

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 (Al-Rasheed 2007, Okruhlik 2004).

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 (Okruhlik 2004, 2005).

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 public polices and social life. Gender segregation was more profound, and the mutawwa (Shari’a 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 Shari'a 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

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 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 ulama. This can be seen in the prestigious position of ulama in its structure. They are given high salaries, apartment, car, living cost, and tickets for home holidays. The professors of Sharia are given the highest positions. They are charged with the teaching of fiqh, hadith, and ushul al-din. Besides Shari'a, 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.

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

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 makes 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 al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah over rational approaches towards religion.

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 next year.

It is becoming clear that the reproduction of knowledge among the Salafis 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 Salafis promotes 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 Sharia

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

while the Salafis 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 Salafis survive due to strong support of campus. The Salafis 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 Yogya 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 person are working together with those who have religious knowledge popularly called ustadz (teacher in Arabic). They previously studied at various universities in Saudi Arabia. While the first group are using their knowledge and skills to develop the movement further, the second are giving 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 Salafis 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 includes 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 for 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

- Al-Sugair, Khalid Ali. 1993. "The Foreign Aid Program of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 1973-1990." Ph D Dissertation. The George Washington University.
- Al-Yassini, Ayman. 1982. "The Relationship between Religion andn State in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." PhD Dissertation, University of McGill.
- An-Na'im, Abdullahi Ahmad. 1996. Toward and Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- An-Na'im, Abdullahi Ahmed. 2008. Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'a. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Asad, Talal. 1985. The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam. Washington, D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies.
- Atar, Muhammad. 1988. "Quest for Identity: The Role of Textbook in Forming Saudi Arabia Identity." Ph D Dissertation, University of Oregon.
- Azra, Azyumardi. 2004. 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.
- Baroni, Samiah Elizabeth. 2007. "Color Me Green: Saudi Arabian Identity and the Manifestation of Power." Ph D Dissertation, Florida Atlantic University.
- Barth, Fredrik. 1993. Balinese World. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Basri. 2008. "Indonesian Ulama in the Haramayn and the Transmission of Reformist Islam in Indonesia (1800-1900)." Ph D Dissertation, University of Arkansas.
- Berkey, Jonathan. 1992. The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education. Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Bowen, John R. 1991. Muslim through Discourses: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Brown, L. Carl. 2000. Religion and Politics: The Muslim Approach to Politics. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Gonggong, Anhar. 1992. Abdul Kahar Muzakkar: Dari Patriot Hingga Pemberontak (Abdul Kahar Muzakkar: From Patriot to Rebel). Jakarta: Grasindo.
- Goody, Jack. 1987. The Interface between the Written and the Oral. Cambridge: University of Cambridge.
- Hasan, Noorhaidi. 2006. Islam, Militancy, and the Quest for Identity in Post-New Order Indonesia. Cornell: Southeast Asian Publication.
- Hefner, Robert W. (ed.) 2009. Making Modern Muslim: The Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia. Honolulu: University of Hawaii.
- , 1989. Hindu Javanese Tengger: Tradition and Islam. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- , 2000. Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratizations in Indonesia. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- , 2005. Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- , and Muhammad Qasim Zaman (eds.). 2007. Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Education. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hirschkind, Charles. 2006. The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hurgronje, C. Snouck. 2007. Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Ismail, Faisal. 1999. Ideologi Hegemoni dan Otoritas Agama (Hegemonic Ideology and Religious Authority) Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana.
- Jahroni, Jajang. 2008. Defending the Majesty of Islam: Indonesia's Front Pembela Islam (FPI) 1998-2003. Bangkok: Silkworm Publishing House.
- Jamhari and Jajang Jahroni (ed.). 2004. Gerakan Salafi Radikal. Jakarta: Rajawali Press.

- Metcalf, Barbara Daly. 1982. *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mobini-Kesheh, Natalie. 1999. *The Hadhrami Awakening: Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indie*. Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asian Program Publications.
- Mottahedeh, Roy. 1986. *The Mantle of the Prophet: Learning and Power in Modern Iran*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Mujiburrahman. 2006. *Feeling Threatened: Muslim-Christian Relation in Indonesia's New Order*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. 2007. *Islam Life and Thought*, London: Routledge.
- Noor, Farish A, Yogindar Sikand, Martin Van Bruinessen (eds.). 2008. *Madrasa in Asia: Political Activism and Transnational Linkages*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Norton, Augustus Richard (ed.). 1995. *Civil Society in the Middle East*. Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, Vol. 1 & 2.
- Okruhlik, Gwenn. 2004. "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.
- 2005. "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.
- Olivia, Yessi. 2009. "Radical Islam in Indonesia." *Jurnal Demokrasi dan Otonomi Daerah* Vol. 7. No. 1, June 2009, pp. 257-276.
- Prokop, Michaela. 2003. "The Politics of Education." in *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs). Vol. 79, No. 1 Jan., 2003), pp. 77-89.
- Rahman, Fazlur. 1984. *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

- Willis, Paul. 1977. *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Job*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wijoyo, Alex Susilo. 1997. "Shaykh Nawawi of Banten: Texts, Authority and the Gloss Tradition." Ph D Dissertation, Columbia University.
- Yamani, May. 2004. *Cradle of Islam: The Hijaz and the Quest for Arabian Identity*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Zaman, Muhammad Qasim. 2002. *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Zubaida, Sami. 2003. *Law and Power in the Islamic World*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris.