁹Azyumardi Azra, *The origins of Islamic reformism in Southeast Asia: networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'ulamâ's in the seventeenth and eighteenth century* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).

¹⁶⁰Mona Abaza, *Islamic Education: Perception and Exchanges, Indonesian Students in Cairo* (Paris: Association Archipel 1994).

¹⁶¹Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam*.

¹⁶²Azyumardi Azra, "Islamic Thought: Theory, Concept and Doctrine in the Context of Southeast Asian Islam" in *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, ed. Nathan, K.S. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), 3-21.

Similarly, the network of Shi'i scholars, in many ways, is comparable to that of their Sunni counterparts. *Rihla 'ilmiya* (the scholarly journey) or seeking knowledge from highly esteemed scholars in traditional Islamic learning centers is considered as the most general way for the transmission of Islamic knowledge. Learning centers for Shi'i students are found in Qom, Iran, not in the Haramayn in Saudi Arabia, the traditional center for Sunnism. Having studied in Iran for several years, Shi'i students have returned to the archipelago, and thus became essential transmitters of Shi'ism while at the same time they have continued to maintain relationships with their teachers in Iran.

The network involved in particular a number of prominent overseas mullahs with their students and followers in Indonesia. Unlike that of Sunnism, this network is interestingly vibrant because it not only constitutes a teacher-student relationship but also forms a global scholarly community linked together by the Shi'i doctrinal value placed on a solid relationship under the institution of *Marjaiyyat*.¹⁶³ Contacts and interactions among these scholars and students from distant places of the Muslim world resulted in the further expansion of the international networks of the Shi'i ulama, who reside in Qom.

Indeed, Qom is the most important loci of these global Shi'i clerical networks, where Indonesian students have spent most of their time in studying Islamic knowledge. Some 156 kilometers southwest of Tehran, the capital city of Iran, Qom is considered a holy city by the Shi'a, as it is the site of the shrine of *Fatime Ma'sume*, sister of Imam Ali ibn Musa Rida (789–816 CE), the eighth of the Twelve Imams. The city is the largest center for Shi'a scholarship in the world, and is a significant destination of pilgrimage and study. As a learning center, Qom

¹⁶³ The office of *Marja Taqlid*.

offers a traditional educational system, the so-called *Hawzah Ilmiyyah*, similar to the *pesantren* in Indonesia.¹⁶⁴ The teaching-learning process in the *Hawzah* has always been focused on the transmission of Islamic knowledge only. The use of local reference books and classical sources were written by traditional Islamic scholars (*kitab kuning*). Teaching is mainly presented verbally to students who sit on the floor in a circle (*halaqah*). *Hawzah's* educational system is supervised by a famous and influential ayatollah. Its program consists of three levels: *muqaddamat* (preliminary), *sutuh* (external) and *dars alkharij* (graduation class) or *bahth al-kharij* (graduation research). To finish each class, a student has to spend from four to eight years. To reach a level of *mujtahid*, one has to complete all three levels and then receive an *ijaza* (license) as a *mujtahid* with the title of *hujjatul Islam* (proof of Islam). Besides competency in Arabic, international students, including Indonesians, are required to follow a six-month training program in Persian, the language of instruction at most of Qom's Islamic educational institutions. So far, there has been no report that any Indonesian student has reached a *mujtahid* level in Qom.

It is not certain when Indonesian students began studying in Qom but Michael Fischer in his list of *Hawzah* students noted the presence of Indonesian students in 1975. There were a small number of Indonesian students in Qom among other foreign students, including those from Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Lebanon, Tanzania, Turkey, Nigeria and Kashmir, but he did not specify any

¹⁶⁴Syamsuri Ali, "Alumni Hawza Ilmiyah Qum, Pewacanaan Intelektualitas dan Relasi Sosialnya Dalam Transmisi Syiah di Indonesia", (PhD diss., the State Islamic institute of Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, 2002), 4-5.

further.¹⁶⁵ This proves that the link between Iranian scholars and their counterparts in Indonesia was established long before the revolution in 1979.

Although there is no single reliable account on this matter, Zulkifli, in his article about Indonesian students in Qom, suggests however that the link had been developed since the 1960s, marked by an intense exchange of visits. During such visits, both sides shared views and information about Shi'ism. They also engaged in lengthy discussions regarding the principal Shi'i teachings. For instance, in 1962, a leading Shi'i scholar of Iraq, Muhammad Reza Ja'fari, came to Indonesia to meet local Muslim leaders and visit *al-Khairiyya* school in Bondowoso. During the visit, this Shi'i preacher participated in a serious discussion with some of the teachers at the school. The discussion carried on for four days and following that event, some teachers converted to Shi'ism.¹⁶⁶

The relationship intensified after the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979 and continued to improve during the 1980s. Iranian ulama with the spirit of exporting the Islamic revolution progressively expanded their relationship with Muslim states, like Indonesia, by attracting Muslim students to study in Iran. This connection contributed greatly to the dissemination of Shi'ism in Indonesia.

The familiarity of local ulama with their Shi'i counterparts overseas made it possible to dispatch Indonesian students to *Hawzah* in Iran. During the New Order era, however, sending Indonesian students to Qom was not easy. *Tempo* reported that the students who intended to study in Qom usually came to this city through

¹⁶⁵ Michael Fischer, *Iran from Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1990), 78.

¹⁶⁶ Zulkifli, "Seeking knowledge unto Qum: the education of Indonesian Shi'i ustadhs" (paper presented at the workshop on the Education of Southeast Asian Islamic Leadership jointly organized by the Institute of Southeast Asia (ISEAS), Singapore, and IIAS, held in Singapore, 19-20 May 2005).

unofficial and underground channels.¹⁶⁷ This means that they did not obtain permission from the education ministry. Muryadi, not his real name, a Pekalongan student who met reporters in Qom, explained, "If you want to come in here through official channels, it is difficult to put on immigration clearance." Therefore, many Indonesian students went to Qom via third countries like Pakistan and Malaysia, where they could easily get Iranian visas. Despite bringing a letter of recommendation from their *kyai* in Indonesia, sometimes there was still no guarantee that the students would be accepted to study in Qom.

At that time, there were two important figures who were able to produce letters of recommendations acceptable to *Hawzah*. One was Ahmad Al-Habsyi (d.1994), the then leader of *Pesantren Ar-Riyadh* in Palembang, South Sumatera. The other was Hussein Al-Habsyi (1921-1994), who established YAPI (*Yayasan Pesantren Islam*, the Foundation for Islamic *Pesantren*) in Bangil in 1976.

Ahmad Al-Habsyi, the then leader of *Pesantren Ar-Riyadh* in Palembang, South Sumatera, established contacts with *Hawzah* in Iran long before the 1980s. He had already sent his students, Umar Shahab and his brother Hussein Shahab, to study in Qom in 1974 and 1979 respectively.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, before Al-Habsyi of Bangil established his Iranian connection, it was Ahmad Al-Habsyi, who actually sent his students to study in Qom. The first generation members of Qom alumni from this *pesantren* were, among others, Umar Shahab and Hussein Shahab, who have now become prominent Shi'i figures in the country.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷"Terjun Bebas di Qum", *Tempo Magazine*, September 1991.

<http://majalah.tempointeraktif.com/id/arsip/1991/09/07/NAS/mbm.19910907.NAS15057.id.html> (viewed on January 2010)

¹⁶⁸Zukifli, "Seeking knowledge".

¹⁶⁹Ali, "Alumni *Hawzah*", 154-155.

The other early influential figure in the Shi'i sphere in Indonesia was Hussein Al-Habsyi, who set up YAPI in Bangil in 1976.¹⁷⁰ His *pesantren* greatly contributed to the spread of Shi'ism in Indonesia.¹⁷¹

Born in Surabaya on April 21, 1921, Hussein Al-Habsyi started his primary school in Madrasah *Al Khairiyah*, the oldest Islamic educational institution in Surabaya and later on became a teacher in that school. It is not clear when exactly Al-Habsyi converted to Shi'ism. According to his acquaintances, Al-Habsyi became a Shi'i after the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1978-1979 but possibly before the Iranian revolution. In addition, the *Al-Khairiyya* where he was appointed as a teacher was frequented by Middle Eastern figures to discuss Islamic teachings, including Shi'i doctrines, with the teachers and students of the madrasa.¹⁷² In 1970, Al-Habsyi set up a boarding school in Bondowoso and another boarding school for boys in Kenep-Beji, Bangil.

¹⁷⁰Hussein Al Habsyi, the leader of YAPI, Bangil, is not to be confused with another man with the same name, Hussein Al Habsyi, who was allegedly involved in the Borobudur bombing on 21 January 1985. Some factors can distinguish between them. Firstly, based on the reports released by Tapol Bulletin 1986, *Indonesia: Muslims on Trials*, the latter Al-Habsyi was described as being blind from birth, while Al Habsyi of YAPI had normal sight until his death in 1994. Secondly, although Al Habsyi of YAPI was arrested as the alleged mastermind of the Borobudur bombings at that time, the police questioned and then released him with no further grounds to implicate him with the incident. While the latter Al Habsyi, better known as Habib Hussein A'ma (the blind man) fled the country to avoid arrest, Al Habsyi of YAPI had never gone overseas because of criminal reasons. Thirdly, Hussein A'ma graduated from University of King Abdul Aziz, Saudi Arabia and leads the puritan Islamic movement Ikhwanul Muslimin in Indonesia, while the former Al Habsyi was never involved in such an organization. The latter is currently still alive.

¹⁷¹“Ustadz Husein Bin Abu Bakar Alhabsyi, Ustadz Yang Pejuang“, *Republika*, 2004. http://www.republika.co.id/launcher/view/mid/19/news_id/7570 (viewed on January 2009)

¹⁷²Zulkifli, “The Struggle of the Shi'is”, 28.



Figure 2: In the early 1960s, some prominent ulama of Jakarta, including Habib Ali ibn Abdurrahman Al Habsyi, Habib Ali ibn Hussein Alatas, Habib Salim Ibn Ahmad ibn Jindan and Habib Abdurrahman ibn Segaf Assegaf, received a Shi'i cleric, Syekh Muzaffar of Iraq. (Personal Album Family)

Despite having no immediate family connection, Ahmad Al Habsyi and Hussein Al Habsyi both fostered the rapid growth of Shi'ism in Indonesia. Their acquaintance with some Iranian counterparts was also crucial to the network of Shi'i scholars in Indonesia.

Within the frame of the Shi'i scholar network in the country, in 1982, another delegation from Iran consisting of Ayatollah Ibrahim Amini, Ayatollah Masduqi and Hujjat al-Islam Mahmudi visited YAPI in Bangil, East Java. They met its leader, Hussein Al-Habsyi and, as a result of this meeting, *Hawzah 'ilmiyya* agreed to accept ten Indonesian students each year. In the following years, Al

Habsyi sent the first ten Indonesian students to study in Qom. They were Muhsin Labib, Ibrahim Al Habsyi, Rusdi Alaydrus, Thoyyib Nafis, Mukhtar Al Jufri, Umar Alatas, Ahmad Baraghbah, Hasan Tono, Muhammad and Musam.¹⁷³ Subsequently the number of Indonesian students in Qom significantly increased so that ten years later the number of Qom graduates in Indonesia numbered more than a hundred.

Those who were sent to Iran by Al Habsyi of YAPI including Zahir Yahya, the leader of the *Al-Kautsar* Foundation in Malang, East Java; Miqdad, the head of *Pesantren Darut Taqrib* in Jepara, Central Java; Fathoni Hadi, the founder of the *Al-Hujjah* Foundation in Jember, East Java and currently a staff member at the Islamic College for Advanced Studies, the London-branch of Islamic higher education in Jakarta; Muhammad Amin Sufyan, the head of the *Samudera* Foundation in Surabaya; Abdurrahman Bima, elected member of the 2009-2014 Parliament from the SBY-led-Democrat Party; Husein Alkaf, the adviser at the *Al-Jawad* Foundation in Bandung; Herman Al-Muthahhar, the head of the *Amirul Mukminin* Foundation in Pontianak, West Kalimantan; Muhammad Al-Jufri, and Abdul Aziz Al-Hinduan. On their return to Indonesia after several years of study, these Indonesian students became the leading preachers of Shi'ism in Indonesia.

The arrival of Qom alumni in the late 1970s and early 1980s helped consolidate the growing Shi'i movement in Indonesia. They directly engaged in informal gatherings such as Shi'i rituals and religious meetings (*pengajian*). They held these meetings in specific locations where they were attended by a limited circle. In addition, the Qom alumni also regularly performed Shi'i rituals (*majlis* rituals), like *Kumayl* supplication, *Ashura* and so on. As individual events, these

¹⁷³Ali, "Alumni *Hawzah*", 186.

gatherings helped to spread Shi'ism in the country.¹⁷⁴ Even more, they subsequently expanded such gatherings by establishing foundations, like Al Jawad in Bandung (established in 1990), Al Hadi in Pekalongan (1989), al Muntazhar in Jakarta (1991) and Mulla Sadra in Bogor (1993).

In keeping with their academic background, most Qom alumni were *fiqh*-oriented, and thus tended to accentuate the importance of Shi'i Islamic jurisprudence. They played a major role in shaping the variety of religious tendencies among the Shi'i community in Indonesia, answering inquiries about matters of the Islamic law (*fiqh*) in daily life. For this reason, they continued their relationships with their teachers in Qom in the form of academic linkage. The need to establish stronger ties with scholars in "the center" was increasingly felt when the returning students faced problems in their homelands, thus needing the guidance of their former teachers. All this helps to explain the continuing scholarly connections in the network.¹⁷⁵

An analysis of a central figure of the Shi'i *ustadh* needs to be undertaken to provide more details on the rise of the *ustadh* group. This is because, as well as the campus circle, the group has also played vital role in disseminating Shi'ism, in terms of doctrinal teachings, in Indonesia.

b. Intellectual formation: Hussein Alkaf¹⁷⁶

Born in Jatiwangi, West Java, Hussein Alkaf came from a strict Sunni family. His father, Muhammad Alkaf, who is from a *sayyid* family, was a well-

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 271-272

¹⁷⁵These basic characteristics have been discussed by Azra in the context of Indonesian students who studied in Haramayn but, to my opinion, all of these are also applicable to those of Qom alumni. See more: Azra, *The origins of Islamic reformism*, 30.

¹⁷⁶This life story is based on his narrative to Syamsuri Ali. See more: Ali, "Alumni *Hawzah* ", 243-246.

respected cleric in Majalengka, West Java. His uncle, Thohir Alkaf, is known as a strong opponent of the Shi'a. Hussein Alkaf's impression of the struggle of the Iranian people, especially the charismatic leader, Imam Khomeini, began during his primary school in 1980. Upon completing primary school, Alkaf proceeded to study at the boarding school of YAPI in Bangil, East Java, where he gained more knowledge about Shi'ism. New life in the *pesantren* became a significant factor in his intellectual formation. The figure of Hussein Al Habsyi, YAPI's leader, was particularly influential on Alkaf's understanding of Shi'ism. In 1987, with a recommendation from his teacher (Hussein Al Habsyi), he was able to advance his studies to *Hawzah* in Qom. Like other Indonesian students going to Qom, his departure to Iran was not as easy as going elsewhere overseas. He had to make a stopover in Malaysia to get a visa from the Iranian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

Studying at *Hawzah*, Alkaf participated in the learning circles (*halaqat*) that were conducted by leading scholars in Qom. In this educational and spiritual city, the learning circles offered a great variety of religious subjects, but *fiqh* dominated the educational system of *Hawzah*. Therefore, Alkaf started out actively attending the circles on *fiqh* and Islamic philosophy. His participation in the study circles enabled him to study under the guidance of renowned 'ulama' and scholars in Qom. His exposure to *Hawzah's* life and his acquaintance with traditional Shi'i ulama had a major impact on his intellectual formation. Like most Indonesian students, Alkaf only reached the level of *muqaddamat* (preliminary). As a result of his academic training, traditional educational institutions like in YAPI and *Hawzah* influenced Alkaf's intellectual formation and strongly affected his perception of Shi'i doctrine. This certainly shaped his attitude of exclusiveness, especially when he emerged as a Shi'i leader in the public sphere.

However, analyzing Alkaf's academic background seems insufficient to provide solid grounds to understand his intellectual formation. It is necessary to discuss the role he played after his arrival in Indonesia from Qom.

Upon his return to Indonesia, Alkaf was appointed to lead Al Jawad Foundation in Bandung, West Java.¹⁷⁷ The foundation organized a wide range of activities in education, library and publications such as providing study packages in *fiqh*, theology, and philosophy. In addition to publishing books about Shi'i rituals and biographies of Shi'i figures, Al Jawad publishes journals and newsletters such as *Risalatuna*, *Al-Ghadir* and *the Al Jawad*. Currently, the foundation also has an Islamic boarding school for university students. In his spare time, Alkaf delivered lectures about practical *fiqh* and other religious materials to several *majlis taklim* in Bandung and other districts like Tasikmalaya, Garut and Cirebon. Most participants of these *majlis taklims* were less educated, lower class people.

His main ideas were often articulated through his writings in the newsletters of the Al Jawad foundation, like *Risalatuna*. These articles were dedicated to the interests of building the basic doctrine of the newly growing Shi'i community in Indonesia. Primarily, the elaboration took up religious themes relating to Islamic jurisprudence and theology, for instance. These were framed with the influence of the theological point of view Alkaf acquired in Qom, as he always referred to the fatwa of Khomeini and Ali Khamenei in his writings. As the leader of the foundation, his writings permeated almost all bulletins of the foundation.

¹⁷⁷We will discuss other Shi'i foundations in more detail the following chapter.

Besides these articles, Alkaf's contributions to Shi'i religious discourse in the form of publications were three translations of religious books: *Masalah Puasa dan Zakat: Fatwa Imam Khomeini dan Imam Khomeini* (On Issues of Fasting and Alms: Based on Fatwa Imam Khomeini and Imam Ali Khamenei, 1998). *Mi'raj Ruhani: Tuntunan Amalan Shalat Arifin*, (Spiritual Ascension: Practical Directions for Prayer) by Imam Khomeini Arifin (1996); and *Amalan Lengkap Bulan Ramadhan* (Complete Guides on Ramadhan) (1997).

As a Shi'i adherent who was required to choose his *Marja Taqlid*, Alkaf followed Imam Khomeini in his religious directions. The reason for choosing Khomeini was because this figure impressed him in his childhood and was the one who led the Islamic revolution in Iran 1979. After Khomeini's death, Alkaf turned to Ali Khamenei as his *marja*. However, he continued to maintain a relationship with his teacher, Ayatollah Syeikh Sadeq Ikhwan in Qom. When encountering any problems in religious matters, Alkaf would make contacts with his teacher for consultation.

Alkaf's relationship with his teachers set a pattern among Qom alumni, demonstrating the significant scholarly network. He still maintained a relationship with his former teacher in Qom, while he was leading a Shi'i foundation in his own village. Sometimes, he needed to contact his Ayatollah Ikhwan just to ask him about some difficult religious questions relating to contemporary issues. His frame of reference was never far off from what he learned in Qom.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸Ali, "Alumni *Hawzah*", 313-314.

5. Conclusion

This chapter argues that, despite encountering political pressure from the Soeharto regime, Shi'i leaders in Indonesia, both from the campus circle and the *ustadh* group, emerged from different sociological contexts and intellectual backgrounds. The campus circle, consisting of young Muslim students with a modern institutional learning background, converted to Shi'ism after Iran's revolution in 1979. Without going through formal seminary schools, they emerged to be leaders of the Shi'i community amidst the flourishing youth movement on secular campuses across the country. Their movement was actually seen as part of the Islamic revivalism in the late 1970s. The main feature of their movement, among other things, was putting aside religious fanaticism, developing an attitude of openness, being non-sectarian and striving for religious pluralism. All these features have also given nuances to their leadership.

By contrast, the *ustadh* group comprises alumni of Middle Eastern learning centers. They trained for some years in seminary schools in Qom before returning home to become Shi'i leaders in the community. Unlike the campus circle, their academic background was based on traditional education such as *pesantren* and boarding schools. Thus, in propagating Shi'ism in the community, they accentuated Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) according to the *Ja'fariyyah* school of thought.

These differences in terms of educational background and orientation became the embryo for internal conflict among the leaders of the Shi'i community in the next decades. Not clearly visible during the New Order era because most Shi'a applied *taqiyyah*, the conflict would later become transparently clear in the open and democratic climate after the fall of the Soeharto regime after 1998. The

triggering factor for the eventual fracture between the campus circle and the *ustadh* group was disagreement on how they would elect a chairperson. The campus circle believed that a leader should be elected democratically regardless of his ethnic background and descent. This group was supported by Rakhmat, who insisted that leadership had to be open to all. By contrast, the *ustadh* group argued that the leader had to be a descendant of the Prophet's Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*) as decreed in the Hadith and in line with the Qur'an. All matters pertaining to this conflict will be discussed in the next chapter, including the establishment of the first Shi'i mass organization by the campus circle and tens of private foundations by the *ustadh* group.

CHAPTER IV

MAPPING CONTEMPORARY INDONESIAN SHI'A: The Competing Influence of Domestic and Iranian Intellectual Milieux

Various religious streams, which once dared not to appear publicly, now come up conspicuously, without fear, and can breathe freely.

(Berbagai aliran atau agama, yang dulu tak berani muncul terang-terangan, kini tampil gagah berani, tanpa rasa takut, boleh bernapas lega)

*Gatra*¹⁷⁹

1. Introduction

The above citation, a part of news released by an Indonesian magazine, *Gatra*, introduces us to an important two-year period of Indonesian history when Abdurrahman Wahid came to power in 1999. During Wahid's tenure, the government lifted many of the restrictions that had constrained religious

¹⁷⁹“Mumpung Gus Dur Jadi Presiden”, *Gatra*, July 10, 2000, available online at: <http://www.gatra.com/cari.php?cari=ijabi&lingkup=all> (accessed 19 on January 2009)

minorities over the preceding three decades.¹⁸⁰ As Djohan Effendi, former State secretary asserted, Wahid created a more open atmosphere (for religious activism) not only as part of *reformasi* but also due to his personal commitment to religious freedom. As the head of the state, Wahid, known as Gus Dur, provided a more democratic window for minority groups to survive.¹⁸¹ As a result, the corresponding period saw various religious minorities and movements appear in the public sphere, overtly displaying their identity and doctrines -- something which had been impossible during the New Order period.

Within this favourable socio-political condition, Shi'i elite captured the moment to consolidate their organization and networks in the country. Both the campus circle and the *ustadh* group were aware of the urgent need for a central "umbrella" organization that was able to unite all components of the Shi'i

¹⁸⁰The election of Abdurrahman Wahid in October 1999 as President was welcomed with optimism by Christians and members of other religious minority groups because of his longstanding advocacy of religious tolerance and harmony. In the past, strict restrictions were in place on the practices of some religious minorities that were not included in six officially recognized religions: Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Those restrictions were lifted during the Wahid administration. For instance, Presidential Decree 6/2000, promulgated by the Wahid government in January 2000, repealed the former Presidential Decree 14/1967 banning any active practice of Confucianism and Chinese customs. Soon after the enactment of Presidential Decree 6/2000, Confucians were permitted to celebrate the Chinese New Year publicly for the first time in over 30 years. In addition, a Ministry of Interior Circular, No. 477/805, was issued in late March 2000, permitting Confucianism to be listed as a religion on marriage license applications, and allowing Confucian marriages to be recognized and registered officially in the country. While the law formally embraces only these aforementioned religions, it explicitly states that other religions, including Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Shintoism, and Taoism are not forbidden. The government also permits the practice of the mystical, traditional beliefs of "*Aliran Kepercayaan*." Furthermore, in May 2000, Presidential Decree 69/2000 was issued revoking Presidential Decree 264/1962, which had restricted the activities of some religious minorities, including the Baha'i and Rosicrucians and this was for the Shi'a also. See more at: Edward P. Lipton, *Religious Freedom in Asia* (New York: Nova Science Publisher, 2002), 111-21; Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *2000 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom: Indonesia* (Washington: the U.S. Department of State, 2000), available online: http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/irf/irf_rpt/irf_indonesi.html (accessed on 05 October 2011)

¹⁸¹"Mumpung Gus Dur Jadi Presiden", *Gatra*.

community in Indonesia. To that end, they held a number of meetings as preparatory steps. Both sides were involved in these meetings. One of the most important meetings was carried out at the Islamic Cultural Centre (ICC) in Jakarta.¹⁸² They eventually reached an agreement that all parties would support Jalaluddin Rakhmat's initiative to establish a Shi'i organization called IJABI (*Ikatan Jamaah Ahlul Bait Indonesia*).

