

# THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF KNOWLEDGE Shari'ah and Saudi Scholarship in Indonesia<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This article investigates how the Saudi regime uses sponsorship to support its educational system in Indonesia. The article focuses its analysis on LIPIA (*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab*, Institute for the Knowledge of Islam and Arab). LIPIA is an Islamic institution consistent using traditional Islamic scholarship especially those of the Hanbalite schools of thought. This is reflected in the entire curriculum the LIPIA has for its students. The writer argues that the relationship between the sponsor, i.e. the Saudi state, and the sponsorship beneficiaries, i.e. students, is patron-client. Nevertheless, it involves a wide range of actors thereby allowing the diversity of knowledge reproduction. Over the last three decades, it has made a big investment on the field of education by building Islamic schools and institutes, distributing scholarship for Indonesian students, and channeling aid for Muslim organizations. It is becoming obvious that Saudi uses education as a political strategy to maintain its influences over Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Shari'a, scholarship, Saudi Arabia, salafism.

## Introduction

Until recently only a few studies have been proposed to account the relations between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia. Most of them are

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dealing with pre-modern era.<sup>2</sup> While this lack of initiatives in some parts can be attributed to the authoritarian nature of the Saudi regime, most of the studies have entertained the idea that the relations are static and that most of the Saudi education projects are largely directed to support state ideology.<sup>3</sup> This assumption does not have strong evidence. Many things have changed over the last decades. Throughout this article I argue that, on the one hand, it is becoming more obvious that these relations have been characterized by patron-client relations. On the other hand, it involves a wide range of actors thereby allowing the diversity of knowledge reproduction.

This article deals with LIPIA, a Saudi education project and its network with Indonesian graduates. These returning graduates are currently serving in various positions such as teachers and preachers. In the course of time they have maintained relations with Saudi, from which they obtain financial supports. It focuses on students who studied in Saudi in recent periods precisely in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. Their understandings of *shari'ah* have changed over the time depending on its contexts.

Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim country. It has played an important role in shaping the politics of regional and global Muslim world. This fact attracts Saudi Arabia, which has attempted to become the dominant player in Muslim politics. Over the last three decades, it has made a big investment on the field of education by building Islamic schools and institutes, distributing scholarship for Indonesian students, and channeling aid for Muslim organizations. It is becoming

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<sup>2</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *The Origin of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Network of Malay-Indonesia and Middle East Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Honolulu: Allen and Unwin in cooperation with University of Hawai'i Press, 2004); Basri, "Indonesian Ulama in the Haramayn and the Transmission of Reformist Islam in Indonesia (1800-1900)" (Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, University of Arkansas, 2008); Michael Francis Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia, The Umma below the Wind* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003); Abdurrahman Mas'ud, "The Pesantren Architects and Their Socio-Religious Teachings" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, UCLA, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Madawi Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State: Islamic Voices from a New Generation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Gwenn Okruhlik, "Making Conversation Permissible: Islamism and Reform in Saudi Arabia," in Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Islamic Activism, A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004).

obvious that Saudi uses education as a political strategy to maintain its influences over Indonesia.

### **Saudi Arabia as an Islamic State**

More than any other country in the Muslim world, Saudi Arabia is identified with Islam. Islam is the religion of the state, its source of political legitimacy, shaping state policies, and serving as the moral code of society. The formation of the state of Saudi Arabia is a result of the political leadership of Muhammad ibn Saud (1702-1765), the founder of Saudi Arabia, and the puritan religious group led by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792).

Despite that Saudi Arabia is an Islamic state, its daily politics, economics and governance is secular. Saudi is one of the Muslim states which has long allied with the Western countries to guarantee its survival. It is a rent-seeking state which invites Western companies to explore its natural resources. Contrary to this, the ulama have played an important role particularly in shaping public policies on education and women's affairs.<sup>4</sup>

Articulate Islamic movements in Saudi did not emerge until the 1970s. The rise of young educated Saudi generation, many of whom studied in the West, the availability of technology and communication system, the growing fragmentation of authority, perpetuated the movements. These movements were aggravated by the two-week occupation of the Grand Mosque of Mecca in 1979. This occupation, led by Juhaiman al-Utaibi and Mohammad al-Qahtani, had a great impact on its further development. Radical Islamist groups accused the regime of having deviated from the straight path of Islam, being subjugated to the power of the infidels, resorting to crimes, corruption, and violation against the Muslim believers. The rebel can be easily oppressed, but clearly revealed the idea that the regime was so vulnerable.<sup>5</sup>

In response to this, King Fahd sought Islamic legitimacy by changing his title from "His Majesty," to "Custodian of the Holy Cities" in 1986. This was followed by his deliberation to tighten up

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Okruhlik, "Making Conversation Permissible; Idem, "Empowering Civility through Nationalism: Reformist Islam and Belonging in Saudi Arabia," in Robert W. Hefner (ed), *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005).

public polices and social life. Gender segregation was more profound, and the *mutamma* (Shari'ah police) were given more leeway to inspect and arrest the dissents. Furthermore, he also proposed major reforms in Saudi education system. New campuses and world-class universities were built across the country, more scholarship given to students, religious shrines refurbished and renovated, and exchange programs with Muslim countries including Indonesia set up. All these things were made up to bolster the image that Saudi Arabia was center of Islamic learning.

### **Education Beyond Border**

At the beginning of the 1980s, Saudi Arabia sought to promote its education system beyond its borders. Universities and institutes specializing on *sharī'ah* were erected at home and abroad. These institutions were made to accommodate the '*ulama*' who become state notables. This period also witnessed the channeling of Saudi funds to other Muslim countries through formal and informal institutions. Most of the funds were distributed through Islamic philanthropist organizations and humanitarian flags. But since the roles of '*ulama*' were significant, this project has been affected by a particular religious spirit called Salafism.

LIPIA (Institute for Islamic Knowledge and Arabic) is the first and the largest Saudi project in Indonesia. It was founded in 1980 in Jakarta. This institute is extremely important since it shapes the subsequent transmission of Salafism to Indonesia. This can be seen in the fact that most of the Indonesian Salafi leaders previously studied at this institute. They are credited of transforming Islamic movements of the 1970s and 1980s and linking them to transnational and global organizations.

The foundation of the LIPIA is an uneasy step. It is made possible by a number of factors. It goes back to the 1970s when Suharto approached depolitization of Islam. Some Islamic organizations in the country approached Saudi Arabia. In response to this, Syekh Abd al-Aziz Abdullah al-Ammar, a prominent student of Syekh Abdullah bin Abd al-Aziz bin Baz, made a short visit to Jakarta. Mohammad Natsir, a prominent Indonesian Muslim figure, welcomed him. He fully supported the idea to build an Islamic institute. Natsir was the founder of *Masyumi* (the largest Islamic party during Sukarno's era and the chief executive of the DDII (Indonesian Muslim Promulgation

Commission). He approached Indonesian officials, most of whom were the high-rank officials of the Department of Religious Affairs.

Daoed Joesoef, Ministry of Education and Culture and a secularist-nationalist, refused to give permission to this idea. Alamsjah, Ministry for Religious Affairs, who supported the idea, came to Joesoep asked the matter. The latter responded that Muslims were already fanatics. If they studied at an Islamic institute, they would become even more fanatical. Alamsyah slammed Joesoep. This brawl eventually led to Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was charged with the operation of the institute.<sup>6</sup>

Located in a rent building in Salemba Central Jakarta, still called LPBA (Institute for Arabic Teaching), the institute began its mission in 1980. The class was held in the afternoon, to give the opportunity for other students who had activities in the morning. For the first time in the Indonesian history, Arabic was introduced to public in highly sophisticated manner. All the teachers were natives. They were Arabs (Saudi, Egyptian, Sudanese, Yemeni, etc).

With two-rent buildings located in South Jakarta, LIPIA has now more than 2500 students, around 25 percent of them female. It has nowadays become one of the main destinations for study. The availability of scholarship is really appealing especially for poor students. It is obvious that Saudi uses scholarship as a means of disseminating its ideology beyond its territorial borders. Whereas experiencing various problems at the beginning and gains less attention from most Muslim groups, in its further development the LIPIA successfully creates network with Muslim organizations. It gradually recruits students particularly of the modernist backgrounds such as DDII, Persis, al-Irshad, and Muhammadiyah. It is obvious that, having the same spirit of puritanism, the modernists are involved in such an intensely religious engagement. The traditionalist Muslim group such NU is not really involved in such an undertaking.

As far as the LIPIA is concerned, there are two things necessary to be highlighted here. First, it has become the Saudi most important institution in Indonesia. Its graduates have played an important role in transmitting and disseminating a model of Islam called Salafism by creating various foundations working on education and social programs all over the country. Second, its graduates have good access

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<sup>6</sup> Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened: Muslim-Christian Relation in Indonesia's New Order* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006).

to state or semi-state relief organizations and individual philanthropists in the Middle East and, as a result, bring home new financial sources.

LIPIA is a form of state accommodation toward ‘ulamā’. This can be seen in the prestigious position of ‘ulamā’ in its structure. They are given high salaries, apartment, car, living cost, and tickets for home holidays. The professors of *sharī‘ah* are given the highest positions. They are charged with the teaching of *fiqh*, Ḥadīth, and *uṣūl al-dīn*. Besides *sharī‘ah*, Arabic is extremely important. This institute is created to promote Arabic as the language of Islam and an international language. Thanks to LIPIA, Arabic has been widely used especially by Muslim scholars. All the subjects are given in Arabic, and all students being required to take Arabic. The Saudis are very dominant within the institute. Non-Saudi Arabs such as Egyptians, Sudanese, Yemenis, are also important due to their language skills. However, they are paid less. Indonesians are at the bottom of the hierarchy. They are paid the least.

**Figure 1: The Salaries of the LIPIA Professors and Staffs (in Saudi Riyal)**

Degree/position	Saudi	Non-Saudi	Indonesia
Doctor	15000-25000	6000-9000	6000-8000
Magister		3000-4000	3000-4000
Undergraduate	-	-	2500
Staff	13.000-18.000		800-1000

The wide gap between the Saudis and non-Saudis, the Arabs and non-Arab, frequently leads to conflict. One of the conflicts which raises public attention, at least to some, is the case of Muhammad Zaini, a staff working with the institute for more than fifteen years. The conflict began when Zaini, a Banjarese, demanded the institute raised his salary. At that time he was only paid 800 riyal per month. The institute asked him to be patient as the government planned to make a new policy. After some time, he found out nothing happened. Once again, the institute asked him to be patient a little more. He waited for the second time. However, after some times, nothing happened. This made him resigned from his position. The bitterest experience is that the Saudis never showed respect for others. In his protest to the director, he said that only stupid person and a donkey who worked in this institute.

Zaini’s case may reflect a broader picture of the LIPIA management. In spite of its modern technology, it is poorly managed.

The recruitment of teachers and students involve personal and informal ties. This also happens in salary system. According to Zaini, the institute does not have a standard for salary payment. Instead it depends on negotiation between professors and the institute. The highest salary an Indonesian professor has ever obtained is that of Salim Segaf al-Jufri, which is 8000 riyal per month. Al-Jufri is one of the Indonesian who successfully create links with Saudi. He previously studied at Islamic University of Medina and assumed key positions in WAMY (World Association Muslim Youth) and International Saudi Relief. He has been credited of creating link between Islamic organizations particularly founded by the Saudi graduates with donor institutions in the Middle East.

LIPIA has consistently applied the curriculum which orients students to acquire a complete knowledge of Islamic traditional scholarship. This results in the rigid nature of their religious practices e.g. gender segregation, women's seclusion, and the stress on outward disciplines such as having long beards (*lihyah*), Arab-style flowering robes (*jalabiyah*), and shortening pants right up ankles (*isbāl*), and women's wearing a form of enveloping black veil (*burqah*).

Furthermore the institute teaches traditional Islamic scholarship especially those of the Hanbali school. A collection of Hanbali books are found in the library. Students are required to take all courses related to this school. Despite other Sunni scholarship are available, the collections are limited. Neither the works of al-Ghazali, a Sunni theologian and philosopher (d. in 1111), nor those of Ibn Arabi, a Muslim mystic (d. 1240), are available. The only classical book available and widely used in the institute is *Bidāyatal-Mujtabid*, composed by Ibn Rushd (d. in 1198). Modern Islamic works by the Salafi '*ulamā*' are available. The works of Syeikh Abd al-Aziz bin Abdullah bin Baz, died in 1999, and Syeikh Abdullah al-Uthaimin, died in 2001, are abundant. The institute also emphasizes on the importance of the memorization of the Koran and the Ḥadīth. Some scholarship are given to students memorizing the Ḥadīth at most.

**Figure 2: List of the Textbooks in the Faculty of Shari'ah and Takmilī of LIPIA Jakarta**

Subject	Books	Author	Madhhab
The Qur'an	8 chapter		

Subject	Books	Author	Madhhab
Fiqh	Bidāyat al-Mujtahid wa Nihāyat al-Muqtaṣid	Ibnu Rusyd	Maliki
	Mukhtashar Abī Shuja' Matan Ghāyah Taqrib in Fiqh Syafii	Abu Syuja'	Syafii
Ḥadīth	Subūl al-Salām Sharḥ Bulūgh al-Marām	Al-San'ani	Previously Zaidi moved to Zahiri
Musthalah Ḥadīth	Taysir Mustalah al-Ḥadīth		
Tafsīr	Fath al-Qadīr al-Jāmi bayna Fanni Riwayah wa Dirayah	Al-Shawkani	Previously Zaidi moved to Salafi
Naḥwu	Sharḥ Ibn Aqīl li Alfīyah ibn Mālik Awqāḥul Masālik li Alfīyah ibn Mālik		
Ushūl Fiqh/Qawa'id Fiqhiyah	Raudhat al-Nadhīr Wa Jannat al-Munadhīr	Ibn Qudamah	Hanbali
	Al-Mumta'a fi al-Qawā'id al-Fiqhiyah	Muslim bin Muhammad bin Majid al-Dawsi	
Tauḥīd	Al-Qaul al-Mufīd 'alā Kitāb al-Tauḥīd	Muhammad bin Salih al-Uthaimin	
	Sharḥ al-Aqīdah al-Thahāwīyah	Ibn Abd-Uzz al-Dimasqi	
	Al-'Aqīdah	Shalih bin Fauzan Ali Fauzan	



Subject	Books	Author	Madhhab
Mawāris	Al-taḥqīqāt al-Mardhiyah fī al-Mabāhis al-Fardhiyah	Shalih bin Fauzan ali Fauzan	
Tsaqafah al-Islāmiyah	Al-Kutub al-Mukhtalifah	Rashid al-Rijal	
Mashādir al-Baḥthi	Al-Kutub al-Mukhtalifah	Rashid al-Rijal	

As I argued earlier, the Saudi uses scholarship as a means to promote its education system. In relation to LIPIA, all students are given scholarship (*mukāfā'ah*) for 200 riyal every month. They are also given all textbooks for free. This scholarship is really important especially for poor students who cannot afford high education due to financial problems. Apart from this, the Saudi also provides financial supports distributed through its international organizations for Salafi organizations in Indonesia. A Wahdah preacher in Makassar South Sulawesi admits that he had been financially supported by the Saudi in the mid 1990s. It is heard that a number of prominent Saudi graduates have been given kafalah (social security). Saudi Islamic Relief (*Hay'at Iqāṭhab al-Islāmiyah al-Sa'ūdīyah*) and Saudi Religious Affairs (*Mulḥaq Dīn*) are central in distributing funds to Salafi communities in Indonesia. This does not include funds provided by Middle East individual philanthropists whose names can be found in the inscriptions on the walls of Salafi mosques across the country.

### Creating Salafi Identity

Identity is extremely important for the Salafists. It is created through several ways, formal and informal. The formal ways consist of training in which new cadres are introduced to the Salafi teachings. Informal ways consist of all forms of social life. Identity is maintained and reproduced through physical appearance, formal and informal socialization.

Gender is highly enforced in all forms of social life. This fact is one of the most striking features of the Salafists. In LIPIA, female and male students use the library on every other day. Female students are taught by female teachers, male students by male teachers. Most of the

female students are covering up their bodies (*burqah*). Some have veiling (*nigāb*). Dating is prohibited, marriage recommended. If male and female students like each other, they could go to seniors or teachers to arrange marriage. It should be registered and with the notification of parents.

The ideology of Salafism is further disseminated among others through prayer. Prayer is the most important ritual in Islam, and mosque serves the locus where identity making is taking place. Despite prayer can be performed individually, it is better to perform it collectively. By performing collective prayers, students are involved in face-to-face communication with others. Conversation, expressions, shaking hand, kissing, hugging and patting are quite common and ritualized. Performing collective prayer will give deep impact and raise strong in-group feelings on each member of the believers.

Collective prayer, highly recommended, is strategized in such a way to directly contribute to identity-making process. Ideally there is only one collective prayer for one community in each prayer time. The second, the third, the fourth prayer, would only be justified if there are reasons to do so. To make all the believers aware of and to give them chance to come to the mosque, the intervals between prayer call and prayer are made longer. While in non-Salafi mosques, it is around five to ten minutes, in Salafi mosques, however, it takes fifteen to thirty minutes.

The numerous collective prayers has been discussed in many Salafi publication as to whether it is justified to perform collective prayer in one mosque for more than once. To this question, there are several answers. First, the second, the third, the fourth collective prayers are justified if the capacity of mosque is limited. Second, the second, the third, the fourth collective prayers are justified if there is no regular imam. Third, it is unlawful if there is a regular imam and the mosque can accommodate all the congregants. It is easy to understand this rule. By making only one collective prayer, all the members of the community are seeing each other thereby contributing to the strengthening of their identities.

### **The Diversity of Knowledge**

The Saudi education projects involve such a wide range of actors as students, teachers, religious scholars, activists. All of them are having different interests that make the reproduction of knowledge multi-faceted, complex, and ever-changing phenomenon. This is a

result that actors have different backgrounds and live in largely overlapping social settings. The LIPIA itself has gradually changed to adjust to the existing conditions. This can be seen in the fact that it begins to get involved in such public discourses as pluralism and civil rights.

Throughout this article, I will use the term Salafism to denote the process of the reproduction of knowledge taking place within LIPIA and other Saudi-funded institutions in Indonesia. Salafism is a form of Islam which calls on the Muslim people to return to the pristine sources of Islam. This term has historical precedence that goes back as early as the first century of Islamic history. It is also evidently safer and more fruitful during my interviews with professor and students. Despite that the Salafi groups have different understanding on Salafism, they agree on the extent to which Salafism is defined such as the primacy of the religious resources such as the Qur'an and the Sunnah over rational approaches towards religion.

In regard to religious innovation (*bid'ah*), which becomes one of the most salient features of Salafism, there have been different ideas. Many groups are quite flexible, while others are extremely strict. Some Salafi groups use *bid'ah* as a weapon to attack other Muslim groups to gain sympathy and popularity. They publish various books on the danger of *bid'ah*. This strategy seems to have attracted particular Muslim groups to join Salafism and become its members. Other Salafi groups prefer to take low profile approaches to promote its ideas and programs. The controversy of *bid'ah* has recently reemerged after the rise of Salafism. In the previous times, it divided the modernist and traditionalist Muslim groups and brought a deep impact on social and political life. The former accused the latter of creating various *bid'ah* in their religious practices. The latter argued that not all the *bid'ah* were forbidden. Good *bid'ah* (*bid'ah hasanah*) was permissible.

In the previous times, debates on *bid'ah* took place in mosques or madrasah. Thus the opposing groups deliberately defended their arguments in public spheres attended by ordinary Muslim population. Recent debates, however, are taking place impersonally thanks to the advancement of technology. The Salafists use internet, CD, radio, books, to advocate their ideas. As a result there is no physical contact between both groups. As far as I am concerned there has been no physical violence between the Salafists and non-Salafists taking place in the country.

Whether or not the Salafi are interested in such contemporary issues as civil right and democracy. This question is crucial since there has been suspicion among other Muslim groups against the Salafists that the latter might not support civil right and democracy. While these issues have never been so intensely discussed, there is a growing concern among the Salafists to get engage more seriously in such public discourses. In the aftermath of the 9/11, many Islamist groups began to discuss, with a varying degree of acceptance, on democracy and civil right. This indicates that there has been a constant change on the reproduction of knowledge among the Salafists. Nowadays, it is hardly surprising that the LIPIA holds seminar in cooperation with Indonesian police in an attempt to combat terrorism and radicalism that sparks upon the country over a decade. This development brought about a deep impact on other Salafi groups.

Based on my interviews, the Salafists oppose the term democracy. This term, they believe, is a Western concept alien to Islam. Instead they propose the term *ahl al-hall wa al-'aqd*, literally meaning the commission having the right to legislate and abrogate the laws, a concept quite similar to 'indirect democracy' in the Western sense. The Salafists oppose 'direct democracy' since it likens a learned person having the knowledge of God, with a layman. Distancing themselves from real politics, the Salafi do not vote during the general election. It is hardly ever found that they vote for particular candidates. Despite the Salafis prevent formal politics, they argue that it is important for Muslim to give advice to the rulers. This is the most common Salafi political attitude. Other Salafi groups such as Wahdah Islamiyah of Makassar consider politics as something important to improve the quality of public life. Politics is a means by which leaders are selected based on their capacities. This can be seen, for instance, it supports Ilham Arif Sirajuddin, the incumbent mayor of Makassar to go for gubernatorial election to be held in 2013.

It is becoming clear that the reproduction of knowledge among the Salafists widely vary depending upon their understanding on Islamic teachings, backgrounds and social settings. The assumption that Salafism is a form of Saudi propaganda is obviously mistaken. This assumption simplifies the fact that Salafism has historical precedence and always bears the spirit of reform as its salient feature. Moreover, the idea that Salafists promote radicalism and extremism on the one hand and absolute quietism in another, as reflected in bitterly contested

terms such as jihadist versus non-jihadist, do really depict its entirety. The entire picture is that it covers up issues ranging from religious reform, education, economy, social, and culture. This is not to say that Salafism is free from patronage, political propaganda, and its fusion with other ideologies. As I said earlier, before reaching Indonesian coastlines, Salafism has constantly evolved absorbing locally established ideologies.

### **The Multiplicity of *Shari'ah***

In the aftermath of 9/11, LIPIA began to get involve in discussing such discourses as democracy and civil society. It was a part of campaign against terrorism. Many Islamic organizations were encouraged to get engage in this campaign. This period witnessed the rise of public awareness of the danger of terrorism and radicalism. Programs and research on terrorism had been made. It was for the first time a large number of Islamic organizations discussed more seriously such issues. Before that these issues had never been given enough attention especially by the Islamists. LIPIA was frequently invited by authorities such as Contra-terrorism National Office (BNPT) to discuss the effective ways to combat radicalism and terrorism.

It is very likely that LIPIA is concerned with the fact that some people have been suspicious towards the institute as it might have promoted radicalism and extremism in the country. It therefore holds seminar and conference to explain to the public that it has nothing to do with terrorism and radicalism. It also made several roadshows to Islamic high schools and pesantren to recruit students. These attempts are positive and reassure the public that the institute is not charged with those allegations.

Most of the LIPIA students oppose liberalism promoted young Muslim intellectuals associated with Islamic Liberal Network (JIL). This issue is particularly emotional as its main figure, Ulil Abshar Abdallah, previously studied at LIPIA. Having a traditionalist NU background, Ulil continued his education at LIPIA but dropped out before he finished it. This opposition is found in their personal blogs, facebook, and twitter. Some students even publish books to oppose the danger of liberal Islam. The controversy of Ulil does not only attract LIPIA students, it also divided Muslim groups into two opposing camps. The opponent camp even issued a fatwa of murdering Ulil.

A number of student organizations such as Hizb al-Tahrir, KAMMI (Indonesian Muslim Student Action Union), HMI (Indonesian Student Association) are found within the LIPIA. KAMMI is the largest student organization which has link with Welfare and Justice Party (PKS), an Islamic political party which produce important politicians and bureaucrats. It is obvious that most of the students support Islamism, that Islam becoming the alternative system for the *ummah*. However, support for Islamism has recently eroded, as more people believe in democracy and civil rights. Despite LIPIA still play an important role in transmitting Islamism and Salafism, its influence is particularly limited within a relatively small group of Muslim communities. Its position is really marginal in term of reproducing Islamic knowledge within larger Muslim audiences. Most of the Muslim people still regard the prominence of state Islamic universities in Jakarta and Yogyakarta.

LIPIA has played an important role in creating Salafi schools in the country. There have been dozens of Salafi schools built in the country over the last two decades. These schools are linked to LIPIA in one way or another. Most of them are found in Java. Looking at their bases, it is obvious that the Salafists have been successful in creating its network in non-traditionalist NU strongholds. In West Java, they created network in Bandung, Tasikmalaya, Garut, Ciamis, Sukabumi, and Bogor. In Central Java, they created network in Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Magelang and Salatiga.

In the aftermath of Aceh Tsunami in 2005, the Salafi created network in Sumatra especially in Banda Aceh. Working with various Islamic reliefs, they bought lands and built mosque, schools, and boarding schools. It is clear that the Salafi joined the humanitarian project together with other Islamic organizations and this project linked them to broader international financial sources. In Sulawesi, the Salafi network is found in Makassar. This network is made, among others, by Wahdah Islamiyah, a leading Salafi organization in the region. From Makassar, the network is further developed to Kalimantan, Maluku, and Papua. It is important to say that Wahdah is founded by the LIPIA graduates and has the largest network in eastern Indonesia.

It is becoming clear that the Salafists have successfully created network in province, city, town, and district. This success cannot be separated from two modernist organizations, Muhammadiyah and

Persis. In the grass root level, the Salafists gain strong support from these organizations. They pave the way for the Salafists to advocate their ideologies. This may not be surprising if one recalls that both Muhammadiyah and Persis have the same spirit of reform. At organizational level, the Salafism, Muhammadiyah and Persis have made joint project on education. The agreement is that, while the Salafists provide fund for building schools, mosques, and dorms, the Muhammadiyah and Persis provide lands. This project has been going on in several campuses.

It is found that the Salafists survive due to strong support of campus. The Salafists are in fact students previously studied at various campuses in the city. They converted to Salafism for several reason. In most cases, they converted due to willingness to seek for true Islam. In some cases they converted due to friendship, family ties and marriage. This fact also reveals the idea that Salafism links to student movements of the 1980s. This period witnessed a shift of paradigm after the student movements being crushed by the New Order regime. Many Salafi members I talked with in this region were former students of Gajah Mada University, the main campus in the city. They are now becoming active members of Salafi communities. This is the reason why Salafi enclaves are found around the city such as Piyungan, Banguntapan, and Kaliurang. The same pattern can be found in Surakarta, about fifty kilometers from Yogyakarta to the north. In this city, a relatively big Salafi enclave is found. They establish schools, Islamic boarding schools, etc. Many of them are former students of various campuses in this city such as State University of Surakarta (UNS).

The Salafi communities consist of well-educated persons, mostly of biology, physics, chemistry, and math backgrounds. They are now serving as doctor, paramedic, engineer, and scientist. These persons are working together with those who have religious knowledge popularly called *ustādh* (teacher in Arabic). They previously studied at various universities in Saudi Arabia. While the first group uses their knowledge and skills to develop the movement further, the second gives legitimacy to the movement attracting wider Muslim audiences. This is the reason why Salafi movements are so extensive and have far-reaching consequences.

In the following sections, I want to briefly discuss the joint project between the Salafists and the modernist Muhammadiyah and Persis.

This is one of the largest Salafi network in the country that shapes many aspects of Muslim communities. As I said earlier, the LIPIA graduates link local Indonesian organizations to wider financial resources. Thanks to them, many relief organizations create their local branches in Jakarta and make humanitarian programs. These programs include education, health, social and economic programs, the construction of mosque and madrasa, the distribution of the Koran and Islamic books, the distribution of sacrificed animal, and the donation of food during Ramadhan.

Muhammadiyah and Persis are the main modernist organizations in Indonesia which have been active so far. Founded in 1912, Muhammadiyah has been active on education and social projects. Persis was founded in 1923. It had the same concerns with those of Muhammadiyah. While Muhammadiyah has been successful in establishing schools and universities, Persis had been stuck due to its rigidity. It had been focusing on eradicating *bid'ah* and given little attention to social and education program. Both organizations are seen as having abandoned reform issues which previously became the main important agenda. This fact made the leaders of both organizations really concerned. It is frequently heard both organizations did not have good prayer leaders (*imām*), their Qur'anic recitations really bad. It is also heard that it is really difficult to find a preacher for Friday sermon.

Muhammadiyah and Persis made cooperations with Middle East charity organizations to build Qur'anic schools across the country. These schools are largely to train religious functionaries (prayer leaders, preachers, Qur'anic teachers, religious teachers). In less than a decade, there have been a number of institutes specializing on Islamic studies and memorizing of the Qur'ān. They are built in Jakarta, Bandung, Surakarta, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Makassar, Malang, Medan, Palembang, Batam, Mataram, Palu, Lampung, etc. After completing their training, students are to be sent to areas for religious promulgation. Excellent students are given scholarship to continue their advanced studies in Saudi Arabia.

