

THE RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION IN INDONESIA: FROM ORTHODOXY OF MUSLIMS TO SPLINTER AND RADICALISM

Salman Harun ^a, Mohamad Avicenna ^b, Eva Mushoffa ^c, Mohammad Atqa ^d

^a Faculty of Education, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta.

^b Faculty of Psychology, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta.

^{c,d} Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta.

^d Corresponding author: m_atqa@yahoo.com

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Abstract: The study attempts to investigate the factors that motivated the members of splinter groups to convert from Muslim mainstream. Splinter groups of Muslims are considered against Islamic beliefs especially due to its teaching. Talking about the splinter group, then there is no meaning without the benchmark of orthodoxy or the mainstream. Almost all group had stamped as splinter in Indonesia, it has indeed been banned, forbidden or at least controversial by orthodoxy, which may be deemed to be represented by authoritative agencies such Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and so forth. Some examples of splinter groups: Jamaah Islamiyah, Ahmadiyah Qadian, DI (Darul Islam)/TII (Islamic Troops of Indonesia), Shi'ah, Baha'i, Inkarus Sunnah, Darul Arqam, Jamaah Imran, Mufarridiyah, Bantaqiyah, *Qur'an suci* (Holly Qur'an), *Sekte Hari Kiamat* (Domsday sect), Mukmin Mubaligh, Alqiadah Islamiah, *Jaringan Islam Liberal* (Liberal Islam Network), *Front Pembela Islam* - FPI (Islamic Defender Group) and *Laskar Jihad* (Holly War Warriors). There are still dozens more splinter groups in Indonesia, which has not been mentioned.

Splinter groups actually gave birth to three patterns of Muslims that influence the discourse and action on behalf of Islam: Islam fundamentalism, Islam radicalism and Islam terrorism. The outcomes of these three patterns of Muslims are ideology of radicalism, extremism and terrorism. Others aim for the establishment of an Islamic state in the country, fanaticism of ideological leaders, liberalism and deviancies.

In this context, it is pertinent to investigate in greater detail the central issue in question i.e. what are the factors that contributed the members of splinter groups to convert from Muslim mainstream, what are the dominant factors that contributed them to convert, and how was the understanding of Islam developed by the followers of splinter groups.

This study adopts a quantitative research approach. The 35 persons from FPI (Central Jakarta), Shi'ah (Central Jakarta) and Islam Liberal Network (Central Jakarta) will be given questionnaire.

Keywords: Experience Islam, Meaning, Radicalism, Splinter

Introduction

There was only one version of Islam during the prophet time. In the later period, the understandings and expressions of Islam have been diverse. In Indonesia there are several religious mainstreams like Muhammadiyah, Nahdhatul Ulama, Persis, and Al-Washliyah, which are streams of orthodoxy. In addition, there are streams that exist or ever existed, which we called non-orthodoxy such as FPI, Jama'ah Tabligh Jamat Darul Arqam, Laskar Jihad FKAWJ, Jemaah Islamiyya, Darul Islam, and others. And there are also a number of groups which otherwise prohibited or forbidden by the Indonesian Ulema Council, namely: Ahmadiyya Qadian, Mujahidin'nya Warsidi (Lampung), Shia, Baha'i, "Inkarus Sunnah", Darul Arqam (Malaysia), Jamaat Imran, the tasawwuf school of wahdatul wujud, Mufarridiyah, and movement of Bantaqiyah (Aceh), movement of

inkar Sunnah , al-Qiadah al-Islamiyya and so on. These groups are referred to as splinters.ⁱ

Those groups denote that Islam is not monolithic. Some scholars call the groups as fundamentalist, radical Islam and Islamic terrorists.ⁱⁱ Other calls them radicalist, terrorist, extremist, movement which fights for an Islamic state idealism, fanaticism of ideological figures, and liberalism. Some scholars classify them in to the categories of orthodoxy, splinter, radicalism, terrorism, extremism, etc.ⁱⁱⁱ

The root behind the emergence of those religious streams seems to be laying around the issue of the interpretation of religious texts. Those interpretations are strongly influenced by individual experiences and his/her environmental conditions. This interpretation is then used as a reference from which the meaning derived and subsequently resulted in a variety of expressions. The expressions studied in this paper are then called idealism, fanaticism, radicalism, and liberalism. The expression is basically a transformation of human experiences. By interpreting the expressions and experiences, one could understand "the meaning" of a religious stream for its followers.

For this reason, this paper asks the following questions; what is the meaning of Islam perceived by the followers of groups of non-orthodox and the splinter of Islam? To what extent these meanings are influenced by the local socio-cultural and psychological factors, **how the adhesive factor it**, and how to view and treat the groups of non-orthodox and they will splinter.

The purpose of this study is to uncover the meaning of Islam to the followers of groups of non-orthodox and splinter. Thus, the meaning is elaborated based on the experiences of the adherents of these streams, and analyzed to understand the formation of meaning, and causes driving them to adopt these meanings.

This study is expected to contribute to the academic world, especially in the field of Quranic exegesis, sociology, anthropology, psychology and political science. In general, the study expects to produce some input that are beneficial for the government in making judgments and policy in addressing problems associated with groups of non-orthodox and splinter.

Framework of Study

The Meaning and the Expression

The emergence of streams within the Islamic theology and community is a reflection of diverse interpretations of the text of the Qur'an and the Hadith. E. D. Hirsch Jr. Argues that the interpretation made by the reader to grasp the message of a text or reading will not really the same as the message made

by the creator, due to different social scope and time period between the reader and the creator.^{iv} Hefner concluded that different contexts of adherents made the chances of different interpretation of Islam in highly open.^v This is also true for the emergence of splinter streams which has different interpretation from the existing orthodoxy, resulting in a variety of religious expression, such radicalism, terrorism, extremism and liberalism.

Umberto Eco views that the text is open for indefinite interpretation. However, he also notices that the meaning the reader has greatly influenced by the environment and the reader's own experience,^{vi} apart from the nature of language itself which allows for different meanings.^{vii} Similarly, Blumer notes that human actions toward an object are based on the meaning of the object for him/herself, which is formed of an ongoing process of interpretation, (experience) that are later used to act in response to the object at hand.^{viii} Then, one will take the meanings from the actions of others which in turn will be used to react for or against them.^{ix}

Turner states that to understand the meaning of behavior is necessary to understand his experience. Experience contains the thoughts and feelings.^x Meaning arises when experience meets the feelings, the desires and the thoughts at particular point of time.^{xi} Similarly, Dilthey concludes that to understand one's own meaning, requires the interpretation of the expressions. Expression according to Bruner is the articulation, formulation, and the representation of human experience. Bruner adds expressions that appear later will result in new experiences, which then re-generate the expression, and so on over and over again.^{xii}

Orthodoxy, Non-orthodoxy and splinter groups of Islam in Indonesia

Orthodoxy in this paper is not identical with the Sunni, but is a group of mainstream in a particular location or context. According to Bruinessen, the movements that differ from the mainstream called splinter.^{xiii} He adds that orthodoxy is represented by authoritative bodies such as the Council of Indonesian *Ulama* (MUI), *Muhammadiyah*, *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), and so on.

Bruinessen further argues that splinter movements, as well as orthodoxy also consider themselves more completely.^{xiv} In the sociological approach, "orthodoxy" and "splinter" is a relative and dynamic concept. For example, the Islamic reformist movement in the early 20th century in Indonesia (like Al Ershad and Muhammadiyah) which firmly opposed to "orthodoxy" of traditional affiliation of majority scholars at that time, were splinter movements. So, some ideological movements that

now are seen as orthodoxy had also been a kind of "splinter movement" before.^{xv}

Al-Chaidar also discusses mainstream Islam and splinter. He explains that the legacy of the history of political Islam has divided its followers into two main currents: the *Sunni* and *Shia*. Indonesia is a country in which adherents of Sunni are dominant, while Shiites held only by a small portion of society. Sunnis in Indonesia is divided into two major groups: NU and Muhammadiyah. NU represents the bulk of Sunni Muslims who are traditionally characterized by orthodox ulama figures (religious scholars). Meanwhile Muhammadiyah represents a modern Sunni Muslims, anti-heresy, superstition and syncretism. Outside of these two groups, which does not made reference to such traditional and modern teachings, is called a splinter group of Islam.^{xvi} Al-Chaidar adds that these splinter groups paved the way for the emergence of three ideologically different groups that currently claim for and influence the discourse and action on behalf of Islam: Islamic fundamentalist, radical Islam and Islamic terrorists.