However, this agreement did not stand long as a wave of misunderstandings destroyed it. The triggering factor was disagreement on how they would elect a chairperson of the new organization. Supported by Rakhmat, the campus circle believed that a leader should be elected democratically regardless of his ethnic background and descent. By contrast, the *ustadh* group argued that the leader had to be a descendant of the Prophet's Household (Ahl al-Bayt) as decreed in the Hadith and the Qur'an, which is enshrined in the Shi'i doctrine of *Wilayat al faqih*,¹⁸³ literally meaning "custodianship of the Islamic jurist". Rakhmat maintained IJABI did not have to follow the concept, which accords religious leaders with the highest authority. As an independent and democratic social organization like any other organization in Indonesia, it had to accord its Congress the highest authority. Rakhmat's point of view was not acceptable among the *ustadh* group, who eventually accused IJABI of being a non-Shi'i

¹⁸²ICC is one of the major Shi'i foundations in Indonesia. Located in Warung Buncit, South Jakarta, it is highly dependent on Iranian authority and responsibility as well as financial resources. The Islamic centre has functioned among others as a coordinating body in the celebration of Islamic festivals. It also plays a crucial role between local Shi'i institutions with its Iranian counterparts.

¹⁸³*Wilayat al faqih* as a doctrine was introduced in 1970s by Imam Khomeini. According to the doctrine, clerics must rule the state. A religious authority is higher than that of political rulers. However, this doctrine is still controversial among high-ranking Shi'i clerics because not all of them accepted it. See further: Laurence Louer, *Transnational Shia Politics, Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2008), 6 and 97.

organization or at least as not representing Shi'ism and violating the principles of Shi'ism. Therefore, the *ustadh* group immediately withdrew their support from the organization and distanced themselves from its activities, and they strived to establish private foundations for their own path in propagating Shi'ism to the community.

Taking into account the split between the campus circle and the *ustadh* group, the chapter discusses some distinctions in their organizations or institutions. As indicated earlier, the campus circle focused on IJABI and the *ustadh* group founded privately run foundations across the country. This chapter elaborates how these organizations pursued different orientations and activities, reflecting their leaders' intellectual and social background. For instance, IJABI tends to promote pluralism through its involvement in interfaith dialogues among different religions, cultures and ethnicities. As a formally registered mass organization, it certainly fulfilled the requirements of a democratic and modern religious organization, like NU and Muhammadiyah. The distinctiveness of IJABI, compared with other Shi'i foundations in the country, was that it put priority on the significance of *akhlaq* (noble ethics) and Sufism in its programs, rather than religious jurisprudence (*fiqh*). In contrast, Shi'i foundations established by the *ustadh* group emphasize the implementation of *Ja'fariyyah* jurisprudence. They were more legalistic and exclusive. These foundations, and a *pesantren*¹⁸⁴ founded by Ahmad Baraghbah in Pekalongan, Central Java, continue to promote all aspects

¹⁸⁴ An Islamic boarding school.

of Shi'i teachings.¹⁸⁵ Undoubtedly, this made them less accommodatory stance towards the society because they showed an Iranian inclination.

The first part of this chapter delineates IJABI, the mass organization that was founded by Rakhmat as representing the campus circle, focusing on the influence of its leaders on the organization's foundation, structure and programs. The second part of the chapter sheds light on some Shi'i foundations in the country founded by the *ustadh* group, focusing on *Pesantren* al-Hadi, in Pekalongan, Central Java. The analysis will also unfold how this *pesantren* has an established relationship with its Iranian connection and receives financial assistance from the office of *Marjaiyyat* in Middle East, as well as being committed to adopting the Iranian culture.

2. IJABI

a. Foundation and Structure

As indicated above, most members of the *ustadh* group separated from the campus circle, although they had already pledged to support the establishment of IJABI. This did not make Rakhmat and his friends lose spirit. Realizing that his plan to establish such as an organization in Indonesia was strategically important, Rakhmat visited Iran to seek support from the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.¹⁸⁶ The result of the visit remains unknown, but it is reasonable to assume that if the Supreme leader had given approval to Rakhmat, the result would have been announced.

¹⁸⁵Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is In Indonesia" (PhD dissertation, Leiden University, 2009), 247.

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 226.

Eventually, without the support of the *ustadh* group, on 1 July 2000, Rakhmat publicly declared the establishment of IJABI in the presence of at least 2,000 Shi'i followers from 20 provinces.¹⁸⁷ Widely reported by the media, the event was held in Gedung Merdeka Bandung, West Java. The ceremony was followed by a seminar on Shi'ism presenting speakers such as: Ayatollah Ibrahim Kazerooni of London,¹⁸⁸ Sheikh Ja'far Hadi of Iran, Muhammad Bagir, the father of Haidar Bagir, Indonesia.

The following day after the declaration, IJABI held its first national Congress (*muktamar*) to elect board and executive members. It also discussed and laid down the constitution, the rules of organization and programs, besides electing heads of departments and organizers. As results of the first Congress in Bandung, West Java, Rakhmat was elected as the Chairman of the Religious Advisory Board (*Ketua Dewan Syuro*). Besides him, the board has 12 members, the number of which symbolizes the Twelve Imams. The members of the board were Haidar Bagir, Director of Mizan Press, Muchtar Adam, a politician from West Java's Partai Amanat Nasional, Segaf al-Jufri, O. Hashem, Djamaluddin Asmawi, Muhammad Taufiq Yahya, Othman Omar Shihab, Rahmat, Ridwan Suhud, Sipon Muladi, Ayik Ali Idrus, Ja'far Ali Alqadri. The chairperson of executive body was

¹⁸⁷“Ijabi Dideklarasikan di Bandung”, *Kompas* daily newspaper, 4 July 2000, available online at: <http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0007/04/daerah/ijab20.htm+ijabi&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=69&gl=au> (accessed on 17 January 2009)

¹⁸⁸Ibrahim Kazerooni was born in Al-Najaf, Iraq, into a religious family and began his theological studies in that city when he was very young. As a Shi'i Islamic priest, he emerged as an Iraqi dissident and was imprisoned repeatedly under Saddam Hussein. Fleeing the country in 1974, he ended up in London, where he went to university. He is a board member for several local municipal agencies, but it was his appointment as a Muslim cleric to the staff of St. John's Episcopal Cathedral that attracted the attention of Homiletics. He serves at the cathedral as the Director of the Abrahamic Initiative. He maintains a small office in the cathedral as well.

Dr. Dimitri Mahaya, a lecturer in the Electronics Department of ITB, and Hadi Suwastio as its general secretary.¹⁸⁹

Structurally, IJABI's organization resembles NU, the largest Muslim organization in Indonesia. Its leadership consists of a Religious Advisory Council (*Dewan Syuro*) and an Executive Council (*Tanfidziyah*). *Dewan Syuro* is headed by a chairperson, practices collective leadership and is the paramount council for decision-making outside the congress. It supervises *Tanfidziyah* regarding the implementation of Congress decisions. The highest authority in IJABI is held by Congress. Meanwhile, the *Tanfidziyah* consists of a general chairperson, general secretary, treasury, and several departments, serving as the implementing body of all congress decisions. Looking at this structure, we can judge that the authority of the organization is based on the democratic principle since anyone can participate in making decisions through Congress.

The establishment of IJABI marked a crucial step in the development of Shi'ism in Indonesia since it was its first mass organization. While most of the Shi'i institutions in Indonesia tended to conceal their Shi'i identity, IJABI clearly stated in its constitution its adherence to the *Madhhab Ahl al-Bayt*, something that was seen as taboo a decade earlier.

b. Legal Aspects

Before discussing the efforts of IJABI to obtain legal status, it would be useful to understand aspects of the civil law system in Indonesia. In regard to non-governmental organizations, Indonesia recognizes two main legal forms, namely associations (*perkumpulan*) and foundations (*yayasan*). The legal status of a *yayasan* is based only on the agreements and aspirations of its founders. The purpose and

¹⁸⁹Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is", 230.

agreement for establishing a *yayasan* is then authenticated by a public notary act and registered in the Ministry of Law and Justice. An association (*perkumpulan*) is another form of legal entity. It is established by a number of people to serve the interests of its members or the public. Different from *yayasan*, which is a non-membership organization, a *perkumpulan* is established based on its membership or the group of people with a common social objective and not-for-profit purpose. It is registered in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

In this context, IJABI endeavoured to register itself as a membership-based organization or *perkumpulan*. Several months after the declaration day, the elected executive members submitted their paperwork to the Ministry of Home Affairs to apply for its legal status. The application was signed by Chairman, Dimitri Mahayana, and Secretary-general, Hadi Suwastio. In a prompt response, the Ministry provided the organization with formal legal status as mass organization on 11 August 2000.¹⁹⁰ Thus, IJABI can be considered as the first Shi'i mass organization that officially obtained legal recognition from the government.

c. General Characteristics

Looking at IJABI as an organization from the conceptual level up to the program realization, one might find that this organization not only represents the personality of Rakhmat, the central figure, but it also, at the same time, highlights characteristics of the campus circle. For instance, the nature of the organization, as stated in the article 6 of the constitution, is non-sectarian and independent. This trait was obviously influenced by the orientation of its leaders. As discussed earlier in Chapter Three, the hallmark of the campus movement was putting aside

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 232.

religious fanaticism, developing an attitude of openness and striving for religious pluralism.

IJABI is an organization that is Shi'i in nature, despite its professed pluralism. Rakhmat's assertion that his organization was actually not exclusively for the Shi'a but for all followers of other *madhhabs* is both a statement of principle but also a strategy to interact widely with other Muslim groups. Some words in the preamble at least subtly implied the orientation, like *Ahl al-Bayt*. The first and second paragraphs of the constitution show "*Kecintaan kepada Ahlulbait (as) telah menjadi titik pusat yang mempersatukan kaum muslimin apapun mazhabnya*" (The love for the *Ahl al-Bayt*, Household of the Prophet, has become a centre point unifying all Muslims, regardless of their *madhhabs*).¹⁹¹

In his analysis, Zulkifli critically views Rakhmat's statement, that IJABI was not only meant for the Shi'a, as a strategy to attract a large number of followers from other denominations. He went on to say, the reality was that only Shi'a participated in the organization. In addition, some statements and expression in the constitution explicitly indicated IJABI as a Shi'i organization. First, the Shi'i five basic faiths (*usul al-din*) are stated in the preamble of its constitution. It says; "...a social organization based on the beliefs in Oneness of God (*tawhid*), Prophecy (*nubuwwa*), imamate (*imama*), justice (*'adala*), and *return of servants to Lord...*" These five articles of faith are specific to Shi'ism, unlike the six pillars of faith within Sunnism. Second, there is an explicit expression of the belief in the twelfth Imam—Imam Mahdi— and recognition of his leadership within Shi'ism. Third, the word

¹⁹¹As we discussed at the earlier chapter, a group of people claim to be the Prophet's offspring as members of the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

Imamah in the second paragraph of the constitution preamble is undoubtedly the most explicit clue to indicate that IJABI as a Shi'i organization.¹⁹²

Approaching from a different perspective on this matter, I suggest another opinion about Rakhmat's statement. He just emphasized the main feature of the organization, illustrating IJABI's openness and inclusivity. The Shi'i elements in the constitution undoubtedly do not undermine the pluralistic trait of the organization since all faiths and various religious orientations are welcome and respected. Zulkifli's preliminary conclusion that only Shi'a participated in the organization still requires further investigation because, so far, there has been no statistical numbers of the Shi'a and, in fact, joining the organization requires no membership card since the organization does not issue them. For this reason, it is very complex to prove that members of the organization are only the Shi'a. Conversely, it is difficult to find evidence for Sunni membership in the organization.

Another characteristic of IJABI might be seen through the principle of upholding *akhlak* (good behavior) above Islamic jurisprudence. The formulation of this feature actually has been explained in Rakhmat's book, *Mendahulukan Akhlak di Atas Fiqh* (Prioritize Ethics over Jurisprudence, 2002). To elaborate the principle, Rakhmat in his book distinguished two paradigms of Islam: *Paradigma Fiqih* and *Paradigma akhlak* (the fiqh paradigm and the ethics paradigm).¹⁹³

¹⁹²The doctrine of Imamate is exclusively belongs to Shi'ism, see more about in Chapter II.

¹⁹³Jalaluddin Rakhmat, *Dahulukan Akhlak di atas Fiqh* (Jakarta: Mizan, 2007), 33-57.



Figure 3: The writer interviewed Jalaluddin Rakhmat and Furqan Buchari at the IJABI's headquarters in Jakarta, July 2009 (Personal album).

In the book, Rakhmat emphasizes that the *fiqh* paradigm signifies the way Muslims perceive Islamic teachings as a compilation of law and religious practical guidance for everyday life. With this paradigm, people tend to adopt a sectarian attitude, causing the division of the Islamic community because people regard themselves as holding the most correct opinion, and rule out others' opinions. This attitude was described by Rakhmat as religious fanaticism, which reflects the problems of focusing too narrowly on Sharia law. The interpretation of Islam has been so far dominated by a strong orientation towards *fiqh*, stressing the values of *halal* and *haram* or right of wrong more than anything else does. He points out that this somewhat narrow interpretation of Islam has actually been transmitted for centuries by classical ulama. In this case, according to Rakhmat, the Muslim community forgets that the main prophetic mission is that "Actually I was sent to

perfect noble ethics".¹⁹⁴ In fact, nowadays they often fight other Muslim groups despite their trivial differences only in procedures of Shari'a.¹⁹⁵

In another part of his book, Rakhmat describes the ethics paradigm as the way to accept the principle that no group or ideology can claim, "to be the sole truth." In any condition, moral values should be the primary consideration while the religious jurisprudence (*fiqh*) has to be given up in order to avoid social conflict or distress. Acknowledging the fact that other people may have different views due to disparity in place, time, and abilities in understanding Islam, the principle enables us to encourage a process of dynamic dialog with other groups, resulting in the values of appreciation and respect among them. This paradigm has become one of the most important principles for IJABI.

Examining this principle, I consider it as distinctive for IJABI with two important dimensions. First, it gives room for the organization to interact with other Muslim religious groups, especially dominant groups, by demonstrating a more flexible attitude in facing the reality of different religious orientation. Second, the principle would enable its members to respect differences, individual freedom, and local culture beside the religious teachings. This means, in viewing "the others", IJABI does not restrict itself to a theological confinement but more importantly it adopts cultural approaches.

With regard to the principle, "none can claim to be the sole truth" in IJABI, I argue that it has similarity to that of Muhammadiyah and, seemingly, Rakhmat

¹⁹⁴The prophet said that actually I was sent to perfect noble ethics. This Hadith was narrated by al-Bukhari and quoted by al-Albani in *Shahih al-Adab al-Mufrad*, Hadith No: 273 (*Chapter Noble Ethics*).

¹⁹⁵ Rakhmat, *Dahulukan Akhlak*, 187.

might have introduced it to IJABI from his former organization because this principle was not alien to the leaders of the reformist organization.

In order to know more about this matter, it is necessary to observe Ahmad Jainuri's analysis in his dissertation at McGill University in 1997, while noting that the founding father of Muhammadiyah, Ahmad Dahlan, demonstrated inclusiveness and promoted respect for various religious groups. Having friends with the priests of Christianity and Catholicism, Dahlan did not feel awkward about attending churches for dialogue while wearing *haji* clothes. These cases demonstrated the inclusiveness of the Muhammadiyah's founding father in relation to other groups who had a different political or religious ideology. In addition, the position of the Muhammadiyah in understanding Islam, according to Jainuri, was that they believed the truth of Islam, which is set down by the Qur'an and the Hadith but, realizing that Islam is interpretable, they were also aware that different interpretations must be tolerated.¹⁹⁶

In the context of IJABI, Rakhmat has likely been preoccupied a lot with this principle since he was an active cadre of Muhammadiyah, preaching in his village for the mission of this organization, as discussed in Chapter Two. Undeniably, the past activism has shaped his intellectual formation, which eventually influenced the orientation of his leadership in IJABI. In sum, this case eventually supported the author's argument that the socio-political background of Shi'i leaders has shaped their current leadership.

d. Programs

¹⁹⁶ Ahmad Jainuri, *Ideologi kaum reformis: melacak pandangan keagamaan Muhammadiyah periode awal* (Surabaya: LPAM, 2002), 106.

As the main purpose of IJABI was to support propagation of Islam in Indonesia based on the teachings of the Prophet's family (*Ahl al-Bayt*),¹⁹⁷ the nuances and characteristics of its leadership as mentioned above have galvanized most of its programs. In the field of education, for instance, the organization set up at least six tuition-free schools for poor people in West Java, East Java and South Sulawesi, organizing short religious courses and training sessions on Sufism, philosophy and Islamic law.¹⁹⁸

One of the educational institutions was the Muthahhari SMU Plus (Senior High School Plus) in Bandung, West Java. The attribute "Plus" means that the school combines some teaching subjects taken from the national curriculum with Islamic knowledge. In an interview, Miftah Fauzi, the head of the school foundation who is also the son of Rakhmat, refuted the accusation that his institution was a means of Shi'i propagation in Indonesia.¹⁹⁹ Claiming that his school was one of the favorites in Bandung, he emphasized that a lot of the students also came from Sunni families in the region and no Shi'i-related subject was taught. Besides general knowledge, the school also provides Islamic knowledge (*dirasa Islamiyya*) such as *'ulum al-Qur'an*, *'ulum al-hadith*, *usul al-fiqh*, and comparative *fiqh*. In this regard, Dede Anwar, the school deputy principal, described how the subject of comparative *fiqh* has particularly enabled students to

¹⁹⁷ See Appendix B about the IJABI's constitution.

¹⁹⁸ In 1988, Rakhmat together with his colleagues, Haidar Bagir, Ahmad Tafsir, Agus Effendi and Ahmad Muhajir, established the Muthahhari Foundation in Bandung to promote da'wa and publishing activities. In 1992, the foundation expanded its operations to setting up high schools. This high school is well known as a senior high school plus. The attribute 'plus' is used because its programs combines a number of subjects from the national curriculum with Islamic teachings with a focus on fostering moral conduct. Available online at: <http://www.smuth.net/> (accessed on 19 January 2009)

¹⁹⁹ Miftah Fauzi, personal interview with the writer during fieldwork on July 2009.

see a broader window of Islamic jurisprudence by comparing some views of classical as well as modern ulama, not only from Sunnism but also Shi'ism.²⁰⁰

In terms of focal point, Anwar admitted that most of the financial expenses, including teacher salaries, were taken from three resources: student tuition, government subsidies and the last resources was coming from the central body, the Muthahhari Foundation. Anwar did not go into further details about this matter but when I raised this question to Rakhmat, he insisted that his school has never received a big fund from foreign countries.

Analyzing the Muthahhari High School, one may say that it can be regarded as a part of IJABI's contribution in promoting Shi'ism in the country through the transfer of knowledge and values from one generation to another. Certainly, unlike the *ustadh* group, whose sufficient Islamic knowledge enabled them set up a *pesantren* (an Islamic boarding school), the way the campus circle played their role in this case reflected the boundaries of their characteristics and intellectual background. Indeed, we might explore more illustrations of their leadership in contemporary Indonesia.

Some other activities and programs such as the involvement of IJABI in helping the people of Aceh in the face of the tsunami tragedy in 2004²⁰¹ and its participation in a public protest against the *Jyllands-Posten* Muhammad cartoons controversy in 2006²⁰² signaled the organization's effort to assimilate with the wider Islamic community in dealing with contemporary issues. For IJABI, this role was apparently important because these two major events attracted great

²⁰⁰ Dede Anwar, personal interview with the writer during fieldwork on July 2009.

²⁰¹ Zainal Abidin EP, "IJABI Peringati Setahun Tsunami Aceh", *Majemuk Magazine*, Edition 17 November-Desember 2005, 23.

²⁰² "Kemarahan Di Kedubes Denmark", *Rakyat Merdeka* on 7 February 2006, available online at: <http://www.rakyatmerdeka.co.id/foto/hal/672/view/177> (accessed on 11 August 2010)

attention locally as well as from international Muslims. More importantly, IJABI has been active in promoting the rights of religious minorities in Indonesia, such as Christianity and Ahmadiyah, through interfaith dialogs by joining the Body for Religious Freedom and Faith Struggle (Badan Perjuangan Kebebasan Agama dan Berkepercayaan-BPKAB). Its membership consists of representatives of various religions and its leaders are religious figures, among others, Dawam Rahardjo, Bismar Siregar, Chevrolet Lumban, Toruan Jackson and Lamardy (Ahmadiyah).

Besides social activities, IJABI has also continued to foster good relations especially with the government, namely through the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). In this regard, following its third national Congress, in August 2008, a delegation led by Rakhmat paid a courtesy call on the MORA and was received by the Director General of Islamic Social Guidance, Nasaruddin Umar, who is an NU cadre and who was already familiar with Rakhmat.

The purpose of the meeting, according to Rakhmat as quoted by the Ministry website, was to introduce the newly elected executive members of IJABI to the MORA's high-ranking official. At the meeting, the MORA's official said, "Shi'ism in Indonesia has undergone a process of domestication (proses penjinakan) so that its existence posed no problems". On this occasion, Rakhmat reported that the 2008 IJABI Congress in Makassar was successfully organized with the contribution and assistance of MORA.

Currently, IJABI claims to have 145 regional branch offices across the country with 2.5 million members.²⁰³ During a recent interview, Rakhmat

²⁰³ Data from the IJABI's leaflet and brochure.

admitted that he has chosen Muhammad Hussein Fadhlallah of Lebanon²⁰⁴ as *Marja Taqlid*²⁰⁵ because this prominent Shi'a is known as more active in promoting pluralism compared with other Shi'i clerics. The ayatollah is well known as a progressive Islamic thinker. He often made controversies among traditional *maraji* (plural of *marja*) because his religious ideas reflect compromise with the Western culture.²⁰⁶ Despite his position as a spiritual advisor of Lebanese *Hizbullah*, he found himself in particular disagreement with the Khomeini regime. Moreover, the Iraqi-born ayatollah was also perceived as more inclusive and moderate than others.

3. Other Shi'i Organizations

a. The *ustadh* Contributions

Just as the campus circle took advantage from the favorable condition of the country, the *ustadh* group has also managed to capitalize on the democratic climate in the country, which prevails in the post-Soeharto era. The group continues to propagate their beliefs to the community by setting up numerous

²⁰⁴Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah was born in Iraq in 1935 and studied in Najaf under various renowned 'ulama', including the Grand Ayatollah Khomeini and Muhsin al-Hakim. He moved to Lebanon in 1966 and is alleged to be the spiritual leader of Hizbullah (the Party of God). Several studies of his ideals and role in Lebanon have been conducted. His website is <http://www.bayynat.org.lb> (in Arabic, English, and French) and contains his *fatwa* and thoughts. Fadlallah has rejected the concept of *Wilayat al faqih*, arguing that "no Shi'a religious leader, not even Khomeini ... has a monopoly on the truth." In a 2009 interview, Fadlallah said that he does not believe the *wilayat al faqih* has a role in modern Lebanon. See more at:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123698785743625933.html>

²⁰⁵*Marja Taqlid* which refers to "the source of emulation" is one of the fundamental doctrines in the contemporary Shi'ism. This is the highest religious authority to make legal decisions in both religious and political matters. See further: Ahmad Kazemi Moussavi, *Religious Authority in Shi'ite Islam: From the Office of Mufti to the Institution of Marja* (International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization 1996).

