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‘*Ghazwul fikri* or Arabisation? Indonesian Muslim responses to globalisation’,

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## ***Ghazwul fikri* or Arabisation?**

### **Indonesian Muslim responses to globalisation**

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#### **Globalisation perceived as a threat: *ghazwul fikri* or Arabisation?**

In the 1990s, discussions in committed Muslim circles in Indonesia were enriched with the concept of *ghazwul fikri* (*al-ghazw al-fikri*, invasion of ideas), which became a catch-all term to refer to various forms of Western cultural invasion: the impact of American movies, popular music, dance and dress styles on Indonesian popular culture, the emergence of middle class lifestyles with ‘Westernised’ consumption preferences, but above all certain styles of religious thought and attitudes towards religion that the speakers disapproved of, notably secularism, liberalism, and the idea of religious pluralism.

Critics were quick to point out that this concept was itself a symptom of another kind of cultural invasion. The term *ghazwul fikri* was part of a much larger complex of ideas, an entire *Weltanschauung*, that was adopted lock, stock and barrel from Middle Eastern Islamist sources and propagated by certain local actors backed up by lavish funding from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries.<sup>1</sup> Many Indonesian Muslims were much concerned at what they perceived as a concerted effort to Arabise Indonesian Islam and wipe out local practices and liberal interpretations that had been influential among wide segments of the population.

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<sup>1</sup> The earliest Indonesian book on the subject that I have found is a straightforward translation from the Arabic: A.S. [Abd al-Sabur] Marzuq, *Ghazwul Fikri: Invasi Pemikiran*, Jakarta: Al Kautsar, 1990. A year earlier, a similar text was published in Singapore: Ali Abdul Halim Mahmud, *Invasi Pemikiran dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Masyarakat Islam Masakini*, Singapura: Pustaka Nasional, 1989. A perusal of relevant journals may yet show up earlier usage of the term in the late 1980s, but these are the books one finds often quoted by later Indonesian authors. The term occurs with increasing frequency in Islamic magazines and journals through the 1990s, and its continuing occurrence in the 2000s can easily be attested with a Google search (25,300 hits when last accessed on 14 December 2010, most of them magazine articles from the previous five years).

Against a perceived Arab-style ‘political Islam’, prominent intellectuals pleaded for what they called ‘cultural Islam’: the expression of Islamic values in Indonesian cultural forms.

Both the proponents of the *ghazwul fikri* thesis and the opponents of Arabisation appeared to share the perception that Indonesian Islam was under threat of being subverted by foreign influences and the assumption that local cultures are largely passive recipients of global flows. In their call for resistance, however, they implicitly conceded the possibility of rejection or selective adoption of ‘foreign’ ideas and practices. In fact, Indonesia’s highly distinctive cultures are not the product of relative isolation from foreign influences, but came about precisely because of centuries and millennia of active interaction with powerful cultural flows that reached the archipelago from across the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.<sup>2</sup> Cultural borrowing was a creative process, in which the ‘foreign’ elements were soon incorporated into a distinctively local synthesis.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the dominant global flows impacting on Indonesia, each supported by communities of settlers, hailed from three powerful centres: the West, the world of Islam, and China. As a nation, Indonesia was shaped by Dutch colonialism and Islam-inspired resistance to foreign rule. Islam came to Indonesia from various regions and in many different forms, but in the course of the nineteenth century, Arab traders from Hadramaut and local men returned from the pilgrimage to Mecca were the most important cultural brokers. Like the colonial administration, networks of Muslim learning and trade transcended ethnic boundaries; for both, moreover, the Malay language, with its numerous Arabic loanwords, was the preferred medium of communication.<sup>3</sup> The Malay language, and other cultural expressions associated with it (poetry, song, music), came to constitute the core of Indonesia’s national identity.

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<sup>2</sup> This was brought out, for a much earlier period, in the important studies on Southeast Asian early states by Georges Coedès, notably *Les états hindouisés d’Indochine et d’Indonésie*, Paris: De Boccard, 1948.

<sup>3</sup> There were in fact a number of different forms of Malay, ranging from *kitab* Malay, the idiom of religious texts translated from, and often maintaining the syntactic structures of, Arabic, to the ‘civilised’ standard Malay sponsored by the colonial administration in the last decades of Dutch rule. On the latter see: Doris Jedamski, ‘Balai Pustaka: a colonial wolf in sheep’s clothing’, *Archipel* 44, 1992, 23-46. *Pasar* Malay, the language of the market, used between Chinese middlemen and their indigenous customers, was quite different again and showed much less Arabic influence.

Muslims have always looked towards Mecca and Medina as the prestigious heartland, and many travelled there to fulfil not only a religious obligation but to gain spiritual power and prestige. Upon their return, they often attempted to reform local religious practices and bring them more in line with what they had witnessed in Arabia. The history of Islam in Indonesia is one of wave upon wave of reform, brought about by these returning pilgrims, after which the reformed practices and beliefs were soon accommodated in new local adaptations or gave rise to anti-reformist protests.<sup>4</sup>

The regular communications with Arabia were not the only ‘foreign’ factor impacting on Indonesian Islam, however. The leading nationalists of the early twentieth century had received their education in Dutch schools and had no access to Arabic texts. Those among them who were committed to Islam and considered Islam to be part of Indonesia’s national identity in many cases depended on Dutch scholarship on Islam and a Dutch translation of the Qur’an. The first association of such Muslim intellectuals, Jong Islamieten Bond (JIB, Young Muslims League, established in 1925), published its journal, *Het Licht* (The Light), in Dutch rather than Malay. The discussions in the association also indicated a quite Westernised approach to Islamic issues.<sup>5</sup> Around the same time, the Ahmadiyah also began to gain influence in the same circles, due to its English-language publications and the English-speaking missionaries it had sent from British India to Indonesia. Another significant European contribution to the distinctive character of Indonesian Islam concerned its associational life. The major Muslim associations, such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, were established according to Dutch Indies legislation and followed the model of Dutch Christian religious associations, also in terms of the type of activities they engaged in.

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<sup>4</sup> Merle C. Ricklefs, ‘Six Centuries of Islamization in Java’, in: Nehemia Levtzion (ed.), *Conversion to Islam*, New York: Holmes and Meier, 1979, pp. 100-28; idem, *Polarising Javanese Society: Islamic and Other Visions (c.1830-1930)*, Singapore: NUS Press, 2007; Martin van Bruinessen, ‘Global and Local in Indonesian Islam’, *Southeast Asian Studies* (Kyoto) 37, 1999, 158-75.

<sup>5</sup> Ridwan Saidi, *Cendekiawan Islam Zaman Belanda: Studi Pergerakan Intelektual JIB dan SIS ('25-'42)*, Jakarta: Yayasan Piranti Ilmu, 1989.

In a much earlier period, there had also been a distinctive Chinese component in Indonesian Islam, still recognisable in the architecture of certain mosques and saints' shrines.<sup>6</sup> The role of Chinese Muslims in the conversion to Islam of Java's north coast remains a highly controversial subject, but in the past decade, recent Chinese converts to Islam have made an effort to highlight and revive the relations between China's Muslim communities and those of Indonesia.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, there are clear traces of Muslim influences hailing from various coastal regions of India in the early phases of Islamisation, and in the twentieth century we find that various South Asian reform movements also made incursions in Indonesia.<sup>8</sup>

In summing up, we may state that the global flows impacting on, or interacting with, Indonesian Islam have been highly diverse and have originated from different cultural regions. 'The Middle East' and 'the West', which both include distinct sub-regions, have been the dominant and to some extent competing sources of the flow of ideas, with minor and less immediately visible roles being played by China and South Asia. Indonesian actors, both individuals and associations, had much more agency in this process than the discourse of 'cultural invasion' or 'Arabisation' suggests, as the following sections will show.

### **The two main streams of Indonesian Islam**

For much of the twentieth century, it was common to speak of Indonesian Islam as consisting of two main streams: Reformists (often dubbed 'Modernists' in Indonesia) and

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<sup>6</sup> Denys Lombard and Claudine Salmon, 'Islam et sinité', *Archipel* 30, 1985, 73-94; cf. the observations on the pervasive Chinese influence on Javanese culture in general in: Denys Lombard, *Le carrefour javanais: essai d'histoire globale*, 3 vols, Paris: Editions de l'EHESS, 1990.

<sup>7</sup> Two respected Dutch scholars lent their prestige to a fascinating but unreliable Malay text claiming that the most saints of Java's north coast were of Chinese origin: H.J. de Graaf and Th.G.Th. Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th Centuries: The Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, Clayton: Monash University, 1984. On the recent efforts to re-establish a connection with China's Muslim (Hue) minority, see: Syuan Yuan Chiou, 'Building Traditions for Bridging Difference: Islamic Imaginary Homelands of Chinese-Indonesian Muslims in East Java', in: Kwok-bun Chan, Jan W. Walls and David Hayward (eds), *East-West Identities: Globalization, Localization & Hybridization*, Leiden: Brill, 2007, pp. 265-278.

<sup>8</sup> This concerns notably the Ahmadiyah, arriving in the 1920s, and the Tablighi Jama'at, active in Indonesia since the 1980s. See: Iskandar Zulkarnain, *Gerakan Ahmadiyah di Indonesia*, Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2005; Farish A. Noor, 'On the Permanent Hajj: The Tablighi Jama'at in Southeast Asia' *South East Asia Research* 18(4), 2010, 707-34.

Traditionalists. These streams were most clearly represented by the large associations Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, respectively. Muhammadiyah (established in 1912), was doctrinally inspired by reformist Islam of the kind represented by the Egyptian reformists Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, and had a programme of social and educational activism that competed with, but to some extent emulated, Christian missionary activities. Its 'modernism' was apparent in its inclination towards a rational interpretation of the Qur'an and its embracing of modern science, but from the start there was also a puritan, fundamentalist strand. Muhammadiyah activists fiercely opposed what they considered to be superstitious beliefs and practices, both because these were incompatible with a scientific worldview and because they had no basis in the Qur'an and *hadith*. There were various other Reformist movements and associations, but Muhammadiyah has remained the most important and best organized of them.<sup>9</sup>

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) was established in 1926 in response to developments in the Middle East that threatened established religious practices and religious authorities – the abolishment of the Caliphate by Turkish revolutionaries and the conquest of Mecca by the Wahhabis under the Al Saud family – and that made their impact felt in Indonesia.<sup>10</sup> NU aimed to protect the world of traditional Islamic scholars (*kiai, ulama*), traditional Islamic schools (*pesantren*), and traditional Islamic practices such as grave visitations (*ziyarah*) and celebrations of *Mulud*, the Prophet's birthday, from the puritanical zeal of the Reformists.

Until the 1970s, Muhammadiyah and NU represented distinctly different constituencies and different orientations towards the world. NU had a rural following; education in its *pesantrens* consisted predominantly of the study of Arabic texts on *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), and its leaders derived their authority from having studied such works in the

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<sup>9</sup> The classical study by Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1940*, Kuala Lumpur, etc.: Oxford University Press, 1973 (originally a PhD thesis at Cornell University in 1963), remains the best overview of Indonesian Islamic reformism. A rather different, and much smaller movement than Muhammadiyah, which was important because within the Reformist stream it exerted a consistent influence towards the purification of religious practices, was Persatuan Islam. See: Howard M. Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State: The Persatuan Islam (PERSIS), 1923 to 1957*, Leiden: Brill, 2001.

<sup>10</sup> On the impact these developments made among Indonesian Muslims, and on the establishment of NU specifically, see: Martin van Bruinessen, 'Muslims of the Dutch East Indies and the Caliphate Question', *Studia Islamika* 2 no.3, 1995, 115-40; idem, *NU: Tradisi, Relasi-relasi Kuasa, Pencarian Wacana Baru*, Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1994.

heartlands of Islam: in Mecca or at the Azhar in Cairo. Muhammadiyah had a largely urban membership; its schools taught a modern curriculum consisting almost exclusively of general subjects, which gave access to secular higher education. Muhammadiyah and other Reformist organisations could boast large numbers of high school and university graduates among their members, many of whom knew some English; NU leaders at best knew some Arabic as their main foreign language, and had detailed knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence but lacked an education in general subjects. When they entered politics, the only cabinet position available to the Traditionalists was that of Minister of Religious Affairs; the other portfolios were invariably occupied by Reformist Muslims, secular nationalists, or non-Muslim politicians.

Under the Japanese occupation (1942-45) and during the struggle for independence, Muslim Reformists and Traditionalists were united under a single umbrella organisation, which was transformed into a political party: Masyumi. However, in 1952 NU broke away from Masyumi to become a political party in its own right, and throughout the 1950s we find four large political parties, each with a plethora of affiliated associations, dominating the scene. Two of them, the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI) and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), were secular parties, which had strong roots in Javanese syncretism and were natural allies of Sukarno's populist nationalism and anti-imperialism. On most issues that did not directly concern religion, the Traditionalist NU accommodated itself with the de facto power holders; its leaders often acted as Sukarno's Muslim legitimisers.<sup>11</sup> Masyumi was the only among the four main parties to consistently defend liberal democracy as well as economic liberalism and to oppose Sukarno's populism. Its leaders, like those of its smaller ally, the Socialist Party of Indonesia (PSI), were on average more cosmopolitan than their colleagues in other parties, and they were generally pro-Western and anti-Communist. In 1958, several leaders of both parties took part in a CIA-supported regional rebellion against Sukarno's increasingly dictatorial rule.<sup>12</sup> This provided the rationale for a ban of both Masyumi and PSI, which was never to be lifted again; the Suharto regime remained distrustful of these parties,

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<sup>11</sup> Howard M. Federspiel, 'Sukarno and his Muslim apologists: a study of accommodation between traditional Islam and an ultranationalist ideology', in: Donald P. Little (ed.), *Essays on Islamic Civilization presented to Niyazi Berkes*, Leiden: Brill, 1976.

<sup>12</sup> James Mossman, *Rebels in Paradise: Indonesia's Civil War*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1961; Audrey Kahin and George McTurnan Kahin, *Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia*, New York: The New Press, 1995.

even though its economic policies were designed and managed by American-educated PSI intellectuals.

Well into the New Order period, it remained generally the case that in politics, as in religion, the Traditionalists were largely inward-looking, whereas the Reformists were more cosmopolitan and open to Western political ideas even while embracing Islamic reformist views hailing from the Middle East or South Asia. To the extent that the Traditionalists were oriented towards the world abroad, their compass did not swerve from the traditional legal scholars of Mecca and Cairo, although they firmly rejected the dominant reformist currents of those places (Wahhabism and the Muslim Brotherhood), which became ever more important to Indonesia's Reformist Muslims. In spite of the ban by Sukarno and the continuation of that ban under Suharto's New Order, Masyumi remained the focus of the nearly primordial self-identity of a huge constituency, partially overlapping with that of Muhammadiyah. As a social category, Reformist Muslims showed a remarkable stability across the generations, and they remain a distinct group. However, in their religious orientation, there was a gradual shift from Modernist to Fundamentalist or Islamist versions of Islamic reform, which accompanied a political reorientation away from the West towards the Middle East. Belonging to NU was similarly a matter of almost instinctive allegiance, transmitted from generation to generation, but within the Traditionalist outlook important new developments took place from the 1970s onwards, as the intellectual horizons of the younger generation widened. Some prominent young NU members came to adopt positions that brought them close to Islamic modernism, even as many Reformists moved away from it.

### **Modernists, Traditionalists, Fundamentalists, and Islamists**

There is no consensus even among academic observers of Indonesian Islam on the terms to be used in referring to the various groups, movements and theological positions. I shall keep the number of terms to a minimum and refrain from detailed subdivisions. The terms 'Reformist' and 'Traditionalist' will be used primarily to describe the two broad mainstreams of Indonesian Islam as social categories. (Common self-descriptions within these groups are *Modernis* or *Islam pembaharuan* and *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah*, respectively.) Within these groups, there have been various tendencies, and considerable shifts have occurred between

positions that emphasise different aspects of reform or tradition. By ‘Modernists’ I shall mean those who adopt a positive attitude towards many aspects of modernity, notably the use of reason and contextual understanding in interpreting the sacred texts. This is the position of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century thinkers known as Islamic Modernists – Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in British India and Muhammad Abduh in Egypt – who had a considerable influence among Indonesian Reformists.<sup>13</sup> I shall also include those Muslim thinkers and activists who accommodated themselves to distinctly modern ideologies such as nationalism, socialism, or liberalism.

Those who reject such modern notions in favour of a return to the original sources, and who claim that these should be literally understood, I shall call ‘Fundamentalists.’ The prototypes of Islamic Fundamentalist movements are the late eighteenth-century Wahhabi movement in the Arabian Peninsula and the Ahl-i Hadith movement in South Asia, and currently the purest representatives of this category are the various Salafi movements.<sup>14</sup> Among the Indonesian Reformist movements, Persis, which consistently struggled against beliefs and practices that had no basis in the Qur’an and *hadith*, was always closest to the Fundamentalist end of the spectrum. However, Persis’ most prominent intellectual, Mohamad Natsir, who during the 1950s was also Masyumi’s most prominent politician, was in many respects a Modernist, and a staunch defender of liberal democracy and human rights.<sup>15</sup> As the founder of the Indonesian Council for Islamic Predication (Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, or DDII) and the main Indonesian representative in the Saudi-sponsored Muslim World League (Rabitat al-` Alam

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<sup>13</sup> Muhammad Khalid Masud, ‘Islamic Modernism’, in: Muhammad Khalid Masud, Armando Salvatore and Martin van Bruinessen (eds), *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates*, Edinburgh University Press, 2009, pp. 237-60.

<sup>14</sup> The French political scientist Olivier Roy has popularised the term ‘Neo-Fundamentalist’ for contemporary, non-political movements of this kind, contrasting them with ‘Islamist’ movements, which have an agenda of political transformation of society. Cf. Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1994.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Burns, *Revelation and Revolution: Natsir and the Pancasila*, Townsville: Committee of South-East Asian Studies, James Cook University of North Queensland, 1981; Endang Saifuddin Anshari and M. Amien Rais (eds), *Pak Natsir 80 Tahun*, 2 vols, Jakarta: Media Da’wah, 1988; Yusril Ihza Mahendra, ‘Modernisme Islam dan demokrasi: pandangan politik Mohammad Natsir’, *Islamika* (Jakarta) vol.1, no.3, 1994, 64-73.

al-Islami, abbreviated as Rabita), he laid the foundations for a radical reorientation, away from modernism, of Indonesian Reformist Islam during the New Order period.<sup>16</sup>

Islamism, as I shall use the term, is a political ideology that offers a model of an alternative social, economic, and political order, based on Islamic principles. The chief model for all Islamist movements was the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood; later, the Iranian revolution provided a slightly different, more revolutionary model. The DDII, established in 1967, was the chief channel through which the literature and ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood were disseminated and widely discussed among Indonesian Reformist Muslims. In 1945 and again in the late 1950s, leaders of both NU and Masyumi had made attempts to enshrine the *shari`ah* in the Indonesian constitution (in the form of a statement that Muslim citizens were obliged to live by the *shari`ah*),<sup>17</sup> but this does not make them Islamists according to my use of this term. Not only were they willing to compromise with secular nationalists and drop references to the *shari`ah* in the interest of national unity, but their understanding of living by the *shari`ah* probably did not go beyond matters of worship, marriage, and inheritance, and they never questioned the legal system, which was based on Dutch law. It was only after the banning of Masyumi that some of its former leaders and a part of its constituency turned towards Islamism, under the influence of developments in the Middle East.

Indonesia had, however, a home-grown Islamist movement, the Darul Islam or Islamic State of Indonesia (Negara Islam Indonesia, NII), which emerged in the final period of the struggle for Independence and remained active as an insurgent movement in control of certain regions well into the 1960s.<sup>18</sup> The Darul Islam recognised no other law or system of moral values

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<sup>16</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, 'Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia', *South East Asia Research* 10 no.2, 2002, 117-54; Lukman Hakiem and Tamsil Linrung, *Menunaikan Panggilan Risalah: Dokumentasi Perjalanan 30 Tahun Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia*, Jakarta: Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, 1997.

<sup>17</sup> On the debates on the so-called Jakarta Charter, the phrase concerning Muslim citizens' obligation to live by the *shari`ah*, see: B. J. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971, pp. 23-33, 90-101; H. Endang Saifuddin Anshari, *Piagam Jakarta 22 Juni 1945 dan Sejarah Konsensus Nasional antara Nasionalis Islami dan Nasionalis 'Sekular' tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia, 1945-1959*, Bandung: Pustaka, 1981.

<sup>18</sup> C. van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981; Holk H. Dengel, *Darul-Islam. Kartosuwirjos Kampf um einen islamischen Staat in Indonesien*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1986; Chiara Formichi, *Islam and the Making of the Nation: Kartosuwiryo and Political Islam in Twentieth-Century Indonesia*, Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012.

apart from the *shari`ah*. Its main leader, Kartosuwirjo, had a Reformist background but many Traditionalist *ulama* also supported the movement (until they were co-opted by the Jakarta government). Darul Islam does not easily fit the Reformist-Traditionalist dichotomy; it found supporters in both streams. After the capture or killing of its leaders, the movement went underground and broke up into a number of smaller groups; only after the demise of the New Order did it become clear that various factions of the Darul Islam remained very influential.<sup>19</sup>

The Traditionalists represent a different response to modernity than the various Reformist currents, but like the other movements mentioned, they are an essentially modern phenomenon. In defence of traditional beliefs and practices, they had recourse to the modern medium of an association, incorporated according to Dutch Indies law, and to print publications.<sup>20</sup> The very defence of traditions was part of the process of reflective awareness that Eickelman and Piscatori have called ‘objectification’ and considered one of the most conspicuous aspects of modernity.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, in the course of time Traditionalists have adopted many of the ideas and attitudes against which they originally organised resistance, and there have been both Fundamentalist and Modernist trends among them. In the course of the 1980s and 1990s, it was in the NU rather than in Muhammadiyah that one found the most interesting intellectual developments.<sup>22</sup> Traditionalist Islam remains focussed on three main areas of interest: *fiqh* or Islamic jurisprudence, devotional rituals, and Sufism; but in all three areas there has been a general trend towards increasing conformity with the Qur’an and *hadith*.

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<sup>19</sup> International Crisis Group, ‘Recycling militants in Indonesia: Darul Islam and the Australian Embassy bombing’, Singapore/Brussels: International Crisis Group, Asia Report No.92, 2005; Nur Khaliq Ridwan, *Regenerasi NII: Membedah Jaringan Islam Jihadi di Indonesia*, Jakarta: Erlangga, 2008; Quinton Temby, ‘Imagining an Islamic State in Indonesia: From Darul Islam to Jemaah Islamiyah’, *Indonesia* 89, 2010, 1-37.

<sup>20</sup> There was nothing self-evident about the establishment of the first Traditionalist association, Nahdlatul Ulama, in 1926. It only took place after the senior scholar of East Java, Hasyim Asy’ari, had provided religious arguments allowing the establishment of a *jam`iyah ijtima`iyah*, ‘societal association’. Those involved were acutely aware that this was a major innovation. The essay in which Hasyim Asy’ari developed his argument was reprinted in: Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, *Hasil Mukhtamar Nahdlatul Ulama ke 27 Situbondo: Nahdlatul Ulama Kembali ke Khittah 1926*, Semarang: Sumber Barokah, 1985, pp. 121-32.

<sup>21</sup> Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, Princeton University Press, 1996.

<sup>22</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, ‘Traditions for the Future: The Reconstruction of Traditionalist Discourse within NU’, in: Greg Barton and Greg Fealy (eds), *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia*, Clayton, VIC: Monash Asia Institute, 1996, pp. 163-89.

During the New Order period, the most prominent and apparently influential Muslim public intellectuals were Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid: a former student leader of Masyumi background and a scion of the most prominent family of scholars and politicians in NU, respectively. In spite of their different backgrounds, and by different intellectual trajectories, they came to adopt similar positions on many issues, such as the cultivation of inter-religious harmony and the protection of minorities, the advocacy of ‘cultural’ as opposed to ‘political’ Islam (or, in other words, Indonesian expressions of Islam as opposed to transnational Islam), and the defence of human rights and liberal democratic principles. Some observers, notably Greg Barton, have labelled both Madjid and Wahid as ‘Neo-Modernists;’ more recently, some of their followers have adopted the term ‘liberal Islam’ as a self-description, while some of Wahid’s younger admirers prefer the term ‘Post-Traditional.’ Rather than lumping them all together, I believe it makes good sense to distinguish between the various Modernist trends, based on their origins in Indonesian Reformist or Traditionalist Islam, and especially on the basis of the sort of religious literature in which they locate the roots of their discourse.<sup>23</sup>

### **Studying Islam in the West: The New Order and its Favoured Muslim Discourses**

Indonesians who wished to increase their knowledge and understanding of Islam had traditionally spent periods under the guidance of prominent scholars in Mecca or at the Azhar (hardly any Indonesians studied in the Indian subcontinent, as some Malaysians did). The takeover by Suharto in 1965-66 opened Indonesia to the West, and scholarships for study in North America became readily available. The Muslim party Masyumi, suppressed by Suharto in 1959, remained banned but a number of young Masyumi activists received grants to study in North America. Harun Nasution and Mukti Ali received their doctorates in Islamic studies from Canada’s McGill University (where W. Cantwell Smith had established an institute that offered a sympathetic approach to the subject). Nasution wrote his thesis on Muhammad

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<sup>23</sup> Greg Barton, ‘Indonesia’s Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid as Intellectual `ulamâ: The Meeting of Islamic Traditionalism and Modernism in Neo-Modernist Thought’, *Studia Islamika* vol.4 no.1, 1997, 29-81; Luthfi Assyaukanie (ed.), *Wajah Liberal Islam Indonesia*, Jakarta: Jaringan Islam Liberal, 2002; Martin van Bruinessen, ‘Liberal and Progressive Voices in Indonesian Islam’, in: Shireen T Hunter (ed.), *Reformist Voices of Islam: Mediating Islam and Modernity*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2008, pp. 187-207.

Abduh and became Indonesia's most prominent defender of rationalist Mu`tazila thought and a long-time rector of Jakarta's IAIN (Institut Agama Islam Negeri: State Institute of Islamic Studies). Mukti Ali's interest was in comparative religion; in 1971 he became the New Order's first Minister of Religious Affairs, and later was long the rector of Yogyakarta's IAIN. Both men had an enormous influence on younger generations of students and Muslim intellectuals.<sup>24</sup>

The first IAINs had already been established in the final days of the Sukarno period. The NU politician Saifuddin Zuhri, who was Sukarno's Minister of Religious Affairs, is usually credited with the furthering of these institutes as a channel of educational mobility for students of *pesantren* background, who had no access to other higher education. Under the New Order their number rapidly expanded until every province had one. The government relied on these institutes to create a class of enlightened religious officials, willing to function in a de facto secular environment and to accept the principle of more or less equal relations between the five officially recognised religions. From the mid-1980s onwards, perceiving the radicalising tendency among graduates from Middle Eastern countries, the Ministry of Religious Affairs intensified academic co-operation with Western countries and sent increasing numbers of IAIN graduates to Canada, the Netherlands, Australia, and Germany for postgraduate studies. Foreign scholars were invited to teach at IAINs. All in all, this was probably one of the few programs of 'religious engineering' anywhere in the world that were really successful. IAIN graduates in the religious bureaucracy, in the religious courts, and in education have proven to be a force of moderation and reason in the conflict-ridden years following the fall of the Suharto regime.

The most famous and influential of the American graduates was Nurcholish Madjid. He had been the chairman of the 'Modernist' Muslim student association HMI for two periods in the early New Order period, was singled out as a potential leader, and received exceptional treatment, completing his studies with a dissertation at the University of Chicago supervised by Fazlur Rahman. In the 1980s, when HMI alumni of his and later generations began filling

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<sup>24</sup> Described in greater detail in Martin van Bruinessen, 'What Happened to the Smiling Face of Indonesian Islam? Muslim Intellectualism and the Conservative Turn in Post-Suharto Indonesia', Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Working paper no. 222, 2011 (available online at <http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/workingpapers/wp222.pdf>).

the middle and higher ranks of the bureaucracy, universities, the media, and the business world, Nurcholish's discourse of renewal of Islamic thought gained dominance. Moderation, inter-religious understanding, bourgeois-liberal values, contextual interpretation of the Islamic sources, and respect for local tradition are some of the core elements of this discourse. In the 1990s, corresponding with the changing global conditions, democratic values and human rights, as well as a tendency towards perennialism and Sufi ideas, became increasingly salient. Nurcholish himself, though remaining personally modest, became Indonesia's Islamic superstar, loved by the rich and powerful, but also accepting invitations to appear in much less glamorous surroundings. His popularity and influence were much resented by those Muslims who were convinced that Islam and secularism do not go together and who thought he betrayed the ideals of the struggle to make Indonesia a more Islamic society and state.

### **The New Order's subaltern Muslims: DDII, campus Islam, the radical underground, and their transnational connections**

As was mentioned above, Masyumi had been a pro-Western party under Sukarno, and some of its leading members took part in the CIA-sponsored regional rebellion PRRI in 1958, which was the main reason why the party was banned. Masyumi leader Mohamad Natsir and his closest collaborators established DDII in 1967 as a vehicle to continue the old political struggle by new means: Islamising society from below by a concerted effort of *da`wa*. Internationally, DDII oriented itself not towards the West but towards the Middle East, and especially Saudi Arabia. Natsir himself was a member of the Founding Committee of the Rabita, and it was to play an important part in anchoring parts of the Indonesian *ummah* in another global network of education, communication, and action.

The Rabita was established in 1962 under Saudi sponsorship and was initially meant as a vehicle for supporting the conservative Saudi regime against Nasser's revolutionary Arab nationalism. Its leading members were not exclusively Salafi-oriented but included Islamist thinkers such as Maulana Maududi in Pakistan as well as several Sufis. Natsir and the DDII were not the only Indonesian contacts of the Rabita. A prominent conservative in NU, Kiai Haji Ahmad Sjaichu, was the Rabita's interface with Traditionalist Islam in Indonesia.

Another favoured counterpart was Kiai Haji Zarkasji of the 'modern' *pesantren* of Gontor, which occupied the middle ground between the Traditionalist and Reformist streams.<sup>25</sup> The youth organisation affiliated with the Rabita, WAMY (World Association of Muslim Youth), involved some Muslim activists in Indonesia, too, but never became as influential there as in Malaysia, where ABIM was closely connected with it and where WAMY opened its regional offices.

The Rabita provided the DDII – or rather, Natsir personally, as well as some of the other contact persons; all relations were personalised – with funds for building mosques and training preachers. More importantly, it made numerous grants available for study in Saudi Arabia. Recipients of these grants were to play leading parts in the Islamist and Salafi movements that flourished in semi-legality in the 1990s and came to the surface after 1998.

In the 1970s and 1980s (and continuing though the 1990s), the DDII and related publishing houses brought out translations of contemporary Islamist works. Initially, most of this literature was by authors affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood or Pakistan's Jama`at-i Islami – Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb and his brother Muhammad Qutb, Yusuf Qaradawi, Abu'l A'la Maududi – perhaps reflecting the fact that the Saudi *ulama* were not themselves producing books deemed to be appealing. Several leaders of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood then lived and taught in Saudi Arabia, and the Saudi regime endorsed the dissemination of their works abroad. (Only from the 1990s onwards was there a significant shift to the dissemination of more strictly apolitical, Salafi literature.) In the mid-1980s, Saudi-inspired publishing became strongly focused on the struggle against Shi`a influence, and there appeared a huge amount of anti-Shi`i literature (alongside polemics against other undesirables such as the Ahmadiyah, the Baha'i faith, the Jews, Freemasons, and the Lions Club).

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<sup>25</sup> On the *pesantren* of Gontor and its remarkable influence within institutionalised Islam in Indonesia, see: Lance Castles, 'Notes on the Islamic School at Gontor', *Indonesia* (Cornell) 1, 1966, 30-45; Martin van Bruinessen, 'Divergent Paths from Gontor: Muslim Educational Reform and the Travails of Pluralism in Indonesia', in: Freek L. Bakker and Jan Sihar Artonang (eds), *On the Edge of Many Worlds [Festschrift Karel A. Steenbrink]*, Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2006, pp. 152-62 (available online at: [http://www.hum.uu.nl/medewerkers/m.vanbruinessen/publications/Bruinessen\\_Divergent\\_paths\\_from\\_Gontor.pdf](http://www.hum.uu.nl/medewerkers/m.vanbruinessen/publications/Bruinessen_Divergent_paths_from_Gontor.pdf)).

On university campuses and among mosque affiliated youth groups elsewhere, the Muslim Brotherhood literature fell upon willing ears. More overtly political student movements had been successfully repressed in the late 1970s, and strict new regulations prevented most organised student activity on campus, but the government allowed, and perhaps even encouraged, the cultivation of religious piety through study circles (known as *halqah* or *daurah*). Most of these were at some time connected with the DDII and modelled themselves to some extent on the Muslim Brotherhood or the Hizb ut-Tahrir, the other major transnational Islamist movement.

The major radical underground Islamic movement, Darul Islam, has remained almost untouched by global influences. It was a home-grown movement from the start, when it was a regional rebellion and would-be Islamic alternative to the secular Republic of Indonesia (NII and TII: the Islamic State of Indonesia and Indonesian Islamic Army). The one globalising incursion occurred when the Central Javanese DDII leader Abdullah Sungkar joined NII, sometime in the late 1970s. He reorganised his wing of the movement along Muslim Brotherhood lines, and injected Brotherhood-influenced, and later increasingly Salafi-oriented, ideas into the movement. Members of Sungkar's network, aided by a generous Arabian sponsor, were in the early 1980s among the first to travel to Pakistan and the Afghan border to take part in the Afghan *jihad*. Altogether, several hundreds of NII activists received training in Pakistan; later the Southern Philippines became a major training field for them.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, Sungkar and his associate Abu Bakar Ba'asyir fled from Indonesia to Malaysia in 1984, remaining there until the end of the Suharto regime. Their network (which broke with NII and was renamed Jama'ah Islamiyah, or JI) came to include a few Malaysians but remained remarkably isolated from the surrounding Malaysian society. The *jihad* experience did not result in a significantly more international orientation of this group. JI remained, like NII, primarily focused on Indonesia. Its religious discourse was influenced by the founding documents of its Egyptian namesake, al-Gama`a al-Islamiyya, which was a violent offshoot

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<sup>26</sup> The reports written by Sidney Jones for the International Crisis Group constitute by far the best overviews of the militant Islamic networks in Indonesia, even though especially the earlier reports tended to perceive more coherence and system in these networks than appears warranted. See especially: International Crisis Group, 'Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia: The Case of the "Ngruki Network" in Indonesia', Jakarta/Brussels: International Crisis Group, Indonesia Briefing, 8 August 2002; and idem, 'Recycling militants in Indonesia: Darul Islam and the Australian Embassy bombing', Singapore/Brussels: International Crisis Group, Asia Report No. 92, 2005.

of the Muslim Brotherhood, and by some of the ideas of global *jihād* associated with Al Qaeda, but it remained distinctly regional rather than part of a global movement. The other wings of the Darul Islam movement were even more local in orientation and show hardly any sign of being influenced by the discourse of the Islamist international, nor of being much concerned with its causes.

In late New Order Indonesia there emerged, however, a few networks that had a genealogical connection with Darul Islam and that were oriented more internationally.<sup>27</sup> They published a number of semi-legal magazines, such as *Suara Hidayatullah* and *Sabili*, which reported sympathetically on various *jihād* movements abroad and strongly appealed to international Islamic solidarity. Their discourse was virulently anti-Western and anti-Jewish, and openly supported *jihād*.<sup>28</sup>

Suharto's co-optation of many of his former Islamist critics around 1990, and the emergence of a faction within the armed forces that patronised Islamist groups were crucial factors in empowering Islamist discourses that were more strongly oriented towards the Middle East and critical of Western influence.<sup>29</sup> This occurred, not coincidentally, at a time when human rights discourse and the strengthening of civil society were becoming core elements of American (and more generally, Western) foreign policy. Anti-liberal and anti-Western Muslim discourses were welcomed and patronised by the elements in the regime that were for various reasons opposed to liberalisation and to Western political and cultural domination. In a departure from previous government policy, street demonstrations by radical Muslim

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<sup>27</sup> See Ridwan, *Regenerasi NII*; Temby, 'Imagining the Islamic state in Indonesia'; Martin van Bruinessen, 'Traditionalist and Islamist pesantrens in contemporary Indonesia', in: Farish A. Noor, Yoginder Sikand and Martin van Bruinessen (ed.), *The Madrasa in Asia: Political Activism and Transnational Linkages*, Amsterdam University Press, 2008, pp. 217-45.