The fact that Muhammadiyah and Persis revitalized *tajdīd* (reform) demonstrates that this is the most salient feature of Salafi organizations. This is totally in opposition to the arguments proposed by many scholars that Salafism is form of Saudi global politics. While political patronage between Saudi Arabia and Indonesian Salafi organizations is



obvious, this is by no means that they do not have their own agenda. To some extent, they enjoy a great deal of independence so that they can create their own agenda. Equally important is that Saudi financial supports and other Middle East countries are limited. They are usually given for initial steps mostly for mosque and school constructions. Once the projects are completed, local organizations should be looking for other resources for survival. In the following sections, I want to briefly describe the backgrounds of LIPIA students to determine its role in the current Indonesian Salafi Islam.

LIPIA has become the main destination for Muslim youths especially with rural backgrounds. It gives stipend for 200 Saudi riyals every month for entire students. It also gives all the textbooks for the students for free. This offer means a lot for those who could not afford high education in public and private universities. Some requirements are applicable for applicants. They should at least memorize three chapters of the Holy Koran (the entire Koran consisting of thirty chapters) by the time they register. In each semester students should add one more chapter. *Hifdh al-Qur'an* (Memorization of the Qur'an) is one the traditional methods in Muslim communities available until nowadays. Some students claim that they also memorize the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. The applicants are also required to submit a recommendation (*tazkiyah*) either by persons or institutions which have good reputations. Hand-written recommendations are preferable. Recommendation should be personal and informal. Since the institute creates networks based on personal or informal connections, recommendations made by LIPIA alumnae or Saudi-link institutions are highly considered.

**Figure 3: The Statistics of LIPIA Students (Total 2350 in 2012)**

School of Origin			Economic Background					Place of origin		Sex
Islamic high school	Islamic boarding school	public school	peasant	small businessman	labor	teacher	other	rural	urban	Male 88 %
45 %	39%	16%	30%	37%	7%	5%	21%	75%	25%	Female 12%

**Conclusion**

It is obvious that the foundation of LIPIA has political elements. From Indonesian side, it is an attempt to support Islamic movements after Islam politics being blocked by Suharto. From Saudi side, it is a

form of political accommodation of the state toward the *'ulama'*. Through LIPIA, the Saudi state can provide more opportunities for the *'ulama'* to flourish who in turn provide legitimacy for the state. LIPIA is an Islamic institution consistent using traditional Islamic scholarship especially those of the Hanbalite schools of thought. This is reflected in the entire curriculum the LIPIA has for its students. Despite other Sunni madhhab are taught, they are limited to literature which are considered relevant for the transmission of knowledge the LIPIA promotes. Notwithstanding this, the diversity of knowledge is taking place as the institute has a limitation to control students. This enables them to create interactions with other groups who have different knowledge which in turn affect theirs. Politization of knowledge takes place due to the fact that actors have different social and historical backgrounds. Actors create knowledge for their own benefits. Moreover, the different social and economic status between actors also contributes to this diversity.

The discussion about Salafism frequently stems from a monolithic perspective which asserts that this Sunni sect is religiously puritan, unchanged, and opposes any possibility of differentiating knowledge. While this judgment is baseless, my ethnographic project shows that Wahdah Islamiyah has successfully bypassed its critical juncture and moved itself to a wider spectrum of knowledge. It is necessary to note that the Salafists are not in opposition against modernization. What becomes their concerns is that modernity should be based on Islamic ethics. At this point what is more interesting and more relevant to discuss is that the Salafists seek to push the Islamic traditions and practices to the center and challenge modernity.

The assumption that Salafi groups are dependent on Saudi funds is not supported by empirical bases. This relates to the nature of donation itself. It is true that charities are distributed to the Salafi groups. But they are limited and are only used at the initial step. Moreover, the Saudi philanthropists define religious charity in a very strict manner. They would only give donation for religious construction as the Prophet Muḥammad said so. Most of the funds are largely used for mosque and school construction, others for orphans, fasting meals, the distribution of the Holy Qur'ān and religious books. This means that once the Salafi have had their own infrastructures, they have to be self-reliant, which means that they have to pay for the establishment. Based on my observations, one of the strategies the

Salafi makes to resolve this problem is by inviting and involving their member to take parts on organizational responsibilities. []

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