²⁰⁶Talib Aziz, "Fadlallah and the Remaking of the Marja 'iya" in *The Institution of the Marja' Taqlid*, ed. Linda S. Walbridge (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 205-16.

foundations (*yayasan*) across the country. These institutions have commonly taken the form of local non-membership organizations, based on the agreements and aspirations of their founders and then authenticated by a public notary for the registration in the Ministry of Law and Justice.

The choice of this model by the *ustadh* group is because this form of organization fits their aspirations. In fact, many Shi'i foundations in Indonesia have been established by a group of people with a close friendship or kinship ties, in a way that they could manage their own interests. For instance, the *Fatimah* Foundation of Jakarta was set up by the al-Muhdar family. Another example is the Al-Jawad Foundation that was established by a group of Shi'a in Bandung, including Ahmad Jubaili, Wawan Tribudi Hermawan, Rivaldi and Yusuf Bachtiar.²⁰⁷ Besides this model fitting their aspirations, the *ustadh* group is considered to lack experience in running a mass organization involving a large number of members. This situation has been indeed admitted by Hussein bin Shahab, Chairman of the *Baitul Muhibbin* Foundation during an interview with the writer in late July 2009 in Jakarta. "Despite an awareness of the need for an organization similar to IJABI, the majority of Shi'a (Qom Alumni) is not capable to manage such an organization. That is one of the problems," he asserted.

²⁰⁷Zulkifli, "The struggle of the Shi'is", 131.



Figure 1: The chest beating (*ma'tam*), Iranian style Shi'i culture during the commemoration of *Ashura*; this photo was taken in Muntazhar Foundation, Jakarta. (Courtesy of Al Muntazhar Foundation)

Some of the foundations were established in the mid-1980s and their activities took the forms of underground movements, including *Al-Hujjah* (founded in 1987) in Jember East Java, *Muthahhari* (1988) in Bandung, *Al-Hadi* (1989) in Pekalongan Central Java, *Al-Jawad* (1991) in Bandung, *Al-Muntazar* (1992) in Jakarta, *Al-Kazim* (1994) in Cirebon West Java, IPABI, *Ikatan Pemuda Ahlul Bait Indonesia* (Indonesian Association of Ahl al-Bayt Youth) (1993) in Bogor, *RausyanFikr* (1995) in Yogyakarta and *Fatimah* (1997) in Jakarta.

b. Characteristics and Orientation

Most of the Shi'i foundations set up by the *ustadh* group in Indonesia can be characterized as exclusive-sectarian.²⁰⁸ Some scholars suggested that the sectarian attitude was mainly affected by the fact that the orientation of the foundations was directed only towards Shi'i development in the country, facilitating their interests, programs and activities. Introducing Iranian-based religious culture, like the chest beating during local *Ashura* ceremonies, these foundations tended to develop the religious discourses only pertaining to more scriptural Shi'i teachings.²⁰⁹ Although the *ustadh* group sometimes practices *taqiyyah* in the community, their experiences as Indonesian students of Qom seminary schools have fervently affected the attitude to their faith. They have very strong missionary zeal and determination to save the world by applying the *fiqh* approach. With the knowledge and experience they acquired in Qom, the group attempts to provide an exemplary model for the total practice of Shi'i teachings in Indonesia.²¹⁰

Unlike IJABI, which was registered at the national level, the foundations are locally registered at the provincial offices and their operations can run only within the region where they are listed. With this type of registration, however, there is no restriction for the foundations to organize a wide range of activities. They can hold religious and ritual gatherings, training courses, school and even establishing a *pesantren*. In line with their missionary goals, most of the activities

²⁰⁸Syamsuri Ali, "Alumni Hawza Ilmiah Qom, Pewacanaan Intelektualitas dan Relasi Sosialnya Dalam Transmisi Syiah di Indonesia" (PhD diss., the State Islamic Institute of Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, 2002), 381. The use of term sectarian denotes a certain group to be seen as a distinctive form of religious behavior or worship by others, and to be classified by characteristics of participants by others. Further details about the definition of sectarian see; D. Knudsen, John R. Earle, Donald W. Shriver, Jr., "The Conception of Sectarian Religion: An Effort at Clarification", *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 20, No. 1/1978), 44-60.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., Ali, 366-70.

²¹⁰Jalulludin Rakhmat, *Catatan Kang Jalal: Visi Media, Politik, dan Pendidikan* (Bandung: Rosdakarya, 1997) 446-447.

are mainly aimed at the effort to realize an Islamic society in accordance with the *Ja'fariyyah* school of thought as the basic legal opinion for all of their activities. Sometimes, these foundations develop collaboration among themselves organizing various activities and trainings with the focus on the Shi'i concept and teachings. This sort of integrated courses is commonly called *Paket Kajian* (a package of courses).²¹¹ The Al-Jawad foundation, for example, jointly with IPABI organized courses, including a one-year integrated *Ja'fariyyah* course, aspects of *'aqida* (doctrine), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *tafsir* (the Qur'an exegesis) within Shi'ism and the concept of *Wilayat al faqih*.

Generally, looking at the activities of the Shi'i foundations, one may distinguish three categories: *tabligh* (preaching), *ta'lim* (teaching, training or courses) and social predication (da'wah social).²¹²

First, the *tabligh* activity is widely known as *pengajian* or *majlis ta'lim* (religious gathering), usually attracting local people, not only the Shi'a but also from Sunnis. It has a regular schedule; weekly, monthly or even annually. The most common weekly gathering is to recite the *Kumayl* prayer²¹³ during which a special prayer is uttered and a sermon is delivered on every Thursday evenings. Some other weekly activities are held on Sundays, known as *Pengajian Ahad* (Sunday's religious gathering). Most weekly *pengajian* are obviously a means of propagation of Shi'ism, including a variety of aspects of Shi'ism, particularly doctrine, morality and thought. Besides weekly activities, the *ustadh* group usually

²¹¹Zulkifli, "The struggle of Shi'is", 148.

²¹² Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is", 127.

²¹³This is also known as the *Kumayl* Prayer, commonly performed on Thursday nights after the Night Prayer. It is usually performed in congregation, led by an *ustadh* who also delivers a sermon. This gathering is commonly called *Majlis Kumayl* (the gathering of *kumayl*), and it lasts for several hours. During the recitation, all participants of the gathering shed tears and cry collectively. See further Zulkifli, "The struggle of Shi'is", 116.

organizes annual events such as the *Ashura* ceremony, *Maqtal Husain*²¹⁴ and *Maulid*.²¹⁵ These meetings, especially *Ashura*, have turned out to be effective venues for missionary activities.²¹⁶

Second, *majlis taklim* (informal and in-house religious gatherings) are usually held in exclusive places, which could only be attended by certain members, and are filled with regular Shi'i programs and Islamic lectures followed by discussion on various topics including *fiqh*. During the course, the meetings usually use classical books by Shi'i ulama, like *Tahrir Al Washilah* by Imam Khomeini or *Al Ajwibat Al Istiftaat* by Ali Khomeini. These books are also used commonly as references in *Hawzah Ilmiyah* in Qom, Iran.

Third, social *da'wah*; some *ustadhs* are involved in social activities and charity programs such as distribution of donations to orphans and needy family, victims of natural disasters. The accomplishment of programs was made possible with the financial assistance of the central office of *Marjaiyyat* in Iran, which was channeled through ICC in Jakarta.

In order to understand the characteristics of Shi'i foundations, it is necessary to examine some of them and evaluate their goals, activities and more

²¹⁴During the ceremony, an *ustadh* reads *Maqtal al-Husain* (the martyrdom epic of Imam Hussein). Different from the existing traditional *Ashura* porridge (*Bubur Asyuro*) in contemporary Indonesia, this ceremony is typically Iranian or Middle East culture.

²¹⁵ *Maulid* is the Prophet's birthday ceremony.

²¹⁶Rachid Elbadri, military researcher, uses a model derived from Emile Durkheim's social ritual theory to explain how rituals transform knowledge into belief and membership into belonging. He reveals how *Ashura* rituals are constructed, embraced, and evolved as well as how they are shaping Shi'i identity and communal sense. As discussed in the previous chapter, *Ashura* ceremony is not merely rituals of sorrow or lamentation or a source of salvation redemption, but also more importantly represents an inspiring force, which can be used as a popular platform to strengthen faith, unifying and empowering the Shi'a identity. This means, participants would inevitably be immersed in an emotional situation where they might find the reality of themselves as followers of the Imam (Shi'a). In short, this ritual has become the venue to attract new followers. See more: Rachid Elbadri, "Shia Rituals: The Impact of Shia Rituals on Shi'a Socio-Political Character" (master thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, 2009).

importantly, the concept of their institutions. To that end, the following account might take some foundations and organizations for examples.

c. FAJAR

FAJAR stands for Forum Ahlibait Jawa Timur (East Java Ahl Bayt Forum), established by some *ustadh* following *reformasi* in Malang, East Java. This organization was initially meant to be an umbrella for other Shi'i foundations located in the province but failed to do so because it never obtained legal status from the government. The organization was initiated by Muhsin Labib with three other Qom alumni. Its statutes say that the main purpose of the organization is to realize an Islamic civil society based on the concept of *Wilayat al faqih*. All of its programs were focused on the promotion of this concept in the country. It has two obvious missions: first, to spread the true understanding of Shi'ism, especially the concept of Imamate with all of its dimensions, and second, to spread the true understanding of Islam in general.

Applying the concept of *Wilayat al faqih*, FAJAR put a *Mustasyar* (Religious Advisory board) to be the highest authority in its structural organization, even higher than a Congress. This format was in contrast to that of IJABI, which established Congress as the most authoritative body within the organization. In FAJAR, the *Mustasyar* held the absolute power to veto any decisions produced by the Congress. In a bid to implement the concept of *Wilayat al faqih*, the advisory board was given a special status as a local representative by *Marja Taqlid*,

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei of Iran. To that end, this advisory board was led by Zahir bin Yahya who claimed to have obtained his appointment from Iran.²¹⁷

However, the presence of FAJAR created division (pro- and con-) among the Shi'i foundations in the province. Some of them were reluctant to be subordinated to FAJAR. This was because, unlike IJABI, which has its Congress as the top authority in making decisions, FAJAR applied a top-down leadership despite the absence of a local strong leader among its elites. Initially, FAJAR played a major role among the Shi'i community in East Java but it shrank when its leaders — Zahir Yahya and Muhsin Labib — moved to Australia and Jakarta, respectively, for study.²¹⁸

d. KIBLAT

Another initiative of the *ustadh* group was to set up a West Java-based Shi'i organization called *Ikatan Ahlibait Wilayah Jawa Barat* (KIBLAT). This was supported by Shi'i foundations operating in five cities, namely IPABI, Bogor (*Ikatan Pemuda Ahlibait Indonesia*: Indonesian Association of Ahl al-Bayt Youth), Al-Jawad-Bandung, Al Kautsar-Bandung, Al Mujtaba-Purwakarta, Al Kadzim-Cirebon and Al Syifa-Garut. KIBLAT was jointly announced by some *ustadh* in August 2001. From the outset of KIBLAT, Yayasan Muthahari was excluded, although this Rakhmat-managed foundation was also based in Bandung, West Java for an unknown reason. Perhaps, it was because the withdrawal of the *ustadh* from the establishment of IJABI in 2000.

²¹⁷This appointment has triggered controversy among the Shi'a in other regions. This is because, by this appointment, all Shi'a in other parts of Indonesia have to legally and theologically follow the existing representative.

²¹⁸Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is", 256.

Soon after its declaration, KIBLAT held its first Congress to formulate its constitution and elect members of its advisory board. As members of its advisory board, it elected Hussien Alkaf (Al-Jawad, Bandung), Fuad al-Hadi (IPABI, Bogor) and Muhammad Sueb (Al Mujtaba, Purwakarta), while the chairman was Abdullah Assegaf (IPABI, Bogor).

With the motto “*Bersama Wilayah Membangun Masyarakat Islam*” (Together with Wilayah, Building the Islamic Community), this organization was based on the Shi’i structural organization of *Wilayat al faqih*. Its main goal was to enlighten and to implement the doctrine of *Ahl al-Bayt*. KIBLAT was considered an ideal form of a Shi’s organization in that it fulfilled the requirements of the concept of *Wilayat al faqih* as well as the readiness of local Shi’a to accept this concept. KIBLAT was an expression of the striving for the existence of representatives of *Wilayat al faqih* in Indonesia.²¹⁹

e. Silatnas

The most recent effort of some of the *ustadh*, including Hasan Dalil,²²⁰ Sayuti Shatri²²¹ and Hussein Shahab, was to initiate a national working conference, *Silaturrahmi Nasional (Silatnas) Ahl al-Bayt*. They expected that this conference would later on produce a consensus on a Shi’i mass organization. The first meeting was held in 2005 in Yogyakarta, attended by representatives from Shi’i foundations at the provincial level across the country but none from IJABI. “We did not call it a Congress because we knew that any initiatives to establish an organization should come from bottom to the top, not vice versa,” Hussein said.

²¹⁹Ibid: 430.

²²⁰Hasan Dalil is not an alumnus of the *Hawzah Ilmilyah* of Qum but has supported the role and ideology of the Qum Alumni. He finished his undergraduate program at King Saud University, Saudi Arabia.

²²¹He is a former Parliament member from the Golkar political party in the period 2004-2009.

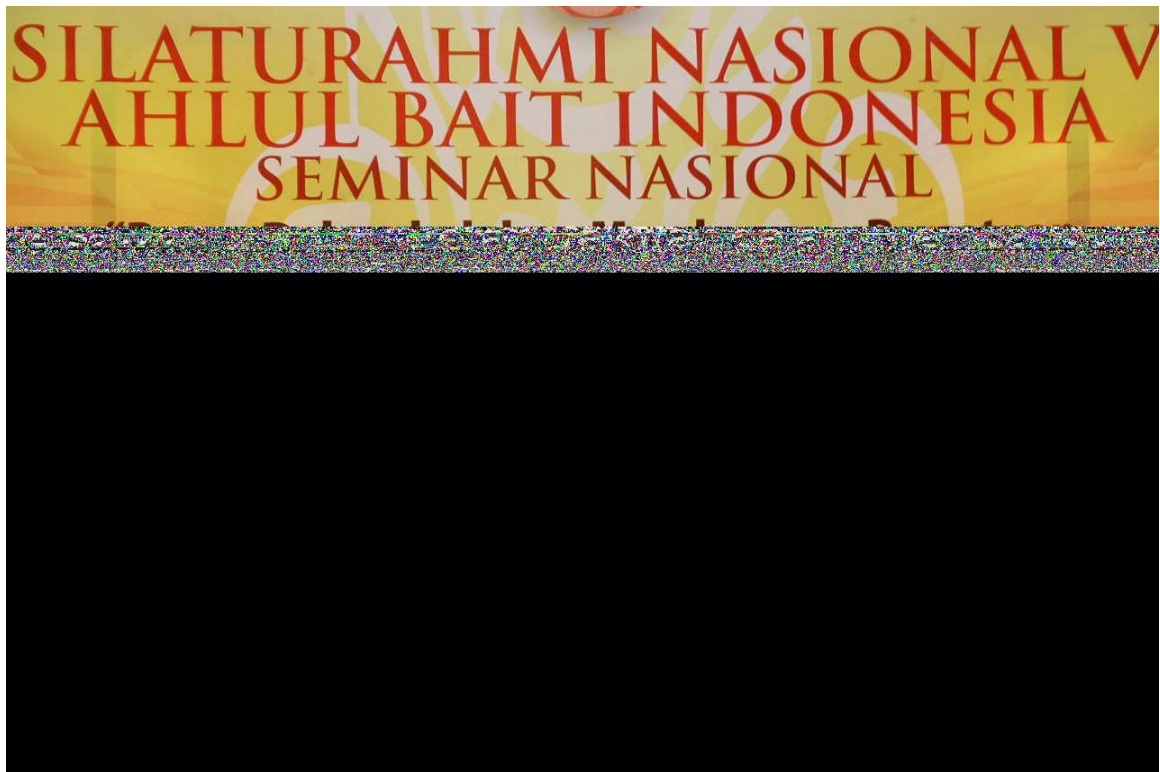


Figure 2: The Fifth National Working Conference, *Silaturrahmi Nasional (Silatnas) Ahl al-Bayt* was held on April 2-4, 2010 in the Pondok Gede Haj Complex in Jakarta (courtesy of detik.com).

The second Silatnas 2006 was held in Bogor, West Java, and the third was in Malang, East Java in 2007 where it was decided that such a meeting would be held every two years, instead of once a year. However, for the time being, it has failed to yield a concrete result in establishing a mass organization for the *ustadh* group.

Most recently, the fifth Silatnas was held on April 2-4, 2010 in the Pondok Gede Haj Complex in Jakarta. It was officially opened by the Chief Justice of the Constitution Court (*Mahkamah Konstitusi*), Professor Mahfud MD.²²² Present at the

²²²“Seminar Nasional Ahlul Bait ke-5 Dibuka Hari ini”, *Radio Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRIB)*, 04 April 2010.

event, among others, were the former chairperson of the Indonesian Intelligence Body (Bakin) A.M. Hendropriyono, and the Minister of Forestry, Zulkifli Hasan. In his keynote speech, Mahfud stressed that he attended the meeting because he was interested in its theme “the role of propagation in building unity and brotherhood for the Republic of Indonesia”.²²³ The three-day Silatnas was concluded with a commitment to set up a national-level mass organization, which could function as a coordinating body of Shi’i foundations all over the country. At the end of the event, the organizing committee told the press that the fifth assembly would soon be followed with a national working conference (*musyawarah kerja nasional: mukernas*) in the next three months to further discuss the plan for setting up a Shi’i organization.

The Silatnas was also confronted with an anti-Shi’i attitude from some other Islamic groups. On the first day, a group of people staged a protest in the front of the Pondok Gede Haj complex, calling for an end to the gathering. Field coordinator (*Kordinator Lapangan*) of the group, Ahmad Farid Oqbah,²²⁴ accused the organizing committee of violating the permit regulation. “Every national event has to get permit from the Police headquarter,” said Okbah to the media adding that followers of *Ahl al-Bayt* are the Iranian-centered Shi’a. “It is forbidden to propagate their belief (Shi’ism) to the Sunni followers, this is Sunni country”. In a statement to the *Hidayyatullah.com*, the group reminded Indonesian Muslims to remain vigilant to the danger of Shi’ism and urged the Ministry of Religious

http://www.indonesian.irib.ir/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=20345&Itemid=82 (accessed on 15 April 2010)

²²³“Menolak Dibubarkan, Silatnas Ahlul Bait Tetap Berjalan”, *Hidayatullah.com*, 04 April 2010. <http://www.hidayatullah.com/berita/lokal/11283-menolak-dibubarkan-silatnas-ahlul-bait-tetap-berjalan> (accessed on 15 April 2010)

²²⁴Farid Okbah is the director of a Salafy boarding school in Bekasi. He is a cadre of DDII, the most ardent anti-Shi’a organization. We will discuss more about DDII in Chapter V.

Affairs to be consistent with the MUI recommendation in 1984 about Shi'ism.²²⁵

The statement was signed by Cholil Ridwan of DDII (*Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia*, Indonesian Islamic Missionary Council), Yusuf Utsman Baisa of Al-Irsyad, Hartono A. Jaiz of *Nahimunkar.com*, Risman Muchtar of Muhammadiyah, and Romli Qomaruddin of Persis.²²⁶

4. Pesantren al-Hadi

The most significant contribution of the *ustadh* group is the establishment of a Shi'i oriented *pesantren* in Pekalongan, Central Java in June 1989, which was named after the Shi'i tenth Imam, al-Hadi. Looking at its structure, it has the minimum elements of a traditional *pesantren* in Java as set out by Zamakhsyari Dhofier.²²⁷ Those basic elements are the *pondok* (dormitories), the mosque, the *santri* (students), the *kyai* (leader) and the study of classical Islamic *kitab* (texts). Obviously, slightly different from other common *pesantren* operating in Indonesia, al-Hadi is associated with Shi'i faith, promulgating the faith tradition and system as well as teaching academic subjects in the light of the Shi'i values. It clearly and openly states that it promotes the practice of all aspects of Shi'i teachings.

In an interview with the writer, headmaster and founder of al-Hadi, Ahmad Baraghbah claimed that his *pesantren* adopts a traditional *Hawzah*-style system²²⁸ and is the first-ever *pesantren* in Indonesia which applies such a system.

²²⁵The MUI recommendation about Shi'ism will be discussed in Chapter V.

²²⁶“Ormas Islam Sikapi Acara Syiah Indonesia”, *arrahmah.com*, 05 April 2010.

<http://www.arrahmah.com/index.php/news/read/7435/ormas-islam-sikapi-acara-syiah-indonesia> (accessed on 17 April 2010)

²²⁷Dhofier, Zamakhsyari, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai* (Jakarta: LP3ES 1982), 49–59.

²²⁸The *Hawzah* system is a model of Islamic education, run under the supervision of a Shi'i cleric (*Ayatollah*). It has three levels of class for its students: *Muqoddimat* (Introductory), *Suthuh*

For teaching materials, all subjects studied are taught in accordance with *Ja'fariyyah Madhhab*, using classical books composed by Iranian clerics. Al-Hadi only offers students religious education, including Arabic, *'aqida*, *fiqh*, *tafsir*, *hadith* and Islamic history. All the instruction, training and guidance of the Shi'i teachings seek to provide students with the basic knowledge and skills to become Shi'i teachers in Indonesia. With these religious skills, the students are also expected to be able to continue their higher Islamic education in Qom.²²⁹

Located not far distant from the central city of Pekalongan, the complex of *Pesantren* al-Hadi consists of two houses and two two-level buildings. A large house accommodates all the activities of the female students, their dorms and classrooms. The other smaller house is used for Ahmad Baragbah and his family. The first two-floored building is used for a mosque on the first floor and other activities such as a hostel for teachers and classrooms of male students on the second floor. The other building is used for classes. The mosque is always used as a multi-functional room. It can either be used for the performance of praying or training and even speech competitions (*muhadharah*).

Up to July 2009,²³⁰ there were 75 (male and female) students (*santri*) officially enrolled in the *pesantren*. They averaged from about 10 up to 20 years of age, coming from places all over the country such as Java, Sumatera and Kalimantan. Al-Hadi employs seven male teachers and three female ones, all of whom were the Qom alumni. For schooling fee, it imposes a variable rate of

(Intermediate) and *Bahs al Kharij* (Advanced). Each level is categorized by different books. It takes four to eight years for a student to finish each class. A degree is given only to those who pass the advanced classes. The degree comprises several levels: *Hujjatul Islam*, *Hujjatul Islam wal Muslimin*, and *Ayatollah*; the highest rank is *Ayatollah Al Udzma*. For more about Hawza see Chapter III.

²²⁹ Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is", 172.

²³⁰ This was the time when the interview with Ahmad Baragbah took place.



Figure 3: Ahmad Baraghbah, the writer and a teacher at the administration office of *Pesantren Al Hadi*. This photo was taken on July 2009. (Personal Album)

payment on its students. The maximum rate is about 150,000 rupiahs (less than AUD \$20) per month, but there are also some students exempted from the tuition on the grounds of the poor economic background of their family. This monthly payment covers tuition, meals and accommodation. “It is really hard for us (teachers and management) and most of the times, we have to dip into our own pockets to cover the cost,” Baraghbah said, adding that, for this reason, they never reject any financial assistance from donors.

The donors to al-Hadi include wealthy Muslims from Indonesia and overseas, such as Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. Besides that, Baraghbah admitted his *pesantren* has received financial and technical assistance and other facilities in the form of books and journals from Iran, through the office of *Marja*

Taqlid. Describing the assistance package as a non-binding one, he admitted, however, that he regularly prepares reports for the office of *Marja Taqlid* on the progress of his *pesantren*. For administrative purposes, the Islamic Cultural Centre of Jakarta, as representative of the office of *Marja Taqlid* in Indonesia, carries out inspections of the application of the curricula and the activities of students and teachers, in order to make sure of its progress.

As the first-ever educational institution adopting a traditional *Hawzah*-style system in Indonesia, al-Hadi has become a stepping stone for Indonesian students who are keen to further their study in Iran. Its letter of reference is highly regarded in Iran. This is not only because of the institutional cooperation it has with its counterparts in Middle East, especially Iran, but also the personal relationship of Ahmad Baraghbah with prominent Shi'i ulama in those countries. Success stories of its alumni studying abroad have served as encouraging points for the *pesantren* and its students. For instance, in the 1990s, a number of students from al-Hadi graduated from Qom, Iran. Among others, this group included Ali Al Aydrus of Bandung, West Java, Muhammad of Purwakarta, West Java and Salman Daruddin of Jakarta.²³¹ They returned to Indonesia and became Shi'i elite in their respective regions.

Baraghbah acknowledged that al-Hadi was established for two main objectives. First, it seeks to mend public misperception about Shi'ism, especially after the outbreak of revolution in Iran, such as exporting the Islamic revolution into Indonesia. For this goal, it has to bring the truth of Shi'ism, erasing such a misunderstanding in the public sphere. Second, it seeks to train young cadres (young generation) among the Shi'a, who are expected to have solid religious

²³¹Ali, "Alumni *Hawzah*", 167.

knowledge.²³² Inseparably, for this reason, it is certainly sectarian, attached to the importance of Shi'i interests in the country. In order to achieve its goals, al-Hadi has been continuously supported by both local and international networks. It actively engages in a constant communication, in terms of educational promotion, with the existing numerous Shi'i foundations across the country. For al-Hadi, such a dynamic local network has inspired an effective way to lure potential students from all over Indonesia.

In addition to the intensive communication link among local Shi'i foundations, the increasingly significant role of al-Hadi as a linkage of Shi'i international networks, in terms of the *Hawza* educational system, is undeniable. It has links with other institutions abroad, especially in Iran. This link can be seen through exchange visits by teachers and students, and in receiving financial and technical assistance. The active role of al-Hadi in regularly sending students to Qom proved the institutional connection with counterparts in Iran.

Unsurprisingly, many prominent Shi'i clerics frequently visited al-Hadi.²³³ For instance, representatives of the Supreme Iranian leader, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, and some other individual Shi'i scholars have taken the opportunity to visit the *pesantren* during their trips to Indonesia. In this way, al-Hadi functions as a hub of linkage between the Shi'i communities in Indonesia with their international counterparts.

The establishment of al-Hadi provoked negative reactions from local people because, when Ahmad Baraghbah first introduced Shi'ism and set up his Shi'i *pesantren*, it was considered to be against local Sunni tradition. Pekalongan

²³² Dewi Nurjulianti and Arief Subhan, "Lembaga-lembaga Syiah di Indonesia", *Ulumul Qur'an*, no 4, volume 6, 1995, 24

²³³ Ali, "Alumi Hawza", 169.

city has been long known as a Sunni stronghold area and Baraghabah himself was actually the son of a respected Sunni *ustadh* in the city of Pekalongan. Evidence of this negative response could be easily seen in regular gatherings (*pengajian*) and local community meetings.

In October 1992, a group of people handed in the so-called “*Resolusi Umat Islam Pekalongan*” (Pekalongan’s Muslims Community Resolution), calling for the immediate closure of al-Hadi. The Resolution asked that all activities of the *pesantren* be halted. In 2000, a branch *pesantren* of al-Hadi in Batang, some kilometers from Pekalongan, was deliberately burnt down, displacing about 60 students (*santri*). “This irresponsible act was evidence of majority dictatorship against a minority,” Baraghabah told reporters. According to the report, this criminal act was instigated by Bagir bin Ahmad Al Attas.²³⁴ On many occasions, al-Hadi frequently received unpleasant treatment at night: people riding motorbikes threw stones into the complex of the *pesantren*. Some local figures asked the police office to close down the *pesantren*.

The public resistance to the Shi’i *pesantren* in Pekalongan was strong. In an interview with the writer in 2009, the Chairman of Regional Al-Rabitah al-Alawiyah (The Alawi Union),²³⁵ Abdul Qodir bin Muhammad Al Jufri, asserted that the resistance came especially from hardliner Sunni residents of Pekalongan City. They were provoked by a rumor that the Shi’i community worshipped a statue inside the *pesantren* compound, he added. For this reason, Al Jufri expressed

²³⁴“Pondok Pesantren al-Hadi Dibakar” *Tempo Magazine*, 07/XXIX 17 April 2000.

²³⁵ Formed in 1927, the Alawi Union was meant as an organization for all members of the descendant of the Prophet (sayyids) in Indonesia. It has branch offices all over the country. On the accounts of this organization, see further: Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami Awakening, Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies 1990-1942* (New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1999), 101.

his concern over the escalating violence against al-Hadi. "Here in Pekalongan, as Muslims, we always sustain a tolerant attitude towards them (Shi'a)," he said. Since the last attack on the branch *pesantren* of al-Hadi in Batang in 2000, no similar reaction has ever reoccurred towards *Pesantren* al-Hadi.²³⁶

5. Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates the distinction between two types of Shi'i institutions in Indonesia: IJABI that was set up by the campus circle, and numerous Shi'i foundations, which were privately established by the *ustadh* group across the country. Although both institutions have a common goal, that is, to propagate Shi'ism in the country, their characteristics, strategies and approaches are different.

Besides elaborating various nuances and orientations of both Shi'i institutions in the country, the chapter also showed that the division of the Shi'i elite in Indonesia was not only set off by trivial differences but was notably affected by other factors such as the intellectual formation and socio-political background of their leaders. More importantly, this chapter unfolded the diversity of the Shi'a in contemporary Indonesia, supporting the main argument of the thesis that the Shi'a in Indonesia is not monolithic.

IJABI has an organizational structure similar to that of Muhammadiyah and NU. The most notable distinctiveness of this organization compared with other Shi'i foundations is that it takes Congress as the highest authoritative body. The system ensures that the equal rights of all members are respected and the majority

²³⁶ However, the accounts of the public reactions in general towards Shi'ism in Indonesia will be further discussed in Chapter V.

of voting members is an existing standing rule in decision making. Officially registered as a mass organization, IJABI plays its role in the society more flexibly and within a wide range of activities and regions. Another characteristic of IJABI was that it puts priority on the significance of *akhlaq* (noble ethics) over religious jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Serving as platform for the organization, this feature galvanizes collaboration with other Muslim or non-Muslim religious groups in the country. By doing so, it tends to achieve its goals by promoting pluralism through interfaith dialogues among different religions, culture and ethnicities.

On the other hand, Shi'i foundations of the *ustadh* group emphasize the implementation of *Ja'fariyyah* jurisprudence. Their foundations continue to promote all aspects of Shi'i teachings, showing a conservative attitude, which undoubtedly lessened their ability to fit in the society. In their social activities, they indicated an Iranian inclination with the significant feature of applying the *Wilayat al faqih* concept in the structure of their organizations. This matter was among the main causes of disharmony between the campus circle and the *ustadh* group. The application of this concept is obviously as a logical consequence of their Iranian connection, intellectually or ideologically. As Qom alumni, the *ustadh* group still maintained personal relationships with their former teachers and their institutions received financial and technical assistance from the office of *Marjaiyyat* in Iran. The perpetual dependency may be seen as transnational linkage and a node of the international network of Shi'i organizations in Indonesia.

Regarding what happened to *Pesantren* al-Hadi in Pekalongan, Central Java, it was not an isolated case relating to the Shi'a, because some other similar cases also occurred towards Shi'i institutions in other regions such Bangil and Pasuruan, East Java. In the larger picture, the emergence of the Shi'a in Indonesia, both the

campus circle and the *ustadh* group, definitely raised public concerns because Shi'ism was still regarded as an exogenous Islamic variant, if not deviant group, by predominantly Sunni Muslims in Indonesia. The rapid growth of Shi'ism in Indonesia, on the one hand, could be regarded as an intellectual treasure for Islamic literature and discourse in Indonesia. However, on the other hand, the existence of Shi'a in general has been a shock both in theological and cultural realms, triggering various reactions from the majority Sunni Muslims. This reaction is moving along the continuum line, which has two extreme poles.²³⁷ The first extreme (negative) pole represents those who totally rejected Shi'i views and thoughts. They not only strongly opposed the Shi'a but also urged the government to ban the Shi'a from the society. The other (positive) end, the pole embodies those who accepted the Shi'i teachings. However, between these two poles, a group of people could tolerate the differences within the Shi'a; they neither rejected nor accepted Shi'ism. All of these mixed reactions will be further discussed in the following chapter.

²³⁷Zainuddin A. Rahman and Hamdan Basyar, ed., *Syi'ah dan Politik di Indonesia: Sebuah Penelitian* (Bandung: Mizan, 2000), 189.

CHAPTER V

MIXED REACTIONS:

Amidst Religious and Political Interest

The connection between religion and politics arises as a problem only in a nation which is not religiously homogenous

R.R. Alford²³⁸

1. Introduction

Since their first public appearance in the early 1980s in the country,²³⁹ the Shi'a have presented a challenge to Indonesian Muslims, who have generally been regarded as tolerant and peaceful. Emerging with a school of thought and religious traditions different from the majority, the Shi'i community has offered an alternative way of expressing Islamic identity and thought for the predominantly Sunni Muslims in Indonesia. In fact, the spread of this new Islamic variant among middle-class Muslims in cities and some regional areas created uneasy relations with some local Sunni groups, generating a mixed response from Muslim individuals and the existing Islamic organizations.

²³⁸R.R. Alford, "Religion and Politics", in *Sociology of Religion: Selected Readings*, ed., Roland Robertson (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), 321-33.

²³⁹The first case of Shi'ism came to public notice in Indonesia in 1982 when Abdul Qadir Bafaqih, the leader of *Pesantren* Al Khaerat in Bangsri Village, Jepara, Central Java. He publicly declared that his Islamic thought was Shi'i. See more about this case in Chapter III.

Along with the rapid growth of Shi'i-affiliated institutions during the 1980s, the Shi'a also faced hostile attitudes from local Islamic groups. The resentment towards the Shi'a was clearly observable through seminars, discussions, and debates concerning Shi'ism, which were held in various places in the country. While the New Order government was cautious about the political impact of Iran's revolution, no violent actions against the Shi'a were reported during that period. However, seminars on Sunni-Shi'i discourses became highly controversial, and were often organized deliberately to counter the spread of Shi'i teachings.²⁴⁰ The negative reactions reached boiling point in a national seminar held on 21 September 1997 in Masjid Istiqlal, which was promoted as "*Mengapa Kita Menolak Syi'ah*" (Why we reject the Shi'a). The seminar resulted in a series of recommendations, essentially urging the government to ban Shi'ism in Indonesia and revoke license of all Shi'i foundations and institutions.²⁴¹

After the fall of Soeharto in 1998 and Indonesia's transition to democracy created a favorable climate for minority groups to be more open and confident in holding religious ceremonies in the public sphere, hostilities to the Shi'a remained, and in some cases intensified or became more violent. Physical attacks were directed at Shi'i institutions and schools. For instance, as discussed in the last chapter, in 2000, a branch of the Shi'i *Pesantren* of al-Hadi in Batang, some kilometers away from Pekalongan, Central Java, was burnt down by an unknown crowd, displacing about 60 students (*santri*).

²⁴⁰Zainuddin, *Syi'ah dan Politik*, 189.

²⁴¹Umar Abduh and Abu Huzaifah, eds., *Mengapa Kita Menolak Syi'ah: Kumpulan Makalah dan Kesimpulan Seminar Nasional Sehari tentang Syi'ah* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 1988), 158-162.

There were other cases of public hatred towards the Shi'a during *reformasi*.²⁴² For instance, violence was committed against a Shi'i *pesantren*, Al Ma'hadul Islam (Foundation of Islamic Boarding School-YAPI), located in Kenep-Beji subdistrict, Bangil, East Java. This *pesantren* has repeatedly been the victim of attacks since 2007. Its Chairman Muchsin Assegaf stated that over the last four years, his *pesantren* had been intimidated and threatened dozens of times.

He recalled an incident at midnight when at least 200 people marched to the Mushollah Jurhum in his *pesantren* complex. Their intention was to meet the leader of the *pesantren* in a bid to call him back to the right pathway of Sunni Islam. But, as they found no one, they hurled stones into the Mushollah and damaged the windows of the building. This incident happened after a routine religious gathering with about 700 participants, some kilometers away from the *pesantren*. The congregation hosted an ardent anti-Shi'i prominent of Al Bayyinah, Thohir Alkaf of Tegal in Central Java, as their speaker. During his sermon, Alkaf emphasized his beliefs that not only are the Shi'a infidels but it is permissible to spill their blood, inciting the congregation to take action to curb the Shi'i proliferation in the region.

The Wahid Institute, Jakarta, in 2008,²⁴³ released a report regarding the Shi'i community in Bangil. It said that in the aftermath of attacks on their mosque, the community in Bangil faced new threats as anti-Shi'a sentiment from the *Ahlussunah Waljamaah* (Aswaja) alliance in Bangil and other groups in East Java and Madura increased. The Bangil campaign spread as far as Pasuruan, where a

²⁴² For more about the anti-Shi'a responses see: the Wahid Institute, "Seeding Plural and Peaceful Islam", *Monthly Report on Religious Issues*, Edition VI, 04 January 2008, 4.

http://www.wahidinstitute.org/files/_docs/06.MonthlyRepost-VI-english.pdf (accessed on 28 January 2010)

²⁴³ The Wahid Institute, "Seeding Plural and Peaceful Islam".

banner read: “Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Pasuruan are Followers of Ahlul-sunnah Wal-Jama’ah”. Another, carrying the logo of NU and MUI Pasuruan, exclaimed: “Be Alert to Deviant Sects!!!” Furthermore, the Wahid Institute reported that the 2007 attack and the continual physical and verbal abuse directed at the Shi’i community had forced them to withdraw from society. Very few were prepared to speak publicly about the issues they were facing. Even the destruction of their mosque has been left to their lawyers.

These violent attacks prompt a number of questions. What is the general attitude of Muslims in Indonesia to minority sects within Islam? And what is the response of major Islamic organizations and the MUI?

In order to answer these questions, the chapter seeks to analyze the general reaction of Sunni Muslims to the existence of Shi’a in contemporary Indonesia, focusing on the role of the MUI as semi-official religious body and the Islamic organizations; NU and Muhammadiyah. The chapter examines the role of these Islamic institutions in influencing the opinion of Islamic community towards the Shi’i minority in Indonesia. The chapter argues that the presence of Shi’a in Indonesia is complicated by a number of political and religious aspects. It argues that many of the anti- Shi’a responses are influenced by Wahhabism.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴Wahhabism is a strictly orthodox Sunni Muslim group from Saudi Arabia. They strive to purify Islamic beliefs and reject any innovation occurring after the third century of Islam. The group was influenced by a medieval wave of Islamic reformism, inspired by medieval ulama, Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792). It aims to “regenerate Islam by a return to the tradition represented by the pious forefathers (*al-Salaf al-Salih*).” The foundation of this movement, which is also often referred to as *islah* (reform) and *tajdid* (renewal), was established by a number of classic Salafi articulators, including Ahmad ibn Hanbal (AH 780 – 855) and Ahmad ibn Taymiyya (AH 1263 –1328). With a puritan spirit, ibn al-Wahhab urged his followers, also known as Wahhabis or *Muwahhidun*, to fight against superstitions prevalent in Arabian society and to attack those who claimed to be Muslim but whose behavior was, in their view, un-Islamic. Indeed, they took a hard line in defining who could be regarded as a believer, stating that no deviation from the Sharia was permitted, and they drew a firm distinction between the world of believers and that of unbelievers. For more about

The chapter begins with general public attitude to the Shi'a in Indonesia and provides a backdrop of the current government's standpoint towards this group. Following the discussion of government's standpoint is an analysis of the responses of the MUI and Islamic organizations as representation of the Muslim community in general.

2. General Public Attitude

The general reaction of local Sunni Muslims towards the Shi'a in Indonesia is complex, moving along a continuum ranging from the extremely negative to the moderate. The complexity was coupled to the effects of domestic politics as well as the global political situation, especially relating to the Muslim world.

From a sociological perspective, the reaction of Sunni groups has to be understood in the context of the relationship between the majority and minority. For the majority, the presence of the Shi'i minority in the society was distinguished by their deviation in doctrine and practice from the prevailing religious system.

In this case, it is noteworthy to look at the concept of two German sociologists, Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch, which distinguished two types of religious groups, the church and sect.²⁴⁵ The church is an established body but tends to be conservative, formalistic, and compromises with the authorities, the political and economic elite. It has a strict hierarchy, claiming to hold the monopoly as an authoritative religious body that lay people can depend on, while

Wahhabism see Hamid Algar, *Wahhabism: Critical Essay* (New York: Islamic Publication International. 2002).

²⁴⁵Steeman, Theodore M., "Church, Sect, Mysticism, Denomination Periodological Aspects of Troeltsch's Types", *Sociology of Religion*, Volume 36, Number 3, 1975, 181-204.

the sect is always a minority. This concept is very much applicable to enlighten the dichotomous religious situation between Sunnis and Shi'a in Indonesia. It enables us to visualize a wider picture of Sunni reactions towards the Shi'a, not only in Indonesia but also in other part of the globe. Sunnis symbolize the dominant group and the Shi'a is the minority.

In Indonesia, the history of the country shows that Sunnis have represented a major influential power outside and inside the state's system. As the dominant group, their religious tradition has been established since the twelfth century.²⁴⁶ Scholars argue that wandering Sufis and traders contributed a great deal in the formation of this tradition. Despite speculations that Shi'ism also developed in the region at the same period, some research undoubtedly affirmed that Sunnism has been the most popular Islamic school across the archipelago since the fifteenth century.²⁴⁷ Theologically, Sunnis adhere to the ideas of Imam Al-Asha'ri²⁴⁸ and are committed to the practices of one of four schools of thought in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*): Ash-Shafi'i, Hanafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali. By doing so, they are called *Ahl Sunnah Wal Jama'ah*, meaning that they follow the way (*Sunnah*) of the Prophet Muhammad and hold tight to the unity of Islamic community (*Jama'ah*). The Sunnis, in the forms of organizations or individuals, claim to be the orthodox Islam in Indonesia.

In contrast, the Shi'a have only entered Islamic discourses in contemporary Indonesia after the Iranian revolution of 1979. With adherence to the *Ja'fariyyah Madhhab*, they have constituted a numerical minority in Indonesia. It was "an

²⁴⁶ Azyumardi Azra, "Islamic Thought: Theory, Concept and Doctrine in the Context of Southeast Asian Islam", in *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, ed. Nathan, K.S (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), 3-21.

²⁴⁷ For more discussion about this matter see Chapter II.

²⁴⁸ Al-Asha'ri, well known as Abu al-Hasan al-Asha'ri, was born in Basra in 873.

alien” to local Muslims and considered by some as a threat to the majority because it is, in a sense both doctrinally and institutionally, at odds with the established religious system (Sunnism).²⁴⁹

However, the arrival of the Shi’a to the country still created fresh polarization among Sunni Muslims. Some warmly welcomed this current, even becoming its followers and supported its dissemination in the country. Some just showed sympathetic views but continued their attachment to Sunnism, and some strongly opposed it.

This analysis highlights Indonesian Muslim Sunnis who adopt moderate and defiant attitudes toward the Shi’i minority. For moderate groups, there is no fundamental difference between Shi’ism and Sunnism. The differences can be easily put aside for the sake of a united community. This group includes some leading scholars for instance, Nurcholish Madjid, Abdurrahman Wahid and Amien Rais, all of whom have sympathetic views towards Shi’ism. Quraish Shihab especially has written “*Sunnah-Syiah bergandengan tangan! Mungkinkah? Kajian atas Konsep ajaran dan Pemikiran,*” (Sunnism and Shi’ism are bound hand in hand, Is it possible: An analysis of Concept and Thought).²⁵⁰

Madjid, for instance, was portrayed by Zulkifli as “one of the most persistent defenders of Shi’ism”. The existence of Shi’ism, according to Madjid, should not be regarded as a problem but instead as a reality which gives more colors to the Islamic history and society. On Sunni-Shi’i relations, he points out

²⁴⁹ For more about new religious movements see: Colin Slee, “New Religious Movements and the Churches” in *New Religious Movements Challenge and response*, ed., Bryan Wilson and Jamie Cresswell (London: Routledge, 1999), 165-166.

²⁵⁰ When appointed as the Minister of Religious Affairs at the end of Soeharto’s presidency in early 1998, Quraish Shihab had once been accused of being a Shi’i. But he strongly denied the accusation. See further Zulkifli, “The Struggle of the Shi’is”, 276-277.

that each should have a mutual understanding and respect. Each should learn to recognize the other's existence in the framework of equality and community.²⁵¹

The aforementioned leading Muslim scholars having sympathetic views towards the Shi'a faced accusations of providing a space for the Shi'a to propagate their teachings in Indonesia. Their lenient attitude is not entirely without foundation because they are not ordinary people, even Esposito and John O. Voll called them "makers of contemporary Islam". They are "persons who judged based on reflection and knowledge."²⁵² Their position as public figures as well as Muslim scholars is strategically significant for the existence of Shi'a in Indonesia.

The other groups are those who consider Shi'ism as un-Islamic. Among the most active cluster of anti-Shi'a is Al Bayyinat of Surabaya, which is chaired by a person of Hadramawt origin, Thohir ibn Abdullah Alkaf. Ironically, he is an alumnus of the famous Shi'i *pesantren* of YAPI in Bangil and a former student of the noted Shi'i scholar, Al-Habsyi.²⁵³ Alkaf believes that not only are the Shi'a infidels but also that their blood is eligible to be spilt. He describes, the Shi'a as more dangerous than any other deviant groups, including Ahmadiyah, saying that those groups are visible and obvious while the Shi'a conceal their agenda behind the concept of *taqiyyah*. For this reason, according to him, it is imperative for Muslim scholars to warn the Islamic community about the danger of Shi'ism. He cited the famous Prophetic hadith describing the methods of *Al-amr bi-al-maruf wa-al-nahy an al-munkar* (Commanding right and forbidding wrong).²⁵⁴

²⁵¹Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is", 299.

²⁵²John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press 2001), 4.

²⁵³For more an extensive discussion about Al Habsyi, see: Chapter III.

²⁵⁴In a hadith narrated by Abu Sa'id Al Khudry, the Prophet said: "Whoever sees the forbidden deeds, he must amend it with his hands, if he cannot do it with his hands, he must do it his tongue

In line with this hadith, Alkaf said that the efforts to promote the religious values depend on the situation and condition. "If you have power, just do it," he asserted when being asked about the use of heavy-handed methods in carrying out the *Al-amr bi-al-maruf wa-al-nahy an al-munkar*. "Your son, for instance, does not pray, hit him first, then tell him what wrong and right is and later on give him a dua (prayer)," he said. He did not show reluctance to use violence against those who he considered as infidels. His statement indeed could clearly explain what happened in some areas in Indonesia, especially in East Java, where some Shi'i groups were attacked and assaulted.

Other anti-Shi'i groups include Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia (DDII: Indonesian Islamic Missionary Council),²⁵⁵ Al Irsyad²⁵⁶ and Persis²⁵⁷ and interestingly, these organizations have a close linkage with Wahhabism of Saudi Arabia.

and if he still cannot do it he might use his heart, but that is the weakest faith." See further: Muslim ibn al Hajjaj Al qushayri (875), *Sahih Muslim, Bi Sharh Al-Nawawi*, Volume 2 (Cairo, 1929) pp 21-28.

²⁵⁵DDII was established on 26 February 1967 by Mohammad Natsir (1908-1993), who was a student of Ahmad Hassan, the leader of Persis, and a former leader of the Masyumi party. It views Shi'ism as a heterodox sect and has organized a number of missionary activities for the purpose of protecting Indonesian Muslims from being influenced by Shi'ism teachings.

²⁵⁶Al-Irsyad was founded in 1914. Its attitude against the Shi'a is based on the fact that the central belief of Shi'a is the admiration of the Prophet's family, which is religiously unacceptable for Al Irsyad. In addition, Al-Irsyad is well known as a reformist organization with strong relationship with Saudi Arabia. The reformist character of its religious doctrines are strongly influenced by Wahhabism, and there are strong historical and psychological factors which contribute to its prominent role in Indonesia's anti-Shi'i movement. It came as no surprise, then, that during Al-Irsyad's 36th National Conference, held in Pekalongan, Central Java, on 23-26 October 1996, the organisation appealed to the government to prohibit the spread of Shi'ism. See more at Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is".

²⁵⁷The most notable study on Persis has been done by Howard Federspiel (1970), which perfectly illuminates this reformist Islamic organisation. It was founded in 1923 and Ahmad Hasan (born in Singapore of Indian origin) joined in 1924. In its theological nature, Persis holds views similar to Wahhabism, appealing for pristine Islam. For more about this organization see: Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam; Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century* (Singapore: Equinox Publishing, 2009).

Especially regarding DDII, Noorhaidi Hasan argued persuasively that this organization shifted to be a primary agent of anti-Shi'a following the rapid change in the political map in the Middle East as an impact of the Iranian revolution in 1979.²⁵⁸ In return for its attitude, DDII received more generous influxes of money from Saudi Arabia than before. With the money from Saudi Arabia, DDII could increase its Islamic projects significantly, including the construction of some new mosques, orphanages, and hospitals; the founding of madrassas (religious schools); the distribution of free copies of the Qur'an and other books; the training of preachers; and similar works.²⁵⁹ On the other around, this also allowed Saudi Arabia to promote its religious and political agenda in a bid to spread its influence and enhance its prestige as the so-called custodian of Islam's holy sites.

For this reason, despite longstanding religious disputes between Sunnism and Shi'ism in ancient Islamic history, it can be argued that the hostility of DDII or other similar organizations to the Shi'a in contemporary Indonesia was more stirred by political than religious aspects. Evidently, these organizations have indirectly been involved in a global competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran over the primacy of the Muslim world. In this competition, Saudi Arabia has long been obsessed to be the centre of the Muslim world. On the other side, Iran emerged in the late 1970s as a new Islamic state inspiring the glory of Islam across the whole world, claiming to be the leading Islamic state.²⁶⁰ The rivalry between these two countries could be seen respectively from the statements of each

²⁵⁸Noorhaidi Hasan, "The Salafi Movement in Indonesia: Transnational Dynamics and Local Development", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Volume 27, Number 1, 2007, 83-94.

²⁵⁹*Ibid.*

²⁶⁰For more about the competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia see: Jacob Goldberg, "Saudi Arabia and the Iranian Revolution: the Religious Dimension" in *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World*, ed. David Menashiri (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1990), 154-170.

government. One of the antagonistic messages of Khomeini to Saudi describes Wahhabi ulama as “to create factionalism and division between the world’s Muslim” and “to eliminate the history of Islam”. In response, the Saudi’s government accused Iran of being an exporter of terrorism and imperialism.²⁶¹

In this regard, scholars suggested that the dissemination of Wahhabism has direct connections to a worldwide anti-Shi’i movement, including in Indonesia. This reality was undeniable and the effort of Saudi Arabia to spread its religious movement into the international network, I believe, is not merely for the sake of enhancement of Islam. It could be easily regarded as a source of tension among Islamic movements for political gains to support their monarchy, which is totally incompatible with the Islamic principles.

Analyzing anti-Shi’i organizations in Indonesia, one may find parallel patterns in their features. They are certainly the reformist groups, induced by Wahhabism, adopting puritan views and tending to be radical. Azra’s description of these groups was entirely reasonable: “their appeal for the pure and pristine Islam practiced in the time of the Prophet and his companions” and, on the interpretation and understanding of Islam, they tend to be literal.²⁶² The most worrying characteristic of these groups is that, to reach their purposes, they often use a radical approach or even violence, as was suggested by Thohir Alkaf of Al Bayyinat above.

²⁶¹Zulkifli “The Struggle of the Shi’is”, 262.

²⁶²Azra, “Islamic Thought”, 3-21.

3. Government Responses

Although most of its population are Muslims, Indonesia is not an Islamic state and the constitution guarantees religious freedom for all citizens. Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution mentions, the state guarantees the freedom of each citizen to adhere to his/her own religion and to worship according to his/her religion and belief.

In theory, this means that each citizen of Indonesia has a constitutional guarantee to freely implement the practices of their own religions and beliefs. However, since only six religions – Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism – are recognized, it seems the government wants to maintain the right to define what constitutes a religion in Indonesia and to ensure through its policies that all citizens follow an acceptable religious faith, which constitutes the religious mainstreams in the country.

It is crucial, to my view, to emphasize the term mainstream here because it is very decisive in identifying something that is legally recognized by the state and acceptable by the community. For religious discourses in Indonesia, this term is applicable to determine the boundaries of what one professes. By this term, the liberty of religion has a narrower meaning in the government policy and is defined as the freedom to believe in only the official religion.

In many cases, disputes arise when a particular religious practice or belief not within the mainstream faith is in question. Some religious minority groups not attached to the mainstream, like Ahmadiyyah, Baha'i and the Shi'a are automatically prohibited.²⁶³ If so, the religious situation in the country seems

²⁶³Martin van Bruinessen, "Gerakan sempalan di kalangan umat Islam Indonesia: latar belakang sosial-budaya" *Ulumul Qur'an* vol. III no. 1, 1992, 16-27.

fragile because, with different approaches, a single doctrine of any religion might have multiple interpretations. The minorities are subject to discrimination and hostilities from the existing dominant groups. The best example for the case is Ahmadiyah in Indonesia. The hostility towards this community is because the group is accused of deviating from the main tenets of Islam by recognizing another prophet after Muhammad.

Admittedly, however, unlike Ahmadiyah, which has been judged by the orthodox Islamic organizations as un-Islamic, the religious status of Shi'a is currently still uncertain. That means none of the major Islamic institutions in Indonesia, whether NU, Muhammadiyah or MUI, has so far clearly decided that the Shi'a are heretical. However, it is not impossible that, in the future, this will change.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) still regards the Shi'i community as the same as other religious groups or movements. "We do not discriminate one from the other. They will always be welcome if they want to establish a good relationship with us," said the Secretary of the Directorate General of Islam's Social Guidance, Mudzakir.²⁶⁴ He stressed that the case of Shi'a in Indonesia is far different from that of Ahmadiyah, which has been punished by the MUI as a deviant group. The government always looks at the aspiration of the Islamic community in general. "There is no problem with Shi'ism at all," he said.

In addition, the Head of the Research and Development Body of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Balitbang, Depag), Professor Atho Mudzhar, said that, as a religious group, the proliferation of Shi'ism in Indonesia poses no problem as long as it does not disseminate any particular political doctrine against

²⁶⁴Ahmad Mudzakir was interviewed by the writer on July 2009.

the state ideology, *Pancasila*. “If they do not uphold a political belief which is against the state ideology, we have no problem with them,” he said.²⁶⁵

According to Mudzhar, one of his department’s responsibilities is to secure the harmony of religious life (*kerukunan beragama*) in the country. The ministry is responsible for maintaining the harmonious relationship among believers of different religions and faiths in Indonesia. Creating harmony of religious life in an atmosphere of mutual respect and a spirit of pluralism is a national development objective in the field of religion.²⁶⁶

Besides conducting various programs encompassing interreligious dialogues among various religious backgrounds, the ministry usually closely monitors at the national level any religious developments against possible disruption of the harmonious relationship. It also sometimes directly involves in an investigation over controversial religious groups and subsequently produces a formal report and opinions for the central government.

Within this framework, the government will never limit the rights of any religious groups to live but would instead strive to maintain the social stability and security. “If there is any violent act against a minority in the country, it is not the government’s initiative but a criminal initiative,” he stressed.

4. The MUI Responses

a. Historical Background

²⁶⁵ Atho M. Mudzhar was interviewed on July 2009.

²⁶⁶ Research and Development Agency, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Badan Litbang Depag), *Kompilasi Peraturan Perundang-Undangan Kerukunan Hidup Umat Beragama* (Jakarta: Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Agama, 2008), 10.

Prior to analyzing the MUI response to the Shi'a, it is worth noting the Council's historical background and socio-religious role in issuing fatwas. Actually, the religious body has a complicated position; it is caught in the middle of the interests of the government and the Muslim community.²⁶⁷ The intimate relationship with the government raises an assumption that the possible political interference on any fatwas the MUI produced is unavoidable. Besides that, due to its financial dependence on the government, in most cases, the council more favorably serves the interest of the government.

The MUI established collaborations with some important governmental institutions, like MORA and the National Family Planning Coordinating Board (BKKBN) and the Indonesian Armed Forces (Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia:ABRI). Especially with ABRI, it set up a joint committee of *Komunikasi Sosial* (social communication), aimed at dealing with religion related issues and security.²⁶⁸

The Soeharto regime established the MUI in 1975 with the purpose of providing the government and the Islamic community with religious recommendations and decrees (fatwas) on issues related to religion as well socio-political problems. However, some scholars believe it was mainly created as a means of mobilizing Muslim support for the government's development

²⁶⁷ Atho M. Mudzhar, *Fatwa-fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia: sebuah studi tentang pemikiran Hukum Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: INIS, 1993), 112.

²⁶⁸ A good example of how this collaboration worked was in the case of using the term '*Komando Jihad*' (Jihad commando), which was in 1981 widely used by ABRI to label violent political actions carried out by certain individual Muslims. The MUI saw the use of the term might discredit the Muslims in general so it asked the government to stop using it. The government agreed. About this matter see more at Mudzhar, *Fatwa-fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, 60.

policies.²⁶⁹ In playing its societal roles, the council produces fatwas and other types of fatwa-like texts, which also express certain religious opinions. For example, *Taushiiyyah* (advice) *Tazkirah* (admonition), *Pernyataan Sikap* (Position Statement), *Himbauan* (Appeal) and *Sumbangan Pemikiran* (contribution to thought). *Taushiiyyah* is not regarded as having the same authority as a fatwa because the fatwa is surrounded by stricter procedures.²⁷⁰

Comparable to the same institutions in some other Islamic countries,²⁷¹ the council is a semi-official religious body although it consists of ulama independently representing major Islamic currents in Indonesia. However, in order to give it more credence in society, Soeharto empowered the MUI with the

²⁶⁹ Martin van Bruinessen, “Indonesia's ulama and politics: caught between legitimising the status quo and searching for alternatives”, *Prisma — The Indonesian Indicator* (Jakarta, 1990), No. 49, 52-69.

²⁷⁰ There are five aspects distinguishing a fatwa from a *taushiiyyah*. First, a fatwa is produced by a special commission (Komisi Fatwa dan Hukum), whereas a *taushiiyyah* is issued by the Leadership Board (Dewan Pimpinan), member meetings, conferences, or the Islamic Brotherhood Forum (Forum Ukhuwwah Islamiyah)—the latter an institution established by the MUI to facilitate coordination with leaders of Islamic organizations at the national level. Second, a fatwa is, in theory, much stronger than a *taushiiyyah*. Third, a fatwa deals with legal and dogmatic issues, whereas mostly a *taushiiyyah* is concerned with social, economic and political ones. Fourth, the official textual format of an MUI fatwa suggests that its authority is much greater than that of a *taushiiyyah* as it duplicates the format of a governmental decision or law, and uses formal phrases such as “referring to,” “considering,” and “it is decided that.” Some fatwas also end with the following note: “the fatwa is valid from the date of its issuance.” By contrast, the format of a *taushiiyyah* is less formal and official, more closely resembling a press release or general letter. See more at: Moch Nur Ichwan, “Ulama, State and Politics: The Council of Indonesian 'Ulama in the Post-Soeharto Era” (paper presented at the workshop Fatwa and the Dissemination of Religious Authority in 20th Century Indonesia, Leiden, October 2002).

²⁷¹ Piers Gillespie, “Current Issues in Indonesian Islam: Analyzing the 2005 Council Of Indonesian Ulama Fatwa No. 7 Opposing Pluralism, Liberalism And Secularism”, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18:2 (2007) , 202–240. In his paper, Gillespie reveals some similar Islamic institutions to the MUI like the Majilis Agama Islam in Malaysia, the Council of Islamic Ideology in Pakistan, and the World Muslim League in Makka. For more discussion about such institutions, see M. Masud, Brinkley Messick and David Powers, “Muftis, Fatwas and Islamic Interpretation” in *Islamic Legal Interpretation: Muftis and their Fatwas*, ed., M. Masud and David Powers (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

right to monopolize the religious orthodoxy as to guard the Muslim community against heterodox doctrines.²⁷²

Due to this position, the MUI's neutrality has always been in question among scholars. For instance, M.B. Hooker suggests that the nature of the council was to support the government and justify the government policy and programs. Some fatwas, such as on the breeding of frogs and rabbits for food, were controversial and several Muslims claim that the council tended to legitimize the government policies rather than perform its religious duty.²⁷³ Martin van Bruinessen was more assertive, describing the council as a highly political body. He pointed out several cases showing the MUI's political games. An excellent example was the *Porkas* affair and the defense of the chairman of the committee, Ibrahim Hosen.²⁷⁴ He holds that Ibrahim Hosen's defense of the lottery was politically convenient, despite being in conformity with "traditional fiqh", but it was however, completely at odds with the public opinion among Indonesia's Muslims. Both NU and Muhammadiyah declared it a form of gambling and therefore *haram* ('forbidden').²⁷⁵

Ibrahim Hosen rejected accusations that MUI was an instrument of the government, emphasizing that the council only performed its religious obligation to answer questions raised, either by the government or by the society, about any

²⁷²Gillespie, "Current Issues In Indonesian Islam".

²⁷³M.B. Hooker, "Islam and Medical Science: Evidence from Malaysian and Indonesian Fatwas", *Studia Islamika*, 4/4 (1997), 16.

²⁷⁴Ibrahim Hosen was the chairman of the MUI fatwa committee, serving from 1981 to 2000. The word *Porkas* was derived from an English word "forecast" that means to predict the ongoing local soccer games. On December 28, 1985, the lottery tickets of *Porkas* was the first time introduced, circulated, and sold. This lottery was intended to raise funds to support the promotion and development of Indonesia's sports activities. People who bought the lottery coupon were asked to guess every soccer game by marking M (*Menang*: wins), S (*Seri*: draws) or K (*Kalah*: loses). One could win 1,000 Australia dollars of the total prize.

²⁷⁵Bruinessen, "Indonesia's ulama and politics".

religious matters.²⁷⁶ Hosen highlighted some of the MUI fatwas on vasectomy and tubectomy as examples showing that the ulama did not always support the government.²⁷⁷ Nevertheless, despite this rejection, undoubtedly, the council has not been entirely neutral and has somewhat served the interests of the government. As cited by Gillespie, Hooker's description of the relationship between the MUI and the New Order government as one in which a fatwa was not wholly government-oriented, but in which 'the hand of government' remained over the MUI is an accurate representation.²⁷⁸

For this reason, it is difficult to rebuff criticism that the establishment of the MUI was meant to help the regime control Islamic political activities in Indonesia and in a bid to smooth all development policies. In fact, in the early 1970s, Soeharto required a political stability for the sake of the national economic development while he was facing Muslim opposition. To tame those Islamic activists, the government needed a sort of religious legitimization of its developmental policies from a highly respected religious body such as the MUI.²⁷⁹ Similarly, such a stamp was also sought by the government when it wanted to crackdown on the Shi'a and other Islamic movements emerging in the 1980s.

Despite the growing awareness of the dangers of politicizing religion in that way, such a practice has been common in Indonesian contemporary politics

²⁷⁶Nadirsyah Hosen, "Behind the Scenes: Fatwas of Majelis Ulama", *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 15:2 (2004), 147–179.

²⁷⁷A fatwa prohibiting vasectomy and tubectomy was issued on 13 June 1979 and this was seen as being against the government's the family planning program. However, as a whole package, the MUI justified family planning program.

²⁷⁸M.B. Hooker, *Islam: Social Change through Contemporary Fatawa* (Crow's Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2003), 240, as cited by Gillespie, Piers, "Current Issues in Indonesian Islam", 202–240.

²⁷⁹Mudzhar, *Fatwa-fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, see also: Nico J.G Kaptein, "The Voice of the Ulama: Fatwas and Religious Authority in Indonesia", *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 125: 115-130.

and the MUI's response about the Shi'a can be singled out as an example.

Therefore, I argue that the council's response in the form of *taushiiyyah*, issued in 1984, was politically motivated.

b. Political Pressure

In light of its close relationship with the government, the MUI's response to the Shi'a will and should be analyzed within the aforementioned context of political as well as the socio-religious environment at that time. In order to conduct an analysis on the MUI position and its political context, it is important to focus the discussion on the MUI's *taushiiyyah*, which was issued at the end of its annual national meeting on 8 March 1984 because it warned Indonesian Muslims to be mindful of Shi'ism. The meeting itself was attended by 150 ulama from all over the country and officially opened by the Minister of Religious affairs, Munawir Sjadzali.

The *taushiiyyah* has stressed five distinctions of religious argument between the Shi'a and the Sunnis. Firstly, the Shi'a reject hadiths narrated by other than the *Ahl al-Bayt* (members of the Prophet's family), while the Sunnis do not discriminate against any hadith as long as the transmitters are reliable. Secondly, the Shi'a regard an imam as *ma'sum* (infallible: free from making mistakes),²⁸⁰ while the Sunnis consider an imam is an ordinary person who is capable of committing sinful acts or mistakes. Thirdly, the Shi'a do not recognize *ijma'*²⁸¹

²⁸⁰The conception that the imam must be fully immune (*ma'sum*) from sin and error (infallible) is fundamental to Shi'i thought. More information about *ma'sum* can be found online: Madelung, W. "Imama", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman; , Th. Bianquis; , C.E. Bosworth; , E. van Donzel; and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill 2011, Australian National University, available online: http://www.brillonline.nl.virtual.anu.edu.au/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-0369 (accessed on 02 December 2011)

²⁸¹*Ijma'* is an Arabic term referring to the consensus of the Muslim community. Technically it is "the unanimous doctrine and opinion of the recognized religious authorities at any given time". See

without approval of an imam, while the Sunnis regard it as an independent agreement among ulama without any need for the approval of the imam. In fact, the Sunnis do not recognize the concept of imamate. Fourthly, the Shi'a believe the establishment of an Islamic leadership or government is one of the principles of Islam, while the Sunnis have no preference for any system of political leadership as long as it serves and protects public interests. Fifthly, the Shi'a do not recognize the leadership of Abu Bakar, Umar ibn al-Khattab and Othman ibn Affan while the Sunnis recognize them, including Ali ibn Abi Thalib. At the end of the *taushiiyyah*, it reminded Indonesian Muslims to protect themselves from any influences of the Shi'i doctrines.²⁸²

Unsurprisingly, the issuance of the *taushiiyyah* invited curiosity among scholars. In fact, during the early 1980s, the Shi'i concept (Shi'ism) as a theological doctrine in Islam was still not popular among the ordinary Indonesian Muslims. Except Muslim scholars and academics, ordinary Muslims in the country mostly had not yet realized the dissemination of Shi'ism. *Tempo* in its media report even raised a question about the existence of the Shi'i followers in Indonesia.²⁸³ The question was: why was it necessary for MUI to issue the religious advice while most of the Muslim community in general was not fully aware about Shi'a?

Taking into account the position of MUI with the Soeharto regime, it is obvious that the reason behind the issuance of the *taushiiyyah* was to support the

more about it available online Bernand, M. "Idjma." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman; , Th. Bianquis; , C.E. Bosworth; , E. van Donzel; and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill 2011, Australian National University, available online: http://www.brillonline.nl.virtual.anu.edu.au/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-0350 (accessed on 02 December 2011)

²⁸²Mudzhar, *Fatwa-fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, 131.

²⁸³“Syiah, Kalau-Kalau Datang”, *Tempo Magazine*, 17 March 1984.

<http://majalah.tempointeraktif.com/id/arsip/1984/03/17/AG/mbm.19840317.AG42472.id.html> (accessed on 02 December 2011)

government policy regarding the possible export of revolutionary ideas from Iran. Despite using classical and theological arguments, the *taushiiyyah* itself had political objectives.²⁸⁴ The intention of the government to use local religious influence against the spread of Shi'ism in the country had been well signposted by Minister Munawir Sjadzali. In his opening remarks, the minister referred to "a group or a country... We have to admit trying to export the revolution, including to Indonesia." Indeed, one might recollect some cases associated with the "spirit of Iran", such as the Iranian Embassy's magazine *Yamul Quds* and the Bangsri case.

As discussed earlier, in the wake of the Iranian revolution in 1979, the New Order government was confronted with the dilemma of wishing to control undesirable impacts of the revolution while not harming its relations with Tehran.²⁸⁵ The regime regarded the emergent Shi'a in early 1980s as a threat to its secular government. For this reason, the government closely examined their movement and linked them to the image of extremism and intolerance. The government even described the group as having subversive or "deviant" religious ideas that sought to destroy true Islam.²⁸⁶ In the words of Bruinessen, the government perceived the growing Shi'a in Indonesia as potential opposition and an intolerable heresy.²⁸⁷ In this case, the government worried that the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, which successfully toppled the secular regime of Shah Pahlavi and installed an Islamic state, might inspire young Muslims in Indonesia

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Fred R. von der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam, Interaction between Southeast Asia and the Middle East* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1993), 67.

²⁸⁶ Mehden, "Malaysian Indonesian Islamic Movements and the Iranian Connection", in *The Iranian Revolution: its Global Impacts*. ed., John L Esposito (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1990), 244.

²⁸⁷ Bruinessen, "Indonesia's ulama and politics".

to do the same.²⁸⁸ Instead of using heavy-handed policy to solve the problem of Shi'a, the government tended to use the influence of local religious figures on the grounds of preventing international attention.

Regarding the effects of the *taushiiyyah*, like any other of MUI's religious opinions, despite having no coercive power, most of the Muslim community still regards it as imperative.²⁸⁹ Its consequences still can be seen nowadays. However, some scholars had a different assessment. Zulkifli saw it as significant for the Shi'a in Indonesia because it did not decide Shi'ism to be a false brand of Islam whose teachings deviate from the orthodox Islam. By implication then, the existing Shi'a can, *de jure*, practice their beliefs and carry out their activities.²⁹⁰ Mudzhar holds that, despite its main purpose to serve politics and security, the MUI *taushiiyyah* on the Shi'a received a high degree of publicity but triggered no controversy.²⁹¹ However, it is important to emphasize here that Mudzhar's study was limited to the time frame of 1975-1988. Understandably, he did not examine the imminent aftermath of this *taushiiyyah* in the following years.

In my view, however, it is important to see broader social consequences of that *taushiiyyah*, especially for the Shi'i community nowadays. Besides the clear political point behind it as a result of the Soeharto pressure during the New Order era, the MUI *taushiiyyah* 1984 on the Shi'a has had far-reaching effects until the present. Only few Muslims are currently well informed that the MUI issued only a *taushiiyyah* which, in fact, is less commanding than a fatwa. Despite the absence of a clear statement about the Shi'i religious status, whether the group is deviant or

²⁸⁸Mudzhar, *Fatwa-fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, 133.