<sup>28</sup> Several mainstream magazines, such as DDII's *Media Dakwah* and occasionally *Panji Masyarakat*, which was independent but ideologically close to Muhammadiyah, carried lighter versions of this discourse, but their overall content was much less oriented towards the international *jihadi* causes. One major publisher, Gema Insani Press, brought out numerous translations of Arabic works reflecting a range of radical as well as conservative Islamist orientations.

<sup>29</sup> Various analyses of the process are given by: R. William Liddle, 'The Islamic Turn in Indonesia: A Political Explanation', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55, 1996, 613-634; Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, Princeton University Press, 2000; Martin van Bruinessen, 'Islamic State or State Islam? Fifty Years of State-Islam Relations in Indonesia', in: Ingrid Wessel (ed.), *Indonesien am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Hamburg: Abera-Verlag, 1996, pp. 19-34.

groups, especially when protesting issues like Israeli policies in occupied Palestine, were allowed. The Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the World of Islam (KISDI, about which more below), established by DDII activists, became increasingly visible in Jakarta's streets during the 1990s: it was the precursor of the various vigilante groups that emerged after the fall of Suharto.

It was an apparent major shift in New Order policies towards Islam that provided the necessary conditions for an increasing orientation of large segments of the Muslim *ummah* towards the Middle East. The groundwork had been laid by organisations such as the DDII, and further developed by the various networks of study circles, both on and off campus. Two other factors, however, were probably crucial: the rapid development of modern electronic communications media and their widespread availability among Indonesia's middle classes, and the significantly increased numbers of Indonesians pursuing studies in the Middle East.

### **Arabisation, *Ghazwul Fikri*, and authenticity**

Young graduates returning from the Azhar and from Saudi universities were making a noticeable impact on public discourse by the early 1990s, making efforts to 'correct' established local practices, as earlier generations of returnees from Arabia had done, and especially criticising the ideas of 'liberal' and 'progressive' Muslim thinkers such as Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholish Madjid and their circles. Madjid had studied in the West and was frequently accused of having betrayed his origins; Wahid had extensive contacts with the world of international (that is, Western) NGOs and their interventionist agendas. Both moreover were vocal defenders of the specifically Indonesian expressions of Islam and the rights of religious minorities. In their view, and that of many mainstream Muslims, one should distinguish between Islam as a religion and Arab culture; a person could very well be a pious Muslim without adopting Arab culture. Their critics, on the other hand, tended to strongly reject all local Muslim practices as *bid`a*, 'innovation', that is, as deviations from authentic Islam. The liberal and tolerant attitudes displayed by the likes of Wahid and Madjid were decried as threats to genuine Islam, the unfortunate effects of globalisation, an invasion of dangerous alien ideas: *ghazwul fikri*.

Like the battle cries of the anti-globalisation movement, the term *ghazwul fikri* is itself a symptom of globalisation. The Indonesians who adopted the term and the accompanying worldview borrowed them lock, stock, and barrel from Arab, and more specifically Egyptian, authors. The increasing popularity of the term reflects increasing communication with the Arab Middle East, for which the DDII constituted a major channel. Usage of the term is strongly associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, and it is not surprising that it was first adopted by Indonesian circles that were sympathetic to the Brotherhood. In the Middle East, the concept of *al-ghazw al-fikri* appears to have gained currency following the Arab defeat in the Israeli-Arab war of 1967, and to be closely associated with the search for Arab authenticity.

In his famous book *The Arab Predicament*, the Lebanese liberal intellectual, Fouad Ajami, discusses various responses to that demoralising defeat, and his chosen representative of the radical Fundamentalist response is the prolific journalist Muhammad Jalal Kishk, who wrote no less than four books with *al-ghazw al-fikri* in the title.<sup>30</sup> One of these, *Al-Naksa wa-l-Ghazw al-Fikri* (The Setback and Cultural Invasion), was Kishk's analysis of the causes of the Arab defeat. Kishk offers here, according to Ajami's rendering, a view of history as a clash of civilisations that struggle for dominance. The notions of cosmopolitanism and so-called universal values are not neutral and supra-civilisational, but they are the weapons used by one of the civilisations in its effort to dominate the others. The Arab people are facing a new crusade from the West, different from the earlier two. The first wave of medieval crusaders, with the cross and the sword, was ultimately repelled; the second wave, which began with Napoleon's conquest of Egypt and colonial expansion, destroyed the self-confidence of the Muslim world, but ended with decolonisation. The current third crusade, unlike the earlier ones, is not military in nature and accepts the Arab states' political independence; its aim is to penetrate the minds of Muslims to make them accept the supremacy of the West. The Arabs lost the war with Israel because they had become alienated from their Muslim roots and had been seduced by the 'false doctrines of universalism',

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<sup>30</sup> Fouad Ajami, *The Arab predicament: Arab political thought and practice since 1967*, Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 50-62. Kishk's books that Ajami discusses are, in chronological order: *Al-Marksyya wa-l-Ghazw al-Fikri* (Marxism and Cultural Invasion, Cairo, 1965); *Al-Ghazw al-Fikri* (Kuwait, 1967); *Al-Naksa wa-l-Ghazw al-Fikri* (The Setback and Cultural Invasion, Beirut, 1969); and *Al-Qawmiyya wa-l-Ghazw al-Fikri* (Nationalism and Cultural Invasion, Beirut, 1970).

whether liberal or Marxist. The Arabs can only win the struggle for survival as a civilisation when they hold on to the authentic core of that civilisation, namely Islam, and do not allow their minds to be invaded by alien ideas and foreign ideologies.

Ajami places the discourse of *al-ghazw al-fikri* in the context of Arab soul-searching after the defeat of 1967, and increasing disappointment with socialism, liberalism and the various forms of nationalism that had dominated Arab political and intellectual life the 1950s and 1960s. Though himself a liberal, Ajami stresses that Kishk and people like him do not simply hark back to a pre-modern past; he recognises the modernity of Kishk's quest for authenticity. More than a decade before Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington popularised the notion of a clash of civilisations, Ajami distilled this notion from Kishk's writings. In his analysis, Kishk's refusal of 'universal' values did not stem from a visceral rejection of modernity but from his keen awareness of the rise and fall of civilisations in a Darwinian struggle for hegemony.<sup>31</sup>

### **Indonesian Muslims and the quest for authenticity**

Once it was transmitted to Indonesia, the notion of *ghazwul fikri* and the quest for authenticity inevitably gained new connotations. As some critics were quick to point out, the very notion of *ghazwul fikri* also represented a cultural invasion, though not from the West, and they questioned why authenticity should be sought for in an Arabian version of Islam. Many Indonesians were keenly aware of the history of colonialism and modern imperialism, and of the role Islam had played in uniting the nation during the centuries of colonial rule, but rejected the notion that one could only be a good Muslim by adopting Arab customs.

Let me open a parenthesis here, and relate my own first encounter with debates on authenticity, soon after I had arrived in Bandung for an extensive period of fieldwork there in

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<sup>31</sup> "Kishk's writings belie the notion that Muslim fundamentalists are reactionaries fixated on the image of a theocratic past that has to be restored. In Kishk's world view, cultures clash for preeminence: Some rise and conquer, and others surrender and are subjugated" (Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, p. 52). Lewis presented his analysis of the Middle Eastern conflict as a 'clash of civilizations' in a much-quoted article, 'The roots of Muslim rage', *The Atlantic Monthly* 266(3), 1990, and Huntington drew on this view for his 'The clash of civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs* 72(3), 1993. It is not unlikely that Lewis took the 'clash of civilizations' idea from Ajami's book without formal acknowledgement.

1983. In the first weeks, when still trying to get my bearings in the new environment, I frequently met with a friendly elderly gentleman, who happened to live next to the guesthouse where I was staying, and who was very knowledgeable about Javanese and Sundanese culture and the spirit beliefs in which I took a special interest. Pak Dody had grown up in the early years of Indonesian Independence and belonged to the last generation that had benefited from a Dutch school education. As a senior official of the Indonesian Red Cross, he had seen much of the world, was familiar with various foreign cultures, and found it easy to socialise with Westerners. After retirement, he had given in to his interest in the Javanese spiritual tradition and started practising meditation. He told me proudly about his son, who studied at the famous Agricultural Institute of Bogor and who was a very serious young man. The son often expressed his concern with all the things he thought were wrong in their country, its loss of moral strength, pride and confidence, and its surrender to foreign cultural domination. He pressed upon his father that as Indonesians they should be more conscious of their own, authentic values and find strength in their own traditions. I first thought that the son meant local knowledge and cultural practices and, like his father, wanted to reconnect with his Javanese roots, but Pak Dody explained his son meant a different set of authentic values and kept urging him to turn to (Reformist) Islam.