However, if we stick to aforementioned explanation, it would be difficult to classify groups of Muslims which are different in term of the nature and the goals of their movements, yet they cannot be considered out of *mainstream* in this case, Sunni followers. Moreover, these groups have not been banned by the orthodoxy. So, what classifies a group that is not prohibited or forbidden by the orthodoxy, such as Laskar Jihad, FPI, Salafi movements and other streams that are different from the *mainstream* in their goals yet still claim as Sunni followers such as NU and Muhammadiyah. Are they also categorized as splinter groups? Splinter groups within Indonesian context always portray negative images. Therefore we want to mention those groups as non-orthodoxy, namely groups that has similar ideological base, but has different nature and goals the movement, and never been banned by the *mainstream*.

Sociological Study on Splinter Group

Sociologist Richard Niebuhr analyzes the dynamics of the birth of sects and denominations. Niebuhr views that many sects, which first was born as a movement of protest against the conservatism and rigidity of the church (and often also against the state), gradually becomes softer, established, organized neatly and increasingly formal.^{xvii} In other words, those newly movements will undergo a process of gradual development in order to be denominations and so on. However, Niebuhr's theory is now considered too schematic, since the sects are not always the denomination.^{xviii}

Thirty years after Niebuhr, another American sociologist, Milton Yinger, concludes that the sect

which was born as a social protest likely to survive as a sect and remains separate from orthodoxy, while the sect which emphasized more personal moral issues tend to be denominated.^{xix} British sociologist, Bryan R Wilson, in *Religion in Secular Society*, explains that the sect is represented in particular strata, in which some of the members of this group feel that their religious and perhaps social needs are not accommodated.^{xx}

There are four general characteristics of the rise of sects within each religious tradition. First, in terms of teaching, usually they are different from the religious doctrine that has been agreed. Second, they typically have charismatic leaders who demands absolute obedience. Third, they have a tendency to feel more righteous than any other group. Fourth, they feel "obliged" to save the world. They believe that only their group could guarantee "salvation" for humankind.

Wilson tried to create a typology that is not too dependent on Western Christian cultural context. The typology is based on the attitude towards sects around the world, although in reality, a sect can have characteristics of more than one ideal type. But almost all of Wilson's ideal types represented by splinter movements exist in Indonesia.^{xxi}

According Bruinessen, as a result of urbanization and economic monetarization, many traditional social ties have become more loose or disconnected, both in traditional villages as well as in family networks. In modern urban society, on the contrary, every person associated with a more people, but the relationship is very shallow and do not contain significant responsibilities. As a result many people feel isolated, and feel that no one can really be trusted due to the absence of social control system with all the sanctions. In this situation, religious streams often can fill the emptiness created by the disappearance of large families and village communities.^{xxii}

Methodological Note

This is a descriptive study, which allows to give the picture as accurately as possible about individual characteristics.^{xxiii} Qualitative approach is used to obtain complete and depth information. Data were obtained through the data collection of individual experiences acquired from interview.^{xxiv} The study employed in-depth interviews combined with participant observation. In addition, secondary data are obtained through library based study. The informants in this study were selected based on certain criteria and considerations that fulfill the representation of the non-orthodoxy and splinter groups. They are active in a variety of religious expressions associated with the ideology of the group. Some informants also selected because of

structural positions within the organization. This study focused on a few organizations that is considered as non-orthodoxy, namely the FPI (Tanah Abang, Central Jakarta), and the splinter groups; the Liberal Islam Network (Utan Kayu, Jakarta Pusat), and Ahmadiyah (Parung, Bogor).

Brief Descriptions of Non-Orthodoxy and Splinter Groups

Non-Orthodoxy Group: the Islam Defenders Front (FPI)

The FPI was declared in August 1998, just four months after the resignation of the New Order President Suharto, by a number of *Habib* (those claim having a blood ties to the Prophet), scholars, preachers and Muslim activists and other figures which are mostly of Arab descent and was educated in the Middle East. The organisation was established in response to variety of actions deemed against the right teaching of Islam.

Post-Suharto era marked by high degree of freedom accompanied by economic crisis and limited employment has made the level of criminal actions and immorality increase. This can be seen in the increasing number of prostitution, robbery, narcotics and others.^{xxv} This makes the organization which now has 22 branches in the provincial level gained wide support from the society. To be precise, the FPI is declared in response to the political and social conditions of Indonesia which do not favor for Muslims and as a defense of human rights violations committed against Muslims. FPI was born as a manifestation of protracted austerity felt by Muslims in Indonesia because of weak social control from the authorities.^{xxvi}

The name of FPI as explained in its constitution consists of three basic words; each has specific meanings for the organization. Front means the orientation of the activities developed in the form of concrete actions and tangible frontal and real action. Defenders means pro-active stance in conducting the defense of truth and justice. And Islam shows that the struggle is inseparable from the teachings of straight and true Islamic shariah.^{xxvii}

The FPI endorses the principle of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaa'ah. The guidelines of the organization reads, "God Almighty is our goal, our exemplary is Muhammad, the Qur'an is our guidelines and jihad is our way of life, and martyrdom is our dream" These guidelines were adopted following the Muslim Brotherhood organization in Egypt. FPI also uphold a slogan; "live respectfully and die in a noble martyr (*syahid*).^{xxviii}

The objectives of FPI organisation are enjoining evil (*amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*) in all aspects of life with

the mission of creating righteous people who live in abundance blessings and pleasure of Allah.^{xxix} With this, the FPI calls for the application of complete Islamic law (*kaffah*). The method employed to fulfill the organisational goals divided into two: soft and hard. Gentle (soft) method invites people with the wisdom (knowledge and charity), then gives good advices and discuss thing smoothly. Hard methods are also employed by using force or power. If the first step can not be afforded, followed by the use of oral or pen. If still can not be afford, the next step is the firm stance.^{xxx}

FPI has several types of membership: general, special and honor members. Each has a specification of different rights and obligations. General members are Muslims who has to register with at least 15 years of age. This type of membership implies the right to vote and to be voted, to give criticism, to be protected and enhanced economically, and to complain and so on. This general membership is obliged to uphold the struggle of the organization, to maintain both personal and organizational names and so on. Special members are Chairman, the Organisational Board and the Shura (Advisory) Board. Honorary member is given to the former special members automatically, and for those appointed specifically by the Chairman with the approval the Shura Council. This membership has more preferential position compared to general memberships. Among its special rights are considered special is eligible to become observer in the General Assembly and special meetings of the FPI.

The FPI activities often result in the destruction of bars, night clubs, brothels and places that are considered to serve immoral deeds,^{xxxi} threat and arrest (sweeping) to citizens of certain countries of which the US citizens were the major target,^{xxxii} and conflicts with other faith-based organizations and religious sects deemed heretical. In addition to these controversial actions, FPI involved itself in humanitarian actions, among others, sending volunteers to the tsunami disaster in Aceh. The FPI activities also aimed at influencing public opinion such as sending volunteers to Ambon (1999), rejection of a woman as president (1999, 2000, and 2001) and demanding the enforcement of Islamic law for Muslims (2000-2001).

These actions gained protests from a number of parties. Some national figure reacted against the FPI.^{xxxiii} Some claimed that the actions of FPI barbaric and damaging the image of Islam. Some element of the society even threatened to take their actions, if the government took no action against the FPI.^{xxxiv} Notwithstanding those pros and cons, the FPI still exist today.

The Splinter Groups of Islam; Ahmadiyah and Jaringan Islam Liberal (JIL) Ahmadiyah

Ahmadiyah was founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who received a legal education and worked on the British government and began to study Islam in depth in 1887. In 1882, he acknowledged himself as a religious or Islamic reformer. In 1891, he returned to claim himself as an avatar of Krishna, Jesus returned to earth, and the prophets sent by God without the scriptures. For the last claim, he asserts that he is a follower of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. The goal is to purify Islam by returning to its true teachings, with the divine revelations that he has and his status as the Imam Mahdi.^{xxxv}

Ahmadiyya split into two: *Qadian* and *Lahore*. *Ahmadiyya Qadian* strictly undergoes the above teachings. According to Schimmel, Qadian had a concrete plan or program for progress, but due to the exclusivity of its members, the Ahmadiyya movement is not popular among Muslims. Qadian has a neat organizational structure. The members pay dues each month and have a central government. Its education system is relatively tight and well structured, with