²⁸⁹Nadirsyah Hosen, "Fatwa and Politics in Indonesia" in *Sharia and Politics in Indonesia*, eds. Arskal Salim and Azymuradi Azra (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), 168.

²⁹⁰Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shi'is", 267.

²⁹¹Mudzhar, *Fatwa-fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, 123.

infidel, the *taushiyyah* is potentially misused by certain anti-Shi'a groups. The fear that it would be misinterpreted is reasonable. Some anti-Shi'a groups have twisted it by saying that the MUI has declared the Shi'a as deviant or even infidels, justifying to resort to violence. As a minority, the Shi'i community worried that it would undergo a similar experience as Ahmadiyah.

e. Ambivalence

Struggling in the years after the New Order era over the need to reassess its position in the society, the MUI seems to have shown an ambivalent response towards the Shi'a in contemporary Indonesia. As no official statement is specifically directed at the group, key figures of MUI showed conflicting attitudes; some elements influenced by hardliners have appeared unfriendly while the dominant ulama are still indicating a moderate attitude towards the Shi'a. Thus I suggest in this account that, while in the New Order the Shi'a faced political pressure from the government, in the *reformasi* era they have been encountering the menace of Islamic hardliner groups of Wahhabism.

Attempting to change its paradigm in the *reformasi* era, the council distances itself from the government, seeking to align with Muslim aspirations.²⁹² However, this dynamic process has provided a chance for a small group of Islamic radical groups to penetrate into the MUI ranks. This group, generally affiliated to the transnational movement of the Middle East, especially Wahhabism, pushed Islamist agendas, undermining Indonesia's tolerance and threatening religious and ethnic minorities, including the Shi'a. Understandably, a scholar from the

²⁹²Ichwan, "Ulama, State and Politics".

University of Melbourne, Tim Lindsey, describes the MUI as the increasingly conservative semi-official council of religious scholars.²⁹³

The phenomena became obvious when Cholil Ridwan of Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Missionary Council; DDII), Ismail Yusanto of Hizbut Tahrir, Mohammad Al Khaththath, former Hizbut Tahrir executive²⁹⁴ and Amin Djamaluddin of LPPI (*Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengkajian Islam*), an institution that conducts researches on deviant groups in Islam,²⁹⁵ were allowed to have an access to the formation of the body which would determine the management of

²⁹³Tim Lindsey, "Hardline Islam a bigger threat than terrorists", *The Australian*, 07 July 2011. <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/opinion/hardline-islam-a-bigger-threat-than-terrorists/story-e6frgd0x-1226089230379> (accessed on 03 December 2011)

²⁹⁴ International Crisis Group suggests that Cholil Ridwan and Muhammad Al-Khaththath are catalyst people between the MUI's institutional role and its ties to street protests. Cholil, who went on the executive board of MUI in July 2005, is a member of Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII) and head of a conservative *pesantren* coalition that was a founding member of Forum Umat Islam Indonesia. He is also deputy head of the Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Muslim World, KISDI, a group that in 1998 was closely associated with Soeharto's son-in-law and senior military commander, Prabowo. He has been involved in major street demonstrations against Ahmadiyah. Al-Khaththath, former chairman of Hizb ut-Tahrir is deputy secretary of the MUI's *dawaa* (religious outreach, *dakwah* in Indonesian spelling) committee.

²⁹⁵LPPI is a small, Saudi-funded think tank devoted to exposing and dismantling deviant sects. It is headed by Amin Djamaluddin, a member of the conservative West Java-based salafi organisation, Persatuan Islam (Persis). Claiming to have researched those religious minority groups, LPPI distributed many publications and held seminars in order to expose how deviant these groups were. This organization is the only one that has systematically targeted the bureaucracy, by lobbying governmental organizations such as the Attorney's General office, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the MUI. Djamaluddin was appointed by the MUI to represent the organization in the meeting of Bakorpakem (Badan Koordinasi Pengawas Aliran Kepercayaan Masyarakat: Coordinating Board for Monitoring Mystical Beliefs in Society), a board set up in the dictatorship of Soeharto, to investigate Ahmadiyya, that was attended by officers from the attorney general's office, National Intelligence Bureau (BIN), National Army (TNI), National Police (POLRI), Ministry of House Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MORA, and Culture and Tourism Office. For instance, in the case of Ahmadiyah, Djamaluddin presented some data he found related to the Ahmadiyah and he seemed to be the only one who brought discourse on how deviant the Ahmadiyah were. He represented the MUI in a hearing with commission VIII of the Indonesian parliament and presented his research on the Ahmadiyah in support of the decision made by Bakorpakem on Ahmadiyah. For more about Ahmadiyah see, International Crisis Group (ICG), *update briefing on Indonesia: Implications of the Ahmadiyah Decree*, (ICG, Jakarta/Brussel 2008) available online at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-east-asia/indonesia/B078-indonesia-implications-of-the-ahmadiyah-decree.aspx> (accessed on 03 December 2011)

MUI in 2005-2010.²⁹⁶ In relation to the Shi'a, Ridwan and Djamaluddin often paraded hostility against the Shi'i minority on behalf of their MUI position. On several different occasions, for instance, Ridwan urged the government to ban all activities of the minority group because he considered the Shi'a to be heretic.²⁹⁷ Meanwhile, Djamaluddin had gained a high profile with his anti-Shi'a campaigns when he organized a national seminar "*Kenapa Kita Menolak Syiah*" at Istiqlal Mosques in 1997. Interestingly, both Ridwan and Djamaluddin have a similar Persis (*Persatuan Islam*) background and the Persis has been heavily influenced by Arab reformist Muhammad Abdul Wahab, the founder of Wahhabism.

In fact, there are conflicting attitudes of MUI leaders towards the Shi'a. On the one hand, they showed an extremely negative attitude, upheld by several figures like Ridwan and Djamaluddin, who take part in anti-Shi'i activities. On the other hand, some still tend to be moderate like Professor Umar Shihab, another MUI chairman.²⁹⁸

Shihab's tolerance can be inferred from his statements and attitude. He was invited by the Iranian government to visit Iran, leading an eight member delegation from the council, including the chairman of MUI's foreign relations committee, Saleh Daulay. During the week-long visit, the delegation paid courtesy

²⁹⁶ Ismail Hasani & Bonar Tigor Naipospos, eds., *The Faces of Islam Defenders* (Pustaka Masyarakat Setara, Jakarta, 2010), 114-117.

²⁹⁷ "Umat Islam Bersatu Menolak Syi'ah", *Buana News*, 10 Juni 2011. <http://www.buana-news.com/2011/06/umat-islam-bersatu-menolak-syiah.html> (accessed on 05 December 2011)

²⁹⁸ Umar Shihab was born from a sayyid family in Rapparang, South Sulawesi, on July 2, 1939. He obtained his bachelor degree from the state Islamic Institute (IAIN) of Alaudin, Makassar in 1966, master degree from Al-Azhar University of Cairo in 1968 and doctorate from the University of Hasanuddin in Islamic Legal Studies in 1988. He was active in various organizations including: PII (Indonesian Islamic Student) South Sulawesi, Makassar Branch HMI and the student council of IAIN Alaudin. He also widely assumed academic and political positions including Vice-dean of the IAIN Alaudin, South Sulawesi Provincial legislator, Member of the MPR-RI, the chairman of the MUI South Sulawesi and is now Chairman of the MUI Centre.

calls on the Iranian foreign minister, the minister of Haj Affairs and some senior Iranian clerics. It was during the visit that Shihab told local press that Shi'ism was one of the recognized and legal *madhhabs* in Islam.²⁹⁹ His statement sparked negative reactions from the opposing sides in Indonesia. A few days after that, the MUI board made a clarification, saying that Shihab's statement did not represent the central board's position but his personal views.³⁰⁰ This case explicitly demonstrated an indication of the strength of the pressure from the Islamic hardliners in the council.

In regard to the MUI *taushiiyyah* of 1984, Shihab pointed out that it did not mean to judge Shi'ism as deviant, just exposed the differences in Islam. "If the Islamic world has already accepted Shi'ism, why should the MUI refuse it?" he said.³⁰¹ He emphasized that, nowadays, it is not necessary to debate differences between Sunnism and Shi'ism, and labeling Shi'ism as deviant is wrong since they also can go to Mecca and Medina, Saudi Arabia, to perform the Hajj.³⁰²

Shihab was not alone. The chairman of MUI's foreign relations committee, Saleh Daulay,³⁰³ has also demonstrated a tolerant attitude towards Shi'ism and the

²⁹⁹“Ketua MUI: Syiah Sah sebagai Mazhab Islam,” *Darut Taqrib*, 30 April 2011. <http://www.darut-taqrib.org/berita/2011/04/30/ketua-mui-syiah-sah-sebagai-mazhab-islam> (accessed on 03 December 2011)

³⁰⁰“Sidang Pleno MUI Memutuskan, Pernyataan Umar Shihab Tentang Syi'ah Tidak Mewakili MUI”, *Fajar Islam online*, 16 May 2011. <http://fajrulislam.wordpress.com/2011/05/16/sidang-pleno-mui-memutuskan-pernyataan-umar-shihab-tentang-syi%E2%80%99ah-tidak-mewakili-mui/> (accessed 03 December 2011)

³⁰¹ “Syiah Bukan Aliran Sesat”, *Jurnal Syiah*, 07 April 2008. <http://syiahnews.wordpress.com/2010/01/01/fatwa-mui-syi%E2%80%99ah-bukan-aliran-sesat/> (accessed 01 January 2010).

³⁰²“Bela MUHSIN, Umar Shihab Sebut Sunni dan Syiah Bersaudara,” *Hidayatullah.com*, 21 June 2011. <http://www.hidayatullah.com/read/17628/undefined> (accessed 02 December 2011)

³⁰³ Daulay is Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Youth Organization for 2010-2015. Completing his bachelor degree at University of North Sumatra (USU) in 1997, he furthered his graduate study at the State Islamic Institute of Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta in 1998. He continued his education to the

Shi'a. He paid a visit to Iran saying that Indonesia needs to learn more from Iran because Iran is culturally older than Indonesia. He has been often invited to Iranian diplomatic receptions and attended the embassy's cultural exhibitions.³⁰⁴ His friendly relationship with the Iranian Embassy in Jakarta was obvious. On his visit to Iran, he met senior Shi'i cleric, Ayatollah Ali Tashkiri, who said the religious differences between Sunnism and Shi'ism should not hinder the unity of the Muslim world. In his response, Daulay appreciated Tashkiri's statement. "The split among Muslim groups was sometimes triggered by insignificant misunderstandings among them. Many groups of Muslims do not want to study and understand the teachings of other groups," explained Daulay.³⁰⁵ One might say that Daulay's statement was part of a diplomatic context suitable to Daulay's position as the chairman of MUI's foreign relations but his point of view exhibits sympathy towards Shi'ism.

Besides that, in a recent interview,³⁰⁶ the chairman of the MUI's Fatwa Committee, Dr. Anwar Ibrahim, saw the proliferation of Shi'ism in Indonesia still within the corridor of Islam. He admitted, however, there was an element of Shi'ism that might possibly be considered as *ghulat*.³⁰⁷ "So far, there has been no

doctoral level at the same institution. In May 2007, Daulay received a scholarship from the Ford Foundation for studying at the Colorado State University in the United States at the master level.

³⁰⁴ "Indonesia-Iran Selenggarakan Festival Seni Budaya Al-Quran", *Antara News*, 2 August 2011. <http://www.antaranews.com/berita/269786/indonesia-iran-selenggarakan-festival-seni-budaya-al-quran> (accessed 07 December 2011)

³⁰⁵ "Perbedaan Paham Keagamaan Tak Menghalangi Indonesia dan Iran Bekerja Sama", *Rakyat Merdeka online*, 25 April 2011. <http://www.rakyatmerdekaonline.com/news.php?id=25189> (accessed 06 December 2011)

³⁰⁶ Anwar Ibrahim, the chairman of MUI Fatwa Committee, was interviewed on July 2009.

³⁰⁷ *Ghulat* is a term referring to individuals accused of exaggeration (*ghulu*) in religion. During the early period of Islam, this group had speculated a wide range of different doctrines within the general Shi'i political and theological orientation. For instance, they denied the demise of Ali ibn Talib, expecting his return in here later. See further: Hodgson, M.G.S. "GḤulāt (singular, Gḥālī)." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman; , Th. Bianquis; C.E. Bosworth; E.

public concern or complaints about Shi'i teaching in Indonesia. It is only an extreme group that would certainly create conflict in the society," he said. Ibrahim's statement might illustrate the position of the central board in regard to the proliferation of Shi'ism in Indonesia. As long as the presence of Shi'a in Indonesia does not create public concern, the MUI would regard it as of no matter. This statement reflected a more relaxed attitude in comparison with that of the previous two decades.

5. Major Islamic Organizations

NU is one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, claiming to have 40 million members. It enjoys a reputation for fostering pluralism in Indonesian society. Since its establishment in 1926, NU represents the moderate Muslims in Indonesia. It upholds *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-jama'a* (aswaja)³⁰⁸ as its religious ideological concept, meaning that its members follow the Prophet's traditions and *Ijma'* (the consensus of the Muslim community).³⁰⁹

Upholding this concept, NU develops such principles as *tawassut* (moderation), *tawazzun* (equilibrium), *tasammuh* (tolerance) that enable its members to be moderate and appreciate the principles of pluralism and

van Donzel; and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill 2010, Australian National University, available online: http://www.brillonline.nl.virtual.anu.edu.au/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-2517 (accessed 01 August 2010)

³⁰⁸ NU theologically follows the ideas of Imam Al-Asya'ri and al-Maturidy; committed to the practice of one of four schools of thought in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), i.e., Ash-Shafi'i, Hanafi'i, Maliki and Hanbali. However, some critical ulama of NU have transformed the ideology of *Ahl Al Sunah Wal Jamaah* into an inclusive notion by introducing the principles of *tawassut*, *tawazun* and *tasammuh*. See more discussion in Michael R. Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 157.

³⁰⁹ Zamaksyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai* (LP3ES, Jakarta 1982), 148.

democracy.³¹⁰ In line with the principles, NU has shown a moderate stance towards the Shi'a in Indonesia, avoiding a wider conflict among the Islamic community (*ummah*). Its attitude tends to emphasize the importance of unity rather than social unrest, which can be caused by trivial differences. In this case, NU shows its maturity as one of the oldest and biggest Islamic organizations in the country.

Besides that, as discussed earlier, some of NU's religious practices and traditions are comparable to those of the Shi'a, especially in their admiration and respect for the Prophet's family. The similarities have been admitted by NU leaders such as Abdurrahman Wahid, Said Agil Siradj and Hasyim Muzadi. On many occasions, Wahid has said that Shi'ism is culturally equal to NU. Meanwhile, Said Agil Siradj shared Wahid's views, insisting that "NU is Shi'a less the *Imammah*". Despite the similarity, the Chairman of the Executive Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU), Hasyim Muzadi, has no concern about any possible conversion of NU members to Shi'ism. "I believe that an NU member could not be easily influenced by Shi'ism because of culturally strong roots in the NU tradition. Once he is influenced by Shi'ism, he will soon come back to the old established tradition because, for NU, the Sunni teachings are a top priority," he said.

Regarding the moderate attitude of Wahid towards the Shi'a, an Australian scholar, Greg Barton, explained that there were four reasons for Wahid's behavior. Firstly, he was inclined by nature to help persecuted and downtrodden minorities. Secondly, and related to this, he was against anything that impinged on freedom of belief and freedom of conscience. Thirdly, he saw Shi'i scholarship, with its

³¹⁰ Ahmad Zahro, *Tradisi intelektual NU: Lajnah Bahtsul Masa'il 1926-1999* (LKis, Yogyakarta 2004), 51.

ongoing tradition of *ijtihad* and its openness to metaphysical speculation, as representing a rich vein of learning that could be profitably mined by all Islamic intellectuals. Finally, he argued that many aspects of NU worship (*ibadah*) and approaches to mysticism (*Tasawuf*) have their origin in Persian Shi'i Islam, and that NU scholars should understand Shi'a if only in order to understand Sunni Indonesian Islamic traditionalism.³¹¹

Undeniably, however, the moderate attitude refers to only few members of the central boards of this Muslim organisation. Apparently, at the local level, branches tend to demonstrate a negative attitude towards the Shi'a. In East Java for instance, many social problems with Shi'ism have evidently involved members of the local branches. Despite the majority being consistent with the policy of the NU central executive board, one can not underestimate those who do not agree at its regional office.

In parallel with its NU counterparts, the largest reformist Muslim organization in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah, also considers Shi'ism as a part of Islam and still within the boundaries of the true Islam. According to the Chairman of the Central Committee of Muhammadiyah, Din Syamsuddin, the relationship between his organization and Iran has been improving lately. "Reciprocal visits between dignitaries on both sides have continued intensively," he said.

This good relationship has also been shown by the fact that as many as 98 young leaders of Muhammadiyah have received scholarship from the Iranian government to study as graduate, as well as postgraduate, students in several cities in Iran, like Qom, Mashad and Tehran. These young cadres have also

³¹¹ Greg Barton, *Abdurrahman Wahid, Muslim Democrat, Indonesian President* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2002), 156.

established a special branch office Muhammadiyah (*Pengurus Cabang Istimewa*) in Tehran. "In fact, I also speak Farsi and have even taught in Tehran about modern Islam," the Chairman of Muhammadiyah asserted.

According to Din, Muhammadiyah and Shi'ism have points of comparability in their intellectual tradition based on rationalism, which has roots in Mu'tazilite philosophy.³¹² Moreover, both advocate using rationalism to understand allegorical readings of the Qur'an.

Besides that, the warm relationship between Muhammadiyah and the Iranian government can be observed through the establishment of the Iranian Corner in several Muhammadiyah universities.³¹³ Among Muhammadiyah universities accommodating the Iranian Corner are Jakarta Muhammadiyah University (UMJ), Malang Muhammadiyah University (UMM), Yogyakarta Muhammadiyah University and Ahmad Dahlan University, Yogyakarta.

Regarding the Iranian Corner, a local researcher, Hilman Latief, describes it as concealing a hidden agenda: propagating Shi'ism among university students. The study center, according to him, provides literature and information pertaining to Iran but also becomes a window for Indonesian students to have a look at contemporary Iranian culture, including its religious tradition and political system. The availability of Islamic literature by Iranian scholars is also believed to have contributed to the development of students' knowledge on Shi'a tradition.³¹⁴

³¹²This school was developed between the 8th and 10th centuries. Although it is traced back to Wasil ibn Ata (d. 748 CE) in Basra, theologians Abu al Hudhayl al 'Allaf (d. 849 CE) and Bishr ibn al Mu'tamir (d. 825 CE) are credited with formalizing its theological stance. Mu'tazili thought relies heavily on logic.

³¹³"Dari Iran membawa Syiah untuk Indonesia", *Hidayatullah magazine*, 26 April 2010. <http://majalah.hidayatullah.com/?p=229> (accessed on 12 December 2011)

³¹⁴Hilman Latief, "The Identity of Shi'a Sympathizers In Contemporary Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* Volume 2, Number 2, December 2008, 300-33.

Besides Muhammadiyah universities, a number of universities such as Indonesia University (UI), Islamic State University (UIN) in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Gadjah Mada University and Hasanuddin University in South Sulawesi, have set up a similar study center at their own universities.

6. Conclusion

In sum, the Shi'a face complex responses from the lenient to outright opposition. Even if an understanding and tolerance prevailed at the level of elites, it would not guarantee this attitude would be easily delivered to the grass roots. Both political and social factors are interrelated in this matter. Leaders of major Islamic organizations as well as the MUI would be involved in any discourses, as would the government.

As a religious minority group, the Shi'a has been another test case for the pluralistic Indonesian Muslim, besides Ahmadiyah. This is because some Sunni Muslims in the country still regard the group as deviant. Obviously, its emergence in the society has potentially created social problems and public concerns for the future.

While in the New Order no violent behavior against the Shi'a has been recorded, after *reformasi* the hostilities intensified or became more violent. In this context, the chapter has confirmed that those negative responses to the Shi'a from Muslims individuals and organizations in Indonesia are largely under the influence of the extremely puritanical Islam of Wahhabism from Saudi Arabia. This is because of the fact that the theological, political and social point of views of this Islamic trait is historically "an enemy" to the Shi'a. In contemporary times in Indonesia, some Wahhabi-affiliated groups, which were oppressed under the

Soeharto regime, have managed to appear in the public sphere. They have evolved into several radical groups permissive of the use of violence in their religious propagation. Funded by the oil-rich Saudi Kingdom, these groups indirectly implemented the political and religious agenda of Wahhabism in Indonesia and one of them is opposed to the Shi'a using all means possible.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Indonesia has long prided itself on its religious tolerance. Its independence constitution, the 1945 Constitution, sets out one of the bases for the state as being a 'Belief in Almighty God'. The constitution itself is religiously neutral in tone and eschews 'confessionalised' language which would privilege one particular faith. It also guarantees freedom of religion, a position legally reinforced by Indonesia's signing of various United Nations charters and conventions which, *inter alia*, uphold religious rights. However, in the last ten years, incidents of religious intolerance, extremism and violence have increased markedly. Data from the SETARA Institute for Democracy and Peace, for instance, showed that in 2007 there were 185 actions against religious sects or minorities and 135 incidents of violations against freedom of religion; in 2008 there were 376 actions and 265 incidents and, in 2009, there were 291 actions and 200 incidents.³¹⁵ These incidents mostly targeted religious minority groups from both Muslim and non-Muslim spheres.

This thesis has dealt with the Shi'i minority in contemporary Indonesia that emerged from the early 1980s. This community has endured prejudice and discrimination, particularly from radical Muslim groups, but also, more generally

³¹⁵ Ismail Hasani & Bonar Tigor Naipospos, eds., *The Faces of Islam Defenders* (Pustaka Masyarakat Setara, Jakarta, 2010), 2-3.

from some mainstream groups and bureaucrats.³¹⁶ Its religious doctrine is seen as an exogenous Islamic variant by predominantly Sunni Muslims in Indonesia. The emergence of Shi'ism has sometimes been portrayed by its detractors as closely associated with Ayatollah Khomeini's revolutionary movement and his effort to export the militancy to other Muslim nations. Undoubtedly, the growing public profile of the Shi'a has led to increasingly problematic relations with the Sunni community.

I have argued that the reality of the Shi'i community in Indonesia is far more complex than commonly supposed. Throughout this study, I have analyzed the heterogeneity of the Shi'i community in Indonesia, finding a division in their leadership between the campus circle and *ustadh* group. The analysis has further attempted to investigate the sociological aspects as well the intellectual formation of these groups' leaders, as well as their organization of structures and relations with other Muslim organizations in the country and overseas. The results are presented in Table 1 below.

The campus circle was founded by young Muslim students from several secular universities in the country, who embraced Shi'ism after being inspired by the Iranian revolution. In the following years, they emerged as leaders of the Shi'i community. Their sophisticated ideas were influenced by their academic background and marked by an attitude of non-sectarian openness. In contrast, the *ustadh* group, consisting largely of alumni from Middle Eastern learning centers, was trained for some years in seminary schools in Qom, Iran. Unlike the campus

³¹⁶ Yinger defines prejudice as an emotional, rigid attitude towards a group of people, including misjudgment that one defends and discrimination is the effective injurious treatment of persons on the ground rationally irrelevant to the real situation. For more accounts of prejudice and discrimination on minority see further: Simpson, E. George and Yinger J. Milton, *Racial and Cultural Minorities, Analysis of Prejudice and Discrimination*, (Plenum Press, New York 1985)

circle group, their academic background was based on traditional education as provided in *pesantren* and Islamic boarding schools. Thus, in propagating Shi'ism in the community, they accentuated Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) in accordance with the *Ja'fariyyah* school of thought.

Disparities in educational background and religious affiliation have led to the internal fragmentation of Shi'i elites in Indonesia. Unnoticed during the New Order era due to the application of the concept of *taqiyyah*, the split became clear in the democratic climate after the fall of the Soeharto regime after 1998. These two elite groups established different institutions. IJABI was set up by the campus circle whereas the *ustadh* group established numerous private Shi'i foundations across the country. Although both of these institutions have a common goal of propagating Shi'ism, their characteristics, strategies and approaches are different.

IJABI has an organizational structure similar to that of local religious groups. The most notable feature of this organization, compared with the Shi'i foundations, is that it has a Congress as its highest authoritative body. Officially registered as a mass organization, IJABI plays a more malleable role in the society within a wide range of activities and regions. Another characteristic of IJABI is that it puts priority on the significance of *akhlaq* (ethics) over religious jurisprudence (*fiqh*). As a platform for the organization, this feature galvanizes collaboration with other Muslim and non-Muslim religious groups in the country. By doing so, IJABI tends to achieve its goals by promoting pluralism through interfaith dialogue among different religions, local cultures and ethnicities.

By contrast, the foundations of the *ustadh* group emphasize the implementation of *Ja'fariyyah* jurisprudence, which manifests itself in conservative social and religious attitudes. They reflect an Iranian inclination with characteristic

emphasis on the application of the *Wilayat al faqih* concept in the structure of their organizations. The highest authoritative body in the structural organization of the foundations of the *ustadh* group is a religious guidance council headed by a religious leader or a cleric. This is precisely in line with the *Wilayat al faqih* concept introduced by Khomeini in the 1970s. As Qom alumni, the *ustadh* group still maintained good relationships with their former teachers and their institutions receive assistance from the office of *Marjaiyyat* in Iran. This support illustrates their linkages within the international network of Shi'i organizations.

I have also examined the diverse socio-economic origins and status of the Shi'a in Indonesia. The community consists predominantly of upper-middle class members from an array of backgrounds, including business people, executives, and retired functionaries as well as ex-members of Islamic dissident groups, like DI/NII.

During the Soeharto administration at the beginning of the 1980s, the Shi'a came under tight scrutiny from the government because of a suspicion that they might try to import Iranian-style revolutionary activism to Indonesia. As a result, they conducted their activities secretly and constantly applied the concept of dissimulation while their religious organizations faced difficulties in obtaining legal status from the government. Many Shi'i foundations tended to hide their real identity. During this period, despite political pressure from the government, the dissemination of Shi'ism made unprecedented progress. Shi'ism became a popular topic of discussion among Indonesian students. Works by leading Shi'i thinkers were commonly circulated on the campuses. The dispatch of Indonesian students to Shi'i learning centers abroad was carried out smoothly. In fact, these developments were done quietly.

Table 1 Characterization of Shi'i leaders in Indonesia.

The campus circle	The <i>ustadh</i> group
Academic and Ideological Background	
Secular and western university	<i>Pesantren</i> and Middle East Shi'i seminary schools
Former campus youth activists	Santri (<i>pesantren</i> students)
Open attitude and non-sectarian	Conservative, strictly following <i>Ja'farriyah</i> Islamic jurisprudence (<i>Wilayat al-faqih</i>)
The leader of this group, Jalaluddin Rakhmat, has chosen Muhammad Hussein Fadhlallah, Lebanon as his <i>Marja Taqlid</i>	Most of the <i>ustadh</i> group have chosen Ali Khomeini leader of Iran as their <i>Marja Taqlid</i>
Institution	
IJABI is registered at the Home Ministry as a mass-organization and a membership-based organization	Shi'i Foundations are registered as region-based foundations, only enlisted at the Ministry of Law and Human Rights
Scheme of organization structure imitates major religious organization in Indonesia	Structure of organization privately composed
License from the government for most of their public activities	No license for most of activities and social gatherings because privately organized
Indonesian style leadership	Iranian style leadership/ <i>Wilayat al-faqih</i>
Branch offices in regional areas	No regional branch because of local operated foundation
High acceptability within middle class	Low acceptability within middle class
Opened and democratic	Closed and private
Domestic related resources	Iran/Middle East related resources

After the student-led reformation in 1998, the Shi'i movement became more open. Its followers acted more confidently in promoting their beliefs to others and in holding religious ceremonies in public. Without political pressure or any significant social constraints, the Shi'i denomination freely exercised their beliefs and even legalized their organizations. Yet, in spite of the favorable socio-political climate, they still faced discrimination from Sunni radical groups. Indonesia's democratic system in the post-Soeharto era offered both opportunities and challenges for the Shi'i community in Indonesia. While being given opportunities to exercise their freedom in practicing their beliefs, at the same time they also encountered violent opposition.

Opposition to Pesantren al-Hadi in Pekalongan, Central Java, is illustrative of this negative public response. The incident was not an isolated case because other similar cases also occurred towards Shi'i institutions in other regions, such as Bangil and Pasuruan, East Java. In a larger perspective, the emergence of the Shi'a in Indonesia, both the campus circle and the *ustadh* group, raised public concern because Shi'ism was still regarded as an exogenous Islamic variant, if not a deviant group, among Indonesia's predominantly Sunni Muslims.

The rapid growth of Shi'ism in Indonesia, on one hand, could be regarded as intellectual enriching Islamic literature and discourses in Indonesia. However, on the other hand, the existence of Shi'a in general has been a shock for many mainstream groups in both the theological and cultural realms, triggering various reactions from majority Sunni Muslims. This reaction can be seen in terms of continuum between two extreme poles. The first extreme (negative) pole represents those who have totally rejected Shi'i views and thoughts. They have not

only strongly opposed the Shi'a but they also urged the government to ban the Shi'a from society. The other (positive) pole embodies those who have accepted Shi'i teachings. Between these two poles, a large group of people tolerate the differences presented by the Shi'a; they neither reject nor accept Shi'ism.

The Shi'i community faces complex responses ranging from the tolerant to the outright hostile. Even if an understanding and tolerant attitude prevails at the elite level, this would not guarantee this attitude would be easily conveyed to the grass roots. Both political and social factors are interrelated in this matter. Leaders of major Islamic organizations as well as the MUI would have to be involved in such discourse, as would the government.

In sum, understanding the developments of Shi'a in Indonesia in light of challenges and opportunities from the New Order period to the *reformasi* era illuminates a constant search of the group to chart out their existence as a minority group in Indonesia. Facing cultural and sociological boundaries in articulating their religious orientation, the Shi'a attempt to negotiate their identity in the predominantly Sunni country by their self-conscious efforts to adapt their beliefs and traditions; and reshape their organizations and affiliations. Nevertheless, in doing so, as it was shown in the thesis, it seems that there is no unity among them how to put the Shi'i teachings in the Indonesian context because, like Sunni Muslims, they are also very diverse.

1. APPENDIX A: A LIST OF PUBLISHING COMPANIES AND SHI'I BOOKS

Up to 2002, these publishing companies in Indonesia have been indicated actively publishing Shi'i books and references.

PUBLISHERS	TITLE AND AUTHOR
Lentera	1. Akhlak Keluarga Nabi, Musa Jawad Subhani 2. Ar-Risalah, Syaikh Ja'far Subhani 3. As-Sair Wa As-suluk, Sayid Muhammad Mahdi Thabathaba'i Bahrul Ulum 4. Bagaimana Membangun Kepribadian Anda, Khalil Al Musawi 5. Bagaimana Menjadi Orang Bijaksana, Khalil al-Musawi 6. Bagaimana Menyukkseskan Pergaulan, Khalil al-Musawi 7. Belajar Mudah Tasawuf, Fadlullah Haeri 8. Belajar Mudah Ushuluddin, Syaikh Nazir Makarim Syirasi 9. Berhubungan dengan Roh, Nasir Makarim Syirazi 10. Ceramah-Ceramah (1), Murtadha Muthahhari 11. Ceramah-Ceramah (2), Murtadha Muthahhari 12. Dunia Wanita Dalam Islam, Syaikh Husain Fadlullah 13. Etika Seksual dalam Islam, Murtadha Muthahhari 14. Fathimah Az-Zahra, Ibrahim Amini 15. Fiqih Imam Ja'far Shadiq [1], Muhammad Jawad Mughniyah 16. Fiqih Imam Ja'far Shadiq Buku [2], Muh Jawad Mughniyah 17. Fiqih Lima Mazhab, Muh Jawad Mughniyah 18. Fitrah, Murthadha Muthahhari 19. Gejolak Kaum Muda, Nasir Makarim Syirazi 20. Hak-hak Wanita dalam Islam, Murtadha Muthahhari

21. Imam Mahdi Figur Keadilan, Jaffar Al-Jufri (editor)
22. Kebangkitan di Akhirat, Nasir Makarim Syirazi
23. Keutamaan & Amalan Bulan Rajab, Sya?ban dan Ramadhan, Sayid Mahdi al-Handawi
24. Keluarga yang Disucikan Allah, Alwi Husein, Lc
25. Ketika Bumi Diganti Dengan Bumi Yang Lain, Jawadi Amuli
26. Kiat Memilih Jodoh, Ibrahim Amini
27. Manusia Sempurna, Murtadha Muthahhari
28. Mengungkap Rahasia Mimpi, Imam Ja?far Shadiq
29. Mengendalikan Naluri, Husain Mazhahiri
30. Menumpas Penyakit Hati, Mu?taba Musawi Lari
31. Metodologi Dakwah dalam Al-Qur?an, Husain Fadhlullah
32. Monoteisme, Muhammad Taqi Misbah
33. Meruntuhkan Hawa Nafsu Membangun Rohani, Husain Mazhahiri
34. Memahami Esensi AL-Qur?an, S.M.H. Thabatabai
35. Menelusuri Makna Jihad, Husain Mazhahiri
36. Melawan Hegemoni Barat, M. Deden Ridwan (editor)
37. Mengenal Diri, Ali Shomali
38. Mengapa Kita Mesti Mencintai Keluarga Nabi Saw, Muhammad Kadzim Muhammad Jawad
39. Nahjul Balaghah, Syarif Radhi (penyunting)
40. Penulisan dan Penghimpunan Hadis, Rasul Ja?farian
41. Perkawinan Mut?ah Dalam Perspektif Hadis dan Tinjauan Masa Kini, Ibnu Mustofa (editor)
42. Perkawinan dan Seks dalam Islam, Sayyid Muhammad Ridhwi
43. Pelajaran-Pelajaran Penting Dalam Al-Qur?an (1), Murtadha Muthahhari
44. Pelajaran-Pelajaran Penting Dalam Al-Qur?an (2), Murtadha Muthahhari
45. Pintar Mendidik Anak, Husain Mazhahiri
46. Rahasia Alam Arwah, Sayyid Hasan Abthahiy
47. Suara Keadilan, George Jordac
48. Yang Hangat dan Kontroversial dalam Fiqih, Ja?far

	Subhani 49. Wanita dan Hijab, Murtadha Muthahhari
Pustaka Hidayah	1. 14 Manusia Suci, WOFIS IRAN 2. 70 Salawat Pilihan, Al-Ustads Mahmud Samiy 3. Agama Versus Agama, Ali Syari'ati 4. Akhirat dan Akal, M Jawad Mughniyah 5. Akibat Dosa, Ar-Rasuli Al-Mahalati 6. Al-Quran dan Rahasia angka-angka, Abu Zahrah Al Najdiy 7. Asuransi dan Riba, Murtadha Muthahhari 8. Awal dan Sejarah Perkembangan Islam Syiah, S Husain M Jafri 9. Belajar Mudah Ushuluddin, Dar al-Haqq 10. Bimbingan Keluarga dan Wanita Islam, Husain Ali Turkamani 11. Catatan dari Alam Ghaib, S Abd Husain Dastaghib 12. Dari Saqifah Sampai Imamah, Sayyid Husain M. Jafri 13. Dinamika Revolusi Islam Iran, M Riza Sihbudi 14. Falsafah Akhlak, Murthadha Muthahhari 15. Falsafah Kenabian, Murthada Muthahhari 16. Gerakan Islam, A. Ezzati 17. Humanisme Antara Islam dan Barat, Ali Syari'ati 18. Imam Ali Bin Abi Thalib & Imam Hasan bin Ali Ali Muhammad Ali 19. Imam Husain bin Ali & Imam Ali Zainal Abidin Ali Muhammad Ali 20. Imam Muhammad Al Baqir & Imam Ja'far Ash-Shadiq Ali Muhammad Ali 21. Imam Musa Al Kadzim & Imam Ali Ar-Ridha Ali Muhammad Ali 22. Inilah Islam, SMH Thabataba'i 23. Islam Agama Keadilan, Murtadha Muthahhari 24. Islam Agama Protes, Ali Syari'ati 25. Islam dan Tantangan Zaman, Murthadha Muthahhari 26. Jejak-jejak Ruhani, Murtadha Muthahhari 27. Kepemilikan dalam Islam, S.M.H. Behesti

	28. Keutamaan Fatimah dan Ketegaran Zainab, Sayyid Syarifuddin Al Musawi 29. Keagungan Ayat Kursi, Muhammad Taqi Falsafi 30. Kisah Sejuta Hikmah, Murtadha Muthahhari 31. Kisah Sejuta Hikmah [1], Murthadha Muthahhari 32. Kisah Sejuta Hikmah [2], Murthadha Muthahhari 33. Memilih Takdir Allah, Syaikh Ja'far Subhani 34. Menapak Jalan Spiritual, Muthahhari & Thabathabai 35. Menguak Masa Depan Umat Manusia, Murtadha Muthahhari 36. Menolak Isu Perubahan Al-Quran, Rasul Ja'farian 37. Mengurai Tanda Kebesaran Tuhan, Imam Ja'far Shadiq 38. Misteri Hari Pembalasan, Muhsin Qara'ati 39. Muatan Cinta Ilahi, Syekh M Mahdi Al-syifiy 40. Nubuwah Antara Doktrin dan Akal, M Jawad Mughniah 41. Pancaran Cahaya Shalat, Muhsin Qara'ati 42. Pengantar Ushul Fiqh, Muthahhari & Baqir Shadr 43. Perayaan Maulid, Khaul dan Hari Besar Islam, Sayyid Ja'far Murtadha al-Amili 44. Perjalanan-Perjalanan Akhirat, Muhammad Jawad Mughniah 45. Psikologi Islam, Mujtaba Musavi Lari 46. Prinsip-Prinsip Ijtihad Dalam Islam, Murtadha Muthahhari & M. Baqir Shadr 47. Rasulullah SAW dan Fatimah Ali Muhammad Ali 48. Rasulullah: Sejak Hijrah Hingga Wafat, Ali Syari'ati 49. Reformasi Sufistik, Jalaluddin Rakhmat 50. Salman Al Farisi dan tuduhan Terhadapnya, Abdullah Al Sabitiy 51. Sejarah dalam Perspektif Al-Quran, M Baqir As-Shadr 52. Tafsir Surat-surat Pilihan [1], Murthadha Muthahhari 53. Tafsir Surat-surat Pilihan [2], Murthadha Muthahhari 54. Tawasul, Tabaruk, Ziarah Kubur, Karamah Wali, Syaikh Ja'far Subhani 55. Tentang Dibenarkannya Syafa'at dalam Islam, Syaikh Ja'far Subhani
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	56. Tujuan Hidup, M.T. Jaʿfari 57. Ummah dan Imamah, Ali Syariʿati 58. Wanita Islam & Gaya Hidup Modern, Abdul Rasul Abdul Hasan al-Gaffar
MIZAN	1. 40 Hadis [1], Imam Khomeini 2. 40 Hadis [2], Imam Khomeini 3. 40 Hadis [3], Imam Khomeini 4. 40 Hadis [4], Imam Khomeini 5. Akhlak Suci Nabi yang Ummi, Murtadha Muthahhari 6. Allah dalam Kehidupan Manusia, Murtadha Muthahhari 7. Bimbingan Islam Untuk Kehidupan Suami-Istri, Ibrahim Amini 8. Berhaji Mengikuti Jalur Para Nabi, O.Hasem 9. Dialog Sunnah Syiʿah, A Syafruddin al-Musawi 10. Eksistensi Palestina di Mata Teheran dan Washington, M Riza Sihbudi 11. Falsafah Pergerakan Islam, Murtadha Muthahhari 12. Falsafatuna, Muhammad Baqir Ash-Shadr 13. Filsafat Sains Menurut Al-Quran, Mahdi Gulsyani 14. Gerakan Islam, A Ezzati 15. Hijab Gaya Hidup Wanita Muslim, Murtadha Muthahhari 16. Hikmah Islam, Sayyid M.H. Thabathabaʿi 17. Ideologi Kaum Intelektual, Ali Syariʿati 18. Ilmu Hudhuri, Mehdi Haʿiri Yazdi 19. Islam Aktual, Jalaluddin Rakhmat 20. Islam Alternatif, Jalaluddin Rakhmat 21. Islam dan Logika Kekuatan, Husain Fadhlullah 22. Islam Mazhab Pemikiran dan Aksi, Ali Syariʿati 23. Islam Dan Tantangan Zaman, Murtadha Muthahhari 24. Islam, Dunia Arab, Iran, Barat Dan Timur tengah, M Riza Sihbudi 25. Isu-isu Penting Ikhtilaf Sunnah-Syiʿah, A Syafruddin Al Musawi 26. Jilbab Menurut Al Qurʿan & As Sunnah, Husain Shahab

	27. Kasyful Mahjub, Al-Hujwiri 28. Keadilan Ilahi, Murtadha Muthahhari 29. Kepemimpinan dalam Islam, AA Sachedina 30. Kritik Islam Atas Marxisme dan Sesat Pikir Lainnya, Ali Syari'ati 31. Lentera Ilahi Imam Ja'far Ash Shadiq 32. Manusia dan Agama, Murtadha Muthahhari 33. Masyarakat dan sejarah, Murtadha Muthahhari 34. Mata Air Kecemerlangan, Hamid Algar 35. Membangun Dialog Antar Peradaban, Muhammad Khatami 36. Membangun Masa Depan Ummat, Ali Syari'ati 37. Mengungkap Rahasia Al-Qur'an, SMH Thabathabai 38. Menjangkau Masa Depan Islam, Murtadha Muthahhari 39. Menjawab Soal-soal Islam Kontemporer, Jalaluddin Rakhmat 40. Menyegarkan Islam, Chibli Mallat (*0 41. Menjelajah Dunia Modern, Seyyed Hossein Nasr 42. Misteri Kehidupan Fatimah Az-Zahra, Hasyimi Rafsanjani 43. Muhammad Kekasih Allah, Seyyed Hossein Nasr 44. Muthahhari: Sang Mujahid Sang Muftahid, Haidar Bagir 45. Mutiara Nahjul Balaghah, Muhammad Al Baqir 46. Pandangan Dunia Tauhid,. Murtadha Muthahhari 47. Para Perintis Zaman Baru Islam, Ali Rahmena 48. Penghimpun Kebahagiaan, M Mahdi Bin Ad al-Naraqhi 49. Persinggahan Para Malaikat, Ahmad Hadi 50. Rahasia Basmalah Hamdalah, Imam Khomeini 51. Renungan-renungan Sufistik, Jalaluddin Rakhmat 52. Rubaiyat Ummar Khayyam, Peter Avery 53. Ruh, Materi dan Kehidupan, Murtadha Muthahhari 54. Spritualitas dan Seni Islam, Seyyed Hossein Nasr 55. Syi'ah dan Politik di Indonesia, A. Rahman Zainuddin (editor) 56. Sirah Muhammad, M. Hashem 57. Tauhid Dan Syirik, Ja'far Subhani 58. Tema-Tema Penting Filsafat, Murtadha Muthahhari
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	59. Ulama Sufi & Pemimpin Ummat, Muhammad al-Baqir
YAPI JAKARTA	1. Abdullah Bin Saba? dalam Polemik, Non Mentioned 2. Abdullah Bin Saba? Benih Fitnah, M Hashem 3. Al Mursil Ar Rasul Ar Risalah, Muhammad Baqir Shadr 4. Cara Memahami Al Qur'an, S.M.H. Bahesti 5. Hukum Perjudian dalam Islam, Sayyid Muhammad Shuhufi 6. Harapan Wanita Masa Kini, Ali Shari'ati 7. Hubungan Sosial Dalam Islam, Sayyid Muh Suhufi 8. Imam Khomeini dan Jalan Menuju Integrasi dan Solidaritas Islam, Zubaidi Mastal 9. Islam Dan Mazhab Ekonomi, Muhammad Baqir Shadr 10. Kedudukan Ilmu dalam Islam, Sayyid Muh Suhufi 11. Keluarga Muslim, Al Balaghah Foundation 12. Kebangkitan Di Akhirat, Nasir Makarim Syirazi 13. Keadilan Ilahi, Nasir Makarim Syirazi 14. Kenabian, Nasir Makarim Syirazi 15. Kota Berbenteng Tujuh, Fakhruddin Hijazi 16. Makna Ibadah, Muhammad Baqir Shadr 17. Menuju Persahabatan, Sayyid Muh Suhufi 18. Mi'raj Nabi, Nasir Makarim Syirazi 19. Nasehat-Nasehat Imam Ali, Non Mentioned 20. Prinsip-Prinsip Ajaran Islam, SMH Bahesti 21. Perjuangan Melawan Dusta, Bi'that Foundation 22. Persaudaraan dan Persahabatan, Sayyid Muh Suhufi 23. Perjanjian Ilahi Dalam Al-Qur'an, Abdul Karim Biazar 24. Rasionalitas Islam, World Shi'a Muslim Org. 25. Syahadah, Ali Shari'ati 26. Saqifah Awal Perselisihan Umat, O Hashem 27. Sebuah Kajian Tentang Sejarah Hadis, Allamah Murthadha Al Askari 28. Tauhid, Nasir Makarim Syirazi 29. Wasiat Atau Musyawarah, Ali Shari'ati 30. Wajah Muhammad, Ali Shari'ati
YAPI Bangil	1. Akal dalam Al-Kafi, Husein al-Habsyi 2. Ajaran- ajaran Al-Quran, Sayid T Burqi & Bahonar

	3. Bimbingan Sikap dan Perilaku Muslim, Al Majlisi Al-Qummi 4. Hawa Nafsu, M Mahdi Al Shifiy 5. Konsep Ulul Amri dalam Mazhab-mazhab Islam, Musthafa Al Yahfufi 6. Kumpulan Khutbah Idul Adha, Husein al-Habsyi 7. Kumpulan Khutbah Idul Fitri, Husein al-Habsyi 8. Metode Alternatif Memahami Al-Quran, Bi Azar Syirazi 9. Manusia Seutuhnya, Murtadha Muthahhari 10. Polemik Sunnah-Syiah Sebuah Rekayasa, Izzudddin Ibrahim 11. Pesan Terakhir Rasul, Non Mentioned 12. Pengantar Menuju Logika, Murtadha Muthahhari 13. Shalat Dalam Madzhab AhlulBait, Hidayatullah Husein Al-Habsyi
Rosdakarya	1. Catatan Kang Jalal, Jalaluddin Rakhmat 2. Derita Putri-Putri Nabi, M. Hasyim Assegaf 3. Fatimah Az Zahra, Jalaluddin Rakhmat 4. Khalifah Ali Bin Abi Thalib, Jalaluddin Rakhmat 5. Meraih Cinta Ilahi, Jalaluddin Rakhmat 6. Rintihan Suci Ahlul Bait Nabi, Jalaluddin Rakhmat 7. Tafsir Al fatihah: Mukaddimah, Jalaluddin Rakhmat 8. Tafsir Bil Ma'tsur, Jalaluddin Rakhmat 9. Zainab Al-Qubra, Jalaluddin Rakhmat
Al-Hadi	1. Al-Milal wan-Nihal, Ja'far Subhani 2. Buku Panduan Menuju Alam Barzakh, Imam Khomeini 3. Fiqh Praktis, Hasan Musawa
CV Firdaus	1. Al-Quran Menjawab Dilema keadilan, Muhsin Qira'ati 2. Imamah Dan Khalifah, Murtadha Muthahhari 3. Keadilan Allah Qadha dan Qadhar, Muftaba Musawi Lari 4. Kemerdekaan Wanita dalam Keadilan Sosial Islam, Hashemi Rafsanjani(et. al) 5. Pendidikan Anak: Sejak Dini Hingga Masa Depan, Mahjubah Magazine