Pak Dody spoke with some bewilderment of his son's turn to Islam but refrained from expressing any explicit judgment. Perhaps some criticism was implied when he narrated his experiences in Saudi Arabia, where the Red Cross, because of its very name and flag, perpetually ran into problems and was accused of Christian proselytism. (Twenty years later, Islamists established an Indonesian Red Crescent Society, which they hoped could replace the Indonesian Red Cross.<sup>32</sup>) Pak Dody found the Saudis backward, and he was proud that many Indonesians of his generation were more cosmopolitan and had embraced what he considered universal values, but he was resigned to his son's adopting a different view altogether.

Many young men and women from families that were Westernised or strongly committed to specifically Indonesian varieties of spirituality have gone through a conversion similar to that

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<sup>32</sup> The Bulan Sabit Merah Indonesia (Indonesian Red Crescent) was established by people affiliated with the Islamist party PK as a charity and medical relief association in the early 2000s. It has in vain attempted to gain recognition by the ICRC, which recognises only member organisation in each country.

of Pak Dody's son. From their own point of view, this has widened their intellectual and geographical horizons and made them part of a larger, modern world. Their concern with political and social issues elsewhere in the Muslim world makes them, in a significant sense, cosmopolitans, although they inhabit a different cosmos than the liberals. This shifting orientation in self-identity occurred under the influence of both internal and external factors. To some extent, at least, this was an expression of cultural protest against Suharto's New Order and its cultivation of an invented national culture and national ideology, Pancasila. The major factors, however, were probably the rapidly increasing stream of communications with the Gulf states, made possible by the new electronic media and cheaper air travel, and the active proselytising efforts by rival Islamic movements in the Middle East. Recent graduates from the Middle East were active on major campuses as trainers of religious circles. Conflicts in the Middle East (Israel-Palestine, the Iranian Revolution and the Saudi response, the Afghani *jihad*) were brought to Muslim discussion groups through ever more vivid media: books, videocassettes, satellite television, and the Internet.

### **Middle East conflicts and their impact in Indonesia**

Indonesia never recognised the state of Israel. This was initially, I gather, a gesture of Third World solidarity in support of Arab nationalism. In the 1950s, Sukarno and Nasser, along with India's Nehru, came to lead a bloc of non-aligned nations in a coalition against the imperialism of the former colonial powers. However, as the definition of the conflict gradually changed from Jewish-Arab to Israeli-Palestinian to Jewish-Muslim, solidarity with Palestinian Arabs increasingly came to be seen as solidarity with fellow Muslims. In the aftermath of the Israeli-Arab war of 1967, Mohamad Natsir, the former chairman of the Masyumi party, visited Palestinian refugee camps, and upon his return to Indonesia told his countrymen how ashamed he had felt at seeing relief arriving from India and many other countries but not from Indonesia.<sup>33</sup> The *da`wa* organisation DDII, which Natsir founded the same year, was not only to train numerous preachers but also made a considerable effort to

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<sup>33</sup> Hilman Latief, 'Internationalising Domestic Aid: Charity Activism and Islamic Solidarity Movement in Contemporary Indonesia,' unpublished paper, presented in the International Graduate Student Conference, Gadjah Mada University, 23 November 2009.

inform Indonesian Muslims about political developments in the wider Muslim world, with special attention to Palestine. After the 1973 war, people affiliated with the DDII established a Muslim solidarity committee, and called upon Indonesian Muslims to donate blood for Palestine. This resulted in the embarrassing amount of 45 litres of blood being sent to Lebanon as Indonesia's expression of Muslim solidarity.<sup>34</sup>

It was only by the late 1980s that the issue of Palestine and the struggle against Zionism could mobilise significant numbers of Indonesians. The first *Intifada* (1987-93) marked a turning point, no doubt in part due to the availability and impact of televised images. A number of political activists affiliated with the DDII established an organisation named KISDI (Committee for Solidarity with the World of Islam), which specialised in political rallies and demonstrations, in protest against Israeli policies and in support of Palestinian rights. In the 1990s, KISDI took up other international 'Islamic' issues as well, such as the conflicts in Kashmir and Bosnia, and it demonstrated aggressively against 'biased' reporting in the Indonesian press (especially the Christian-owned media).<sup>35</sup>

The Russian occupation of Afghanistan (1979-89) and the (American and Saudi-sponsored) *jihād* against the occupiers had from the early 1980s on drawn the attention of limited circles of highly motivated radical Muslims. Whereas there never was, in spite of all anti-Zionist rhetoric, a call for Indonesian Muslims to join a *jihād* against the occupation of Palestine, the Afghan war – as mentioned above – attracted small groups of Indonesian would-be warriors, who travelled to Pakistan to receive training and do *jihād*. Some were recruited for the *jihād* while they were studying or working in Saudi Arabia, while others belonged to radical underground groups in Indonesia that were preparing for a violent Islamic revolution. Once they returned to Indonesia, the veterans spread information about the conflict by word of mouth and through semi-legal print publications.

Another significant event in the Middle East, the Iranian revolution of 1978-79, initially made a much greater impression on students, although it took some time for its intellectual

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<sup>34</sup> Latief, 'Internationalising Domestic Aid.'

<sup>35</sup> Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, Princeton University Press, 2000, pp. 109-10; cf. Martin van Bruinessen, 'Genealogies of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia', *South East Asia Research* 10(2), 2002, 117-54.

impact to be felt.<sup>36</sup> The first translations of Ali Shari`ati's works appeared only from 1982 onwards (based on the English translations, which Indonesian students in the US had brought back), and were followed by those of other Iranian thinkers. A small group of young intellectuals, Jalaluddin Rakhmat, Haidar Bagir, Agus Abu Bakar, and the Islamic scholar Husein al-Habsyi, led a movement of self-conversion to Shi`ism that attracted tens of thousands of recruits.<sup>37</sup>

In the long run, the impact of the Iranian revolution was overshadowed by the Saudi reaction to it. Feeling threatened by the Iranian revolutionaries' questioning its legitimacy, the Saudi regime opened a counter-offensive in order to gain hold of the hearts and minds of Muslims all over the world. In Indonesia, the DDII was the Saudis' closest collaborator, and it published numerous tracts and books purporting to prove that the Shi`a constituted a dangerous deviation from Islam proper. From the mid-1980s onwards, Saudi Arabia made great efforts to achieve discursive hegemony for its own brand of Islamic discourse, Salafism (usually dubbed Wahhabism by its opponents), and to delegitimise not only Shi`ism and various heterodox sects but also the moderate, accommodating discourses favoured by the New Order regime. As early as 1981, Saudi Arabia established an Institute of Arabic Studies, later revamped as the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Studies (LIPIA), in Jakarta; this was allegedly the first foreign-owned educational institution officially recognised by the Indonesian government. LIPIA became a major vehicle for the spread of the Salafi *da`wa* in Indonesia, although in the first decades of its existence it also helped many students, who later turned out to be 'liberals' or progressives, to gain fluency in Arabic and acquaintance with modern, non-Salafi Arabic works.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Nasir Tamara, a young Indonesian journalist who flew from Paris to Tehran on Khomeini's plane, wrote a book on the revolution that was widely read: *Revolusi Iran*, Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1980.

<sup>37</sup> A. Rahman Zainuddin and M. Hamdan Basyar, *Syi`ah dan politik di Indonesia*, Bandung: Mizan, 2000; Zulkifli, 'The struggle of the Shi`is in Indonesia', Ph.D. thesis, Leiden: Leiden University, 2009 (available online at: <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/14017>).

<sup>38</sup> On LIPIA and the development of the Salafi *da`wa* in Indonesia in general, see Noorhaidi Hasan, *Laskar Jihad: Islam, militancy and the quest for identity in post-New Order Indonesia*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 2006, Chapter 2 (available online at: <http://igitur-archive.library.uu.nl/dissertations/2006-0705-200332/index.htm>). Among LIPIA's graduates one famously finds not only prominent Salafi activists but also liberals and NU intellectuals such as Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, Ahmad Baso, and Mujiburrahman.

The Internet and improved telephonic communication enabled frequent contact between Indonesians living abroad and their friends at home. Events and discussions taking place in Cairo were relayed to Indonesia by students at al-Azhar. In the 2000s, Salafis in Indonesia regularly requested *fatwas* from *ulama* based in Saudi Arabia or Yemen by telephoning friends studying there, who would then ask the question in person and phone back the answer.<sup>39</sup>

### ***Reformasi* and after: the consolidation of new transnational Islamic movements**

The last decade of the New Order had allowed Islamist voices a certain freedom of expression, although the moderate voices of Nurcholish and his circle continued to be endorsed by the state and received most press coverage. After Suharto's resignation and the gradual unravelling of the New Order, the Islamist groups came out from (semi-) clandestinity and their media, now published legally, for a few years enjoyed enormous circulation figures. In sheer volume and impact, Islamist discourse now dwarfed the liberal, pluralist discourse that had been almost hegemonic during the New Order.<sup>40</sup>

The most significant new movements that moved into the limelight were: an Indonesian version of the Muslim Brotherhood, that transformed itself into a political party, the Partai Keadilan (PK) and later the Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS); an Indonesian wing of the Hizb ut-Tahrir; and a more diffuse Salafi movement (of which one wing became notorious as Laskar Jihad). All three are the Indonesian branches of well-established transnational movements and owe allegiance to a leadership abroad (PKS less so than the other two). In this sense they are significantly different from all earlier Indonesian Muslim organisations. It is precisely this transnational connection that provides them with a degree of legitimacy in the eyes of many ordinary Muslims. The PKS not only maintains connections with the Middle East but has also been careful to cultivate relations with Indonesian students abroad, in the West as well as the Arab world.

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<sup>39</sup> This included some crucial fatwas legitimating actions to be carried out by Laskar Jihad. See the discussion in Noorhaidi Hasan, *Laskar Jihad*, Chapter 4.

<sup>40</sup> This also happened in spite of significant injections of Western funds into the NGO world, subsidies for book printing, and active support of anti-fundamentalist groups such as Jaringan Islam Liberal.

The former two movements sprung from student groups at several of the better Indonesian secular universities; a high proportion of their members and cadres are graduates from institutes of higher education in non-religious subjects. Relatively few of the cadre members of the PKS, but a larger proportion in the central leadership, have been educated in Saudi Arabia or elsewhere in the Arab world. Prior to the 2009 elections, an apparent split between ‘pragmatists’ and ‘idealists’ emerged in the party; this coincided to some extent with the line between professionals educated in non-religious subjects and *ustads* (religious teachers and preachers) with an Arab education. The Salafi movement, on the other hand, is almost exclusively Arab-educated and its major wing depends on significant funding from a foundation based in Kuwait. All wings of the Salafi movements appear to be connected with specific Salafi *ulama* in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, or Yemen.

Some of the other new movements are purely Indonesian, but do take a great interest in Muslim struggles elsewhere in the world. The Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) was established in 2000 as a legal front for various groups that strive for an Islamic state (including sections of Darul Islam as well as Jama`ah Islamiyah). It has adopted some of the international *jihadi* Salafi discourse, but in practice it remains focused on the struggle for an Islamic state in Indonesia and an ideological war against all groups and movements that stand in the way of this ideal. The Hidayatullah movement, originating in the DI-affiliated *pesantren* Hidayatullah in East Kalimantan but now present throughout the Archipelago, has religious teachings, developed by its founder Abdullah Said, that reflect a very Indonesian approach to Islam. Politically, however, the movement is a strong supporter of the *jihads* of oppressed Muslims.<sup>41</sup>

Mainstream Muslim discourse has been much influenced by the discourse of these radical movements, as a series of surveys in the early 2000s suggested, although the violent activism of the most radical fringes was firmly rejected, and the acceptance of parts of Islamist discourse never translated into a stronger vote for political parties that advocated the *shari`ah*.<sup>42</sup> In their 2004 and 2005 congresses, the large associations NU and Muhammadiyah

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<sup>41</sup> See the literature mentioned in note 27.

<sup>42</sup> Saiful Mujani, ‘Religious democrats: democratic culture and Muslim political participation in post-Suharto Indonesia’, Ph.D. thesis, The Ohio State University, 2003.

experienced a shift to Islamism and a purge of ‘liberal’ Muslims from their committees, partly under the influence of recent graduates from the Middle East. As these organisations have discovered that they were to some extent losing control of their constituencies – some mosques and schools were taken over by Hizbut Tahrir or PKS activists – they have begun making efforts to consolidate themselves and defend their turf against further takeovers. The two mainstream organisations have made it clear that they consider these transnational movements to be threats to their existence, and there are the beginnings of more assertive action in defence of the existing local forms of Islam.<sup>43</sup>

### **Local responses to globalising Islam: cultural resistance in Cirebon**

In this final section, I shall take a look at how globalisation, especially in its ‘Arabising’ form, has impacted at the local level in a somewhat peripheral region in Indonesia, and at various forms of cultural resistance that this has brought about. Cirebon is a rice-producing region on Java’s north coast that has been bypassed by many developments in core areas of Java. The once flourishing harbour of the capital city is a sleepy affair, as trade has been diverted away from the region. There is no modern industry worth mentioning; the most significant productive sector is the rattan industry, which processes raw rattan from Kalimantan into furniture for export. Recently enacted trade liberalisation policies, affecting the export of unprocessed rattan, have dealt this industry a serious blow.

Cirebon is known for its distinctive and rich traditions in music, dance, batik, and other art forms, as well as its colourful local adaptations of Islamic practices and the wide range of syncretistic mystical movements that emerged here. This heritage is commonly ascribed to the sultanate of Cirebon, which merged Chinese, Indian, and Arab influences with Javanese and Sundanese traditions into a new synthesis. The sultanate, divided into four rival courts, was never patronised by Indonesia’s republican government (as some of the other sultanates were) and is much in decline, but is still seen as the source of spiritual power that holds this

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<sup>43</sup> See the contributions by Najib Burhani and Martin van Bruinessen in: Martin van Bruinessen (ed.), *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the ‘Conservative Turn’*, Singapore: ISEAS, forthcoming.

vernacular civilisation together.<sup>44</sup> Orthodox Islam (as opposed to syncretistic Javanism) has long been dominated here by four large *pesantrens*, located around (and at some distance from) the city of Cirebon, which remain very influential in the cultural and political life of the region. The city has several modern universities, but none of these can compete with those of the big cities.

This is not a region where one would expect the abovementioned transnational Islamic movements to find a natural following. To my surprise, however, I found that all the new Islamist movements are well represented in Cirebon and have a considerable measure of local support.<sup>45</sup> Their typical mode of expansion was through university students originating from Cirebon who studied in places like Bogor, Jakarta, or Bandung and were inducted into these movements there. Returning home on the weekends, they set up religious study groups at the secondary schools from which they had graduated themselves. Locally recruited activists then attempted to establish groups of sympathisers in neighbourhoods. PKS activists established a number of schools that provide cheap and good education, besides solid discipline; a Salafi group established a large, well-funded *madrasah* that successfully targets the local Muslim middle class.

As elsewhere, in Cirebon these new movements have had some success in converting *abangan*, nominal Muslims adhering to syncretistic beliefs and practices, to their worldview. In fact, they may even have been more successful in recruiting *abangan* as followers than young men and women with a firm religious education in Muhammadiyah or NU, although I encountered several activists from the latter background as well. Upon some reflection, this is perhaps not so surprising. *Abangan* beliefs and rituals are focused on local shrines and local spirits, whose powers are geographically circumscribed. As has been observed elsewhere, once people break out of their geographical isolation, and by trade and travel start interacting more intensively with more distant communities, the old local spirits are of little help to them

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<sup>44</sup> Sharon Siddique, 'Relics of the Past. A Sociological Study of the Sultanates of Cirebon, West Java', Ph.D. dissertation, Bielefeld: 1977; Muhaimin A. G., 'God and spiritual beings in the Cirebon-Javanese belief system: a reluctant contribution against the syncretic argument', *Studia Islamika* 3 no.2, 1996, 23-57.

<sup>45</sup> The following paragraphs are based on my observations during a two-month period of field research in early 2009 and a number of shorter visits in the preceding years.

and supernatural support of a more universal scope has a strong appeal.<sup>46</sup> When *abangan* decide to send their children to a *pesantren* or a Muhammadiyah school – a process that characterised the New Order period – this represents not only a gradual conversion to a more orthodox form of Islam but also mental migration from the village or urban neighbourhood community into the Indonesian nation state. In Cirebon, such conversions have been taking place but never on a massive scale; the relations between the large *pesantren* and the neighbouring villages were in many cases traditionally hostile. The arrival of transnational Islamic movements in the region made it possible for *abangan* to skip the stage of the established national organisations and become part of a global community. It is one of the few available options for cosmopolitanism and a deliberate jump into modernity, however anti-modernist the movement as such may be.

In the post-Suharto period, a number of global Islamic issues were imported into the local political arena, as a direct result of increased transnational contacts. Debates on the compatibility or otherwise of Islam and liberal democracy were one such issue, capable of mobilising many, on which the PK(S) was strongly affirmative, while several other movements, including Hizbut Tahrir and the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, rejected liberal democracy on principle.<sup>47</sup>

One imported global issue that gave rise to local-level conflict was anti-Ahmadiyah agitation. This was not entirely new: the Muslim World League has been spreading anti-Ahmadiyah materials and agitating for a worldwide ban of the Ahmadiyah almost since it was established. As early as 1980, Indonesia's Council of Ulama had issued a *fatwa* declaring the Ahmadiyah to be a deviant sect outside the bond of Islam, but this had had a negligible impact on the Ahmadi religious freedom. The situation changed dramatically around 2004, when in various parts of the country violent mobs, incited by self-appointed guardians of

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<sup>46</sup> This reasoning is the core of an interesting theory explaining the spread of Islam and Christianity in Africa, at the expense of local religions: Robin Horton, 'African Conversion', *Africa* 41, 1971, 85-108. Robert Hefner adapted Horton's idea to an explanation of the ongoing Islamisation of East Java: Robert W. Hefner, 'Islamizing Java? Religion and Politics in Rural East Java', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46, 1987, 533-54.

<sup>47</sup> In the 2009 elections, however, these movements allowed their followers to vote, on condition that they would vote for a party that supported the *shari'ah*.

orthodoxy, attacked Ahmadi institutions and residences, while the police, reluctant to appear insufficiently sympathetic to radical Islam, did not dare to intervene.<sup>48</sup>

Not far from Cirebon lies a village that is almost entirely Ahmadiyah. Never before had these people experienced any serious problems; there are several villages in the neighbourhood that adhere to a number of different heterodox sects or minor religions, and traditionally mutual tolerance had reigned.<sup>49</sup> The first major attack on this village occurred in 2004; a coalition of local Islamist groups, reinforced by activists from Jakarta, stormed the village and attempted to destroy the main Ahmadiyah mosque. Since then, more raids have followed and the local authorities, feeling under pressure, closed down the Ahmadi mosques and forbade the Ahmadi to congregate for worship. The government has done little or nothing to protect the religious freedom of these citizens and instead made gestures to accommodate radical Muslim demands; in fact, in 2008 a joint ministerial decree practically proscribed all Ahmadiyah activities.<sup>50</sup>

There was, however, also some mobilisation of local support for the beleaguered Ahmadiyah. An NGO in Cirebon affiliated with the NU, Fahmina, sent activists to the village to form a protective ring around the mosque and give moral support to the villagers. They advocated the Ahmadiyah's right to their different beliefs, and they managed to have the local press publish a strong statement by a leading NU scholar, who endorsed their pluralist views. In these actions, Fahmina activists operated cautiously in order not to alienate the major *pesantrens*, as NGO activists elsewhere had done. They made clear that their support for the basic rights of the Ahmadiyah did not mean acceptance, or even just tolerance, of Ahmadi

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<sup>48</sup> The main organisation behind the anti-Ahmadiyah agitation is a small, apparently Middle East-funded, group calling itself LPPI (Lembaga Pengkajian dan Penelitian Islam, 'Institute of Islamic Studies and Research'). In 2002, LPPI organised a seminar in Jakarta's Istiqlal Mosque to denounce the Ahmadiyah; in 2005 it organised a major mob attack on the Qadiani Ahmadiyah's main community centre in Parung near Bogor, and it has remained at the forefront of agitation since.

<sup>49</sup> For a description of this village from more peaceful days, see: Djohan Effendi, 'Ahmadiyah Qadyan di Desa Manis Lor', *Ulumul Qur'an* 1 no. 4, 1990, 98-105.

<sup>50</sup> This joint decree was signed by the Minister of Religious Affairs, the Attorney General, and the Minister of the Interior on 9 June 2008. The decree stopped short of actually banning the Ahmadiyah, as had been demanded by the Council of Ulama and various radical groups.

doctrines but rather the defence of an earlier status quo in which different faith communities left each other in peace.

Fahmina is a rather small NGO but it derives strength from its good connections with the major *pesantrens* of the region. Fahmina itself is dwarfed by the numbers that the radical Islamist groups in Cirebon can mobilise, but as long as it maintains its connections with the *pesantrens*, it will remain able to call upon the support of the much larger masses that are loyal to the *kiais* and the NU. In opposing the ‘Arabising’ influences brought into the region by the Islamists, Fahmina activists and a loose network of locally rooted allies have made an effort to revive local cultural traditions as a resource. Some younger *kiais* also take an active role in this effort, such as Kiai Maman Imanulhaq of the *pesantren* Al-Mizan in Jatiwangi, where traditional arts have become part of the curriculum.

Several senior *kiais* appear independently to have come to the conclusion that ‘traditional’ Islam needed to be salvaged from the homogenising and purist influence of the new transnational movements. Their concern was primarily with the *pesantren* subculture, which in fact also reflected Arab and Indian Ocean influences in its expressions of devotion for the Prophet and the high prestige accorded to his descendants, as well as in the use of religious song and recitation and percussion instruments in popular performances. Some deliberate invention of tradition was going on during my fieldwork period: an obscure old grave under a tree was being developed into a new pilgrimage site, where colourful new rituals (based on popular *mawlid*s, celebrations of the birth of the Prophet) were periodically performed. One of the *ulama* involved told me that his ideal was to develop the site of this sacred grave into a centre of local culture. Interestingly, the arts performances I witnessed here, though by local artists, were of Egyptian-style popular music and of songs in praise of the Prophet accompanied by Arab percussion: the sort of cultural practices that Salafis as well as Muslim Brothers strongly object to but that are patronised by the region’s Javanised *sayyids*.

### **Some final observations**

Those Indonesian Muslims who perceive dangerous trends of either Westernisation or Arabisation in the religious views and practices of their Muslim compatriots, as alternative

(or perhaps concomitant) consequences of globalisation, will have no difficulty pointing out developments that seem to confirm their analysis. Both underestimate, however, the extent to which the borrowing of ideas from the West or from the contemporary Middle East is a process of active and selective appropriation and adaptation, just as Indonesian cultures have always appropriated elements of foreign cultures and incorporated them into a synthesis that has remained uniquely Indonesian. The same is, *mutatis mutandis*, true of other cultures: they have always been changing and incorporating whatever foreign ideas and artefacts appeared to fit in. The rate of borrowing has increased, but cultures have never been passive recipients of what other cultures had on offer.

It is true that both Western and Middle Eastern states have had deliberate policies of influencing Indonesian Muslims' worldviews and attitudes, through scholarship programs and other sponsored travel, the sponsoring of publications, and support of educational institutions. The effects of such programs are seldom exactly as hoped; and in fact, they may in some cases have the reverse effect. Though some students may return from US universities as confirmed liberals, and some graduates from Saudi universities may actively propagate a puritan, Salafi version of Islam, there are more than a few exceptions. It has been remarked before that many Muslim students radicalised while studying at American universities. The writings of the ideologists of the Iranian revolution, as observed above, reached Indonesia by way of the USA. Similarly, not all Indonesians studying in Saudi Arabia or at the Saudi-funded institute LIPIA in Jakarta became converted to Salafi views; among the graduates we find several of the most vocal liberal and progressive thinkers.

The talk of Arabisation versus Westernisation implicitly assumes an essentialised, homogenised Arab world, and likewise for the West, impacting on vulnerable and malleable Indonesian *ummah*. It is undoubtedly true that the numbers of Indonesians travelling abroad has dramatically increased during the past few decades and that the flow of goods and ideas, from the Middle East as well as the West (but also from other regions) towards Indonesia has tremendously accelerated; but these cultural flows have been highly complex and richly varied and so has their impact. Islamic liberals and progressives, Traditionalists and Reformists, as well as Islamists and Salafis, have in various ways incorporated some influences of Western origin (or mediated by actors in the West) as well as influences traceable to the Middle East, alongside yet other influences. It is true that the liberals and

progressives are the most eclectic, and deliberately so, whereas the Salafis claim to follow only the most knowledgeable and puritan sheikhs, most of whom are based in the Arabian Peninsula. But the religious debate and ideological struggle between Salafi and Islamist currents and their Indonesian ideological opponents cannot be reduced to one of Arab versus Western influences.

Martin van Bruinessen,

“*Ghazwul fikri* or Arabisation? Indonesian Muslim responses to globalisation”

Abstract

Until the emergence of influential transnational Islamic movements – active underground since the 1980s and erupting into public life after the demise of Suharto’s New Order regime – Indonesian Islam had consisted of two main streams: Reformists and Traditionalists. The former were influenced by Islamic Reformist currents in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and South Asia, but also by Western models of education and organisation, whereas the latter associated themselves with the traditional culture of Arabic learning and devotional rituals that the Reformists wished to abolish in the name of return to a pristine Islam. Traditionalists long remained a rather closed and inward-looking community, only connected with the world outside through the few men who spent years studying classical *fiqh* texts in Mecca or Cairo. The Reformists were comparatively cosmopolitan, if only due to the Western-style education of their leaders, and in the first decades of post-colonial Independence the Islamic Reformist political party, Masyumi, adopted liberal democratic and pro-Western positions, whereas the Traditionalist NU supported Sukarno’s anti-imperialist policies and isolationist nationalism.

Under the New Order, an important segment of the Reformists re-oriented themselves increasingly towards the Middle East and especially Saudi Arabia, and constituted a channel for the dissemination of Islamist (and later Salafi) ideas. The New Order government facilitated and sponsored the flourishing of liberal versions of Reformism, deemed to be more compatible with Indonesia’s presumably tolerant and accommodating culture. The Iranian Revolution, and especially the subsequent Saudi ideological counter-offensive, resulted in a rapidly intensifying flow of ideas and funding from Gulf states towards Indonesian actors, in order to counteract the spread of Shi`a as well as liberal Islamic thought. Meanwhile, Traditionalists increasingly entered the national mainstream through education, and became connected with the international NGO world.

Rapid social, economic and cultural change led many to question the country’s course and to search for an authentic identity, which many committed Muslims found in a rejection of the

West and a conscious adoption of Islam as a comprehensive social and political ideology. The concept of *ghazwul fikri*, 'cultural invasion,' which was central to an earlier Arab search for authenticity, became the slogan of Indonesia's Islamist anti-globalisation sentiment. After the demise of the New Order, transnational Islamist and Fundamentalist movements assumed a prominent presence in the public sphere, at the expense of the major Reformist and Traditionalist organisations. Progressive and liberal Muslim thought, eclectic in its appropriation of ideas, from Arab as well as Western sources, and generally more appreciative of local culture, is no longer patronised by the government, which makes its position precarious. Increased communications with the Middle East have, however, been crucial to the continuing development of liberal thought as well as Islamism and Salafism.