	6. Tafsir Al Mizan: Ayat-ayat Kepemimpinan, S.M.H. Thabathaba'i 7. Tafsir Al-Mizan: Surat Al-Fatihah, S.M.H. Thabathaba'i 8. Tafsir Al-Mizan: Ruh dan Alam Barzakh, S.M.H. Thabathaba'i 9. Tauhid: Pandangan Dunia Alam Semesta, Muhsin Qara'ati 10. Al-Qur'an Menjawab Dilema Keadilan, Muhsin Qara'ati
Pustaka Firdaus	1. Saat Untuk Bicara, Sa'di Syirazi 2. Tasawuf: Dulu dan Sekarang, Seyyed Hossein Nasr
Risalah Masa	1. Akar Keimanan, Sayyid Ali Khamene'i 2. Dasar-Dasar Filsafat Islam[2], Bahesty & Bahonar 3. Hikmah Sejarah-Wahyu dan Kenabian [3], Bahesty & Bahonar 4. Kebebasan berpikir dan Berpendapat dalam Islam, Murtadha Muthahhari 5. Menghapus Jurang Pemisah Menjawab Buku al Khatib, Al Allamah As Shafi 6. Pedoman Tafsir Modern, Ayatullah Baqir Shadr 7. Kritik Terhadap Materialisme, Murtadha Muthahhari 8. Prinsip-Prinsip Islam [1], Bahesty & Bahonar 9. Syi'ah Asal-Usul dan Prinsip Dasarnya, Sayyid Muh. Kasyful Ghita 10. Tauhid Pembebas Mustadh'afin, Sayyid Ali Khamene'i 11. Tuntunan Puasa, Al-Balagha 12. Wanita di Mata dan Hati Rasulullah, Ali Syari'ati 13. Wali Faqih: Ulama Pewaris Kenabian,
Qonaah	1. Pendekatan Sunnah Syi'ah, Salim Al-Bahansawiy
Bina Tauhid	Memahami Al Qur'an, Murthadha Muthahhari
Mahdi	Tafsir Al-Mizan: Mut'ah, S.M.H. Thabathabai
Ihsan	Pandangan Islam Tentang Damai-Paksaan, Muhammad Ali Taskhiri

Al-Kautsar	1. Agar Tidak Terjadi Fitnah, Husein Al Habsyi 2. Dasar-Dassar Hukum Islam, Muhsin Labib 3. Nabi Bermuka Manis Tidak Bermuka Masam, Husein Al Habsyi 4. Sunnah Syi'ah Dalam Ukhuwah Islamiyah, Husain Al Habsyi 5. 60 Hadis Keutamaan Ahlul Bait, Jalaluddin Suyuti
Al-Baqir	1. 560 Hadis Dari Manusia Suci, Fathi Guven 2. Asyura Dalam Perspektif Islam, Abdul Wahab Al-Kasyi 3. Al Husein Merajut Shara Karbala, Muhsin Labib 4. Badai Pembalasan, Muhsin Labib 5. Darah Yang Mengalahkan Pedang, Muhsin Labib 6. Dewi-Dewi Sahara, Muhsin Labib 7. Membela Para Nabi, Ja'far Subhani 8. Suksesi, M Baqir Shadr 9. Tafsir Nur Tsaqalain, Ali Umar Al-Habsyi
Al-Bayan	1. Bimbingan Islam Untuk Kehidupan Suami Istri, Ibrahim Amini 2. Mengarungi Samudra Kebahagiaan, Said Ahtar Radhawi 3. Teladan Suci Kelurga Nabi, Muhammad Ali Shabban
As-Sajjad	1. Bersama Orang-orang yang Benar, Muh At Tijani 2. Imamah, Ayatullah Nasir Makarim Syirazi 3. Ishmah Keterpeliharaan Nabi Dari Dosa, Syaikh Ja'far Subhani 4. Jihad Akbar, Imam Khomeini 5. Kemelut Kepemimpinan, Ayatullah Muhammad Baqir Shadr 6. Kasyful Asrar Khomeini, Dr. Ibrahim Ad-Dasuki Syata 7. Menjawab Berbagai Tuduhan Terhadap Islam, Husin Alhabsyi 8. Nabi Tersihir, Ali Umar 9. Nikah Mut'ah Ja'far, Murtadha Al Amili 10. Nikah Mut'ah Antara Halal dan Haram, Amir Muhammad Al-Quzwainy

	11. Surat-Surat Revolusi, AB Shirazi
Basrie Press	1. Ali Bin Abi Thalib di Hadapan Kawan dan Lawan, Murtadha Muthahhari 2. Manusia Dan Takdirnya, Murtadha Muthahhari 3. Fiqh Lima Mazhab, Muhammad Jawad Mughniyah
Pintu Ilmu	Siapa, Mengapa Ahlul Bayt, Jamia'ah Al-Ta'limat Al-Islamiah Pakistan
Ulsa Press	1. Mengenal Allah, Sayyid MR Musawi Lari 2. Islam Dan Nasionalisme, Muhammad Naqawi 3. Latar Belakang Persatuan Islam, Masih Muhajeri 4. Tragedi Mekkah Dan Masa Depan Al-Haramain, Zafar Bangash 5. Abu Dzar, Ali Syari'ati 6. Aqidah Syi'ah Imamiyah, Syekh Muhammad Ridha Al Muzhaffar 7. Syahadat Bangkit Bersaksi, Ali Syari'ati
Gua Hira	1. Kepemimpinan Islam, Murtadha Muthahhari
Grafiti	1. Islam Syi'ah: Allamah M.H. Thabathaba'i 2. Pengalaman Terakhir Syah, William Shawcross 3. Tugas Cendekiawan Muslim, Ali Syaria'ti
Effar Offset	Dialog Pembahasan Kembali Antara Sunnah & Syi'ah Sulaim Al-Basyari & Syaraduddien Al 'Amili
Shalahuddin Press	1. Fatimah Citra Muslimah Sejati, Ali Syari'ati 2. Gerbang Kebangkitan, Kalim Siddiqui 3. Islam Konsep Akhlak Pergerakan, Murtadha Muthahhari 4. Panji Syahadah, Ali Syari'ati. 5. Peranan Cendekiawan Muslim, Ali Syari'ati
Ats-Tsaqalain	Sunnah Syi'ah dalam Dialog, Husein Al Habsyi
Pustaka	Kehidupan Yang Kekal, Morteza Muthahari
Darut Taqrib	Rujuk Sunnah Syi'ah, M Hashem

Al-Muntazhar	1. Fiqh Praktis Syi'ah Imam Khomeini, Araki, Gulfaigani, Khui 2. Ringkasan Logika Muslim, Hasan Abu Ammar 3. Saqifah Awal Perselisihan Umat, O Hashem 4. Tauhid: Rasionalisme Dan Pemikiran dalam Islam, Hasan Abu Ammar
Gramedia	Biografi Politik Imam Khomeini, Riza Sihbudi
Toha Putra	Keutamaan Keluarga Rasulullah, Abdullah Bin Nuh
Gerbang Ilmu	Tafsir Al-Amtsal (Jilid 1), Nasir Makarim Syirazi
Al-Jawad	1. Amalan Bulan Ramadhan Husein Al-Kaff 2. Mi'raj Ruhani [1], Imam Khomeini 3. Mi'raj Ruhani [2] Imam Khomeni 4. Mereka Bertanya Ali Menjawab, M Ridha Al-Hakimi 5. Pesan Sang Imam, Sandy Allison (penyusun) 6. Puasa dan Zakat Fitrah Imam Khomeini & Imam Ali Khamene'i
Jami'ah al-Ta'limat al-Islamiyah	Tuntutan Hukum Syari'at, Imam Abdul Qasim
Sinar Harapan	1. Iran Pasca Revolusi, Syafiq Basri 2. Perang Iran Perang Irak, Nasir Tamara 3. Revolusi Iran, Nasir Tamara
Mulla Shadra	1. Taman Para Malaikat, Husain Madhahiri 2. Imam Mahdi Menurut Ahlul Sunnah Wal Jama'ah, Hasan Abu Ammar
Duta Ilmu	1. Wasiat Imam Ali, Non Mentioned 2. Menuju Pemerintah Ideal, Non Mentioned
Majlis Ta'lim Amben	114 Hadis Tanaman, Al Syeikh Radhiyuddien
Grafikatama Jaya	Tipologi Ali Syari'ati
Nirmala	Menyingkap Rahasia Haji, Syeikh Jawadi Amuli

Hisab	Abu Thalib dalam Polemik, Abu Bakar Hasan Ahmad
Ananda	Tentang Sosiologi Islam, Ali Syari'ati
Iqra	Islam dalam Perspektif Sosiologi Agama, Ali Shari'ati
Fitrah	Tuhan dalam Pandangan Muslim, S Akhtar Rizvi
Lentera Antarnusa	Sa'di Bustan, Sa'di
Pesona	Membaca Ali Bersama Ali Bin Abi Thalib, Gh R Layeqi
Rajawali Press	1. Tugas Cendekiawan Muslim, Ali Shari'ati
Bina Ilmu	Demonstran Iran dan Jum'at Berdarah di Makkah, HM Baharun
Pustaka Pelita	1. Akhirnya Kutemukan Kebenaran, Muh Al Tijani Al Samawi 2. Cara Memperoleh Haji Mabruur, Husein Shahab 3. Fathimah Az-Zahra: Ummu Abiha, Taufik Abu 'Alama 4. Pesan Terakhir Nabi, Non Mentioned
Pustaka	1. Etika Seksual dalam Islam, Morteza Muthahhari 2. Filsafat Shadra, Fazlur Rahman 3. Haji, Ali Syari'ati 4. Islam dan Nestapa Manusia Modern, Seyyed Hosein Nasr 5. Islam Tradisi Seyyed, Hosein Nasr 6. Manusia Masa Kini Dan Problem Sosial, Muhammad Baqir Shadr 7. Reaksi Sunni-Syi'ah, Hamid Enayat 8. Surat-Surat Politik Imam Ali, Syarif Ar Radhi 9. Sains dan Peradaban dalam Islam, Sayyed Hossein Nasr
Pustaka Jaya	Membina Kerukunan Muslimin, Sayyid Murthadha al-Ridlawi
Islamic Center Al-Huda	1. Jurnal Al Huda (1) 2. Jurnal Al Huda (2) 3. Syiah Ditolak, Syiah Dicari, O. Hashem 4. Mutiara Akhlak Nabi, Syaikh Ja'far Hadi

Hudan Press	1. Tafsir Surah Yasin, Husain Mazhahiri 2. Do'a-Do'a Imam Ali Zainal Abidin
Yayasan Safinatun Najah	1. 1. Manakah Jalan Yang Lurus (1), Al-Ustads Moh. Sulaiman Marzuqi Ridwan 2. Manakah Jalan Yang Lurus (2), Al-Ustads Moh. Sulaiman Marzuqi Ridwan 3. Manakah Jalan Yang Lurus (3), Al-Ustads Moh. Sulaiman Marzuqi Ridwan 4. Manakah Shalat Yang Benar (1), Al-Ustads Moh. Sulaiman Marzuqi Ridwan
Amanah Press	Falsafah Pergerakan Islam, Murtadha Muthahhari
Yayasan Al-Salafiyyah	Khadijah Al-Kubra Dalam Studi Kritis Komparatif, Drs. Ali S. Karaeng Putra
Kelompok Studi Topika	Hud-Hud Rahmaniyyah, Dimitri Mahayana
Muthahhari Press/Muthahhari Papaerbacks	1. Jurnal Al Hikmah (1) 2. Jurnal Al Hikmah (2) 3. Jurnal Al Hikmah (3) 4. Jurnal Al Hikmah (4) 5. Jurnal Al Hikmah (5) 6. Jurnal Al Hikmah (6) 7. Jurnal Al Hikmah (7) 8. Jurnal Al Hikmah (8) 9. Jurnal Al Hikmah (9) 10. Jurnal Al Hikmah (10) 11. Jurnal Al Hikmah (11) 12. Jurnal Al Hikmah (12) 13. Jurnal Al Hikmah (13) 14. Jurnal Al Hikmah (14) 15. Jurnal Al Hikmah (15) 16. Jurnal Al Hikmah (16) 17. Jurnal Al Hikmah (17) 18. Shahifah Sajjadiyyah, Jalaluddin Rakhmat (penyunting) 19. Manusia dan Takdirnya, Murtadha Muthahhari

	20. Abu Dzar, Ali Syariati 21. Pemimpin Mustadha'afin, Ali Syariati
Serambi	1. Jantung Al-Qur'an, Syeikh Fadlullah Haeri 2. Pelita Al-Qur'an, Syeikh Fadlullah Haeri
Cahaya	Membangun Surga Dalam Rumah Tangga, Huzain Mazhahiri
(Non Mentioned)	1. Sekilas Pandang Tentang Pembantain di Masjid Haram, Non Mentioned 2. Jumat Berdarah Pembantaian Kimia Rakyat Halajba 1988, Non Mentioned 3. Al-Quran dalam Islam, MH Thabathabai 4. Ajaran-Ajaran Asas Islam, Behesti 5. Wacana Spiritual, Tabligh Islam Program 6. Keutamaan Membaca Juz Amma, Taufik Yahya 7. Keutamaan Membaca Surah Yasin, Waqiah, Al Mulk, Taufik Yahya 8. Keutamaan Membaca Surah Al-Isra & Al-Kahfi, Taufik Yahya 9. Bunga Rampai Keimanan, Taufik Yahya 10. Bunga Rampai Kehidupan Sosial, Taufik Yahya 11. Bunga Rampai Pendidikan, Husein Al-Habsyi 12. Hikmah-Hikmah Sholawat ,Taufik Yahya 13. Bunga Rampai Pernikahan, Taufik Yahya 14. Hikmah-Hikmah Puasa, Taufik Yahya 15. Hikmah-Hikmah Kematian, Taufik Yahya 16. Wirid Harian, Non Mentioned 17. Do'a Kumay,l Non Mentioned 18. Do'a Harian, Non Mentioned 19. Do'a Shobah, Non Mentioned 20. Do'a Jausyan Kabir, Non Mentioned 21. Keutamaan Shalat Malam Dan Do'anya, Non Mentioned 22. Do'a Nutbah, Non Mentioned 23. Do'a Abu Hamzah Atsimali, Non Mentioned 24. Do'a Hari Arafah (Imam Husain), Non Mentioned 25. Do'a Hari Arafah (Imam Sajjad), Non Mentioned

	26. Do'a Tawassul, Non Mentioned 27. Do'a Untuk Ayah dan Ibu, Non Mentioned 28. Do'a Untuk Anak, Non Mentioned 29. Do'a Khatam Qur'an, Non Mentioned 30. Doa Sebelum dan Sesudah Baca Qur'an, Non Mentioned 31. Amalan Bulan Sya'ban dan Munajat Sya'baniyah, Non Mentioned
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2. APPENDIX B: THE CONSTITUTION OF IJABI



DEKLARASI IKATAN JAMAAH AHLULBAIT INDONESIA (IJABI)

Pada hari ini, Sabtu, tanggal 1-7-2000 (satu Juli dua ribu) bertepatan dengan tanggal 29 (dua puluh sembilan) Rabiul Awal 1421 Hijriyah,
Yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini :
1. Dr. KH. Jalaluddin Rahmat, H.Sc.,
2. Dr. Ir. H. Dimitri Mahayana, M.Fug,
3. Drs. H. Furgan Buchari,
Dengan ini mendeklarasikan berdirinya suatu organisasi dengan nama Ikatan Jamaah Ahlulbait Indonesia (IJABI) berdomisili di Jakarta, Ibukota Negara Republik Indonesia, dengan anggaran dasar sebagai berikut :

ANGGARAN DASAR IKATAN JAMAAH AHLULBAIT INDONESIA (IJABI)

Bismilahi Ta'ala
Muqaddimah

Rahwa kecintaan kepada Ahlulbait AS telah menjadi titik pusat yang mempersatukan kaum muslimin, apapun mazhabnya. Kecintaan kepada Allah tidak dapat dipenuhi tanpa kecintaan kepada Rasulullah SAW dan kecintaan kepada Rasulullah SAW hanya dapat diwujudkan dengan kecintaan kepada ahlulbaitnya.

Selama berabad-abad umat Islam Indonesia telah berusaha memelihara dan mengembangkan kecintaan kepada ahlulbait AS peraya melanjutkan perjuangan untuk mempersatukan dan memperkuat barisan dengan mendirikan organisasi kemasyarakatan yang didirikan pada keyakinan akan tauhid, nubuwwah, imamah, keadilan, serta kepulangan hamba kepada Maula-Nya yang Rahman dan Rahim.

Dengan mengambil berkah pada sabda Nabi SAW, "Perumpamaan Ahlulbait seperti bahtera Nuh AS (dikala tofan dan banjir). Barangsiapa menaiki bahtera itu selamat. Barangsiapa yang meninggalkannya tenggelam dan terhempas". Kami membentuk Ikatan Jamaah Ahlulbait Indonesia sebagai bahtera keselamatan kami.

Dengan ucapan *Bismilahi majreha wa mursaha* dan dengan pancaran cahaya pencerahan dari gemintang keluarga Nabi AS, kami melayarkan bahtera IJABI yang akan melindungi segenap pecinta Ahlulbait dari musuh-musuhnya, mengembangkan pemikiran secara spiritual, intelektual, dan moral, serta mensejahterakan seluruh kaum mukminin lahir dan bathin. Pada akhirnya, kami ingin menyalurkan bahtera ini dengan bahtera-bahtera lainnya di seluruh dunia di bawah terkat dan kepemimpinan Pemilik Zaman Imam Manda Al-Muntazar 'ajjala Allahu farajahu al-syarif.

BAB I NAMA, WAKTU, DAN KEDUDUKAN

Pasal 1
Nama

Organisasi ini bernama Ikatan Jamaah Ahlulbait Indonesia disingkat IJABI.

Pasal 2
Waktu dan Tempat Kedudukan
Didirikan pada tanggal 29 Rabiul Awwal 1423 H bertepatan
dengan tanggal 1 Juli 2000 M untuk waktu yang tidak
ditentukan dan berkedudukan di Ibukota Negara.

BAB II ASAS

Pasal 3
Asas
IJABI berasaskan Pancasila sebagai satu-satunya asas.

BAB III TUJUAN, USAHA, DAN SIFAT

Pasal 4
Tujuan
1. Terwujudnya masyarakat madani yang berakhlak mulia
dengan ketaatan pada Allah, Rasul-Nya dan Ahlulbait
AS.
2. Mengenalkan dan menyebarkan Islam yang diriwayatkan
melalui jalur Keluarga Nabi SAW.
3. Melakukan pemberdayaan masyarakat ekonomi kecil dan
lemah (mustadh'afin).
4. Mengembangkan kajian-kajian spiritual dan
intelektual.
5. Menjalin dan memelihara hubungan baik dengan seluruh
organisasi Islam dan lembaga-lembaga kemanusiaan
lainnya.

Pasal 5
Usaha
1. Membangun diri untuk hidup berjamaah dan berimanah.
2. Mengenalkan dan menyebarkan Islam yang diriwayatkan
melalui jalur Keluarga Nabi SAW.
3. Melakukan pemberdayaan masyarakat ekonomi kecil dan
lemah (mustadh'afin).
4. Mengembangkan kajian-kajian spiritual dan
intelektual.
5. Menjalin dan memelihara hubungan baik dengan seluruh
organisasi Islam dan lembaga-lembaga kemanusiaan
lainnya.
6. Mengadakan dan mengembangkan lembaga pendidikan dan
dakwah.
7. Membangun Lembaga Ekonomi.
8. Melakukan penelitian, pengkajian, keislaman, dan
kebudayaan.
9. Menerbitkan bulletin, buku-buku, majalah dan koran.
10. Mengadakan pendekatan-pendekatan (taqrif) kepada
ormas-ormas Islam dan menciptakan ukhuwah Islamiyah
antar sesama Islam.

Pasal 6
Sifat
IJABI bersifat independen dan non-sektarian.

BAB IV STATUS, FUNGSI, DAN PERAN

Pasal 7 Status

IJABI adalah organisasi kemasyarakatan.

Pasal 8 Fungsi

IJABI berperan untuk membantu mewujudkan masyarakat madani yang berkeadilan dan beradab.

BAB V KEANGGOTAAN

Pasal 10

1. Yang dapat menjadi anggota IJABI adalah setiap orang yang sanggup menaati Anggaran Dasar dan Anggaran Rumah Tangga IJABI.
2. Anggaran IJABI terdiri dari Anggota Muda, Anggota, dan Anggota Kehormatan.

BAB VI STRUKTUR ORGANISASI

Pasal 11 Kekuasaan

Kekuasaan dipegang oleh Mukhtamar (Mukhtamar Istimewa), Musyawarah Wilayah (Musyawarah Wilayah Istimewa), Musyawarah Daerah (Musyawarah Daerah Istimewa), Musyawarah Cabang (Musyawarah Cabang Istimewa), dan Musyawarah Ranting (Musyawarah Ranting Istimewa).

Pasal 12 Kepemimpinan

Kepemimpinan organisasi dipegang oleh Dewan Syura, Pengurus Pusat (PP), Pengurus Wilayah (PW), Pengurus Daerah (PD), dan Pengurus Cabang (PC), Pengurus sub-Cabang (PsC), Pengurus Ranting (PR), dan Pengurus sub-Ranting (PsR).

Pasal 13 Kepengurusan

1. Pengurus IJABI terdiri dari Dewan Syura dan Dewan Tanfiziyyah (PP IJABI).
 2. Dewan Syura adalah kepemimpinan yang bersifat konsultatif kolektif dan merupakan lembaga tinggi organisasi.
 3. Dewan Tanfiziyyah adalah pelaksana harian keputusan-keputusan mukhtamar.
- Kepengurusan Dewan Syura dan Tanfiziyyah masing-masing dipimpin oleh seorang Rais 'Aam Syuriah dan Rais 'Aam Tanfiziyyah.

Pasal 14 Lembaga Otonom

Untuk melaksanakan tugas dan kewajiban dalam bidang khusus, organisasi dapat membentuk dan membina beberapa lembaga otonom/Badan Khusus.

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12. Habib Lutfi ibn Ali ibn Hasyim bin Yahya, Chairman of the Jam'iyyah Ahl al-Thariqah al-Mu'tabarrah (the NU-affiliated association of recognized Tarekat); Pekalongan, Central Java, 11 August 2009.

13. Hasan Dalil, Shi'i activist, Jakarta, 04 July 2009.
14. Hasyim Muzadi, Chairman of the Central Executive Board of NU, Jakarta, 05 July 2009.
15. Jalaluddin Rakhmat, Chairman of the Advisory Board of IJABI, Bandung, West Java, 25 July 2009.
16. Mahdi Alaydrus, a lecturer at the Shi'i University of Madilitul Ilmi in Depok, Jakarta, 07 July 2009.
17. Maryam Umar Alhaddad, Secretary of the Fatimah Azzahra Foundation, in Condet, East Jakarta, Indonesia, 09 August 2009.
18. Miftah Fauzi, Chairman of the Muthahhari Foundation, Bandung, 23 July, 2009.
19. Thohir Abdullah Alkaf, Chairman of Al Bayyinat, Pekalongan, Central Java, 12 August 2009.

I also conducted a series of interviews with members of Shi'a community in Jakarta, Pekalongan and Bandung but for some reasons they did not want their names to be cited in this thesis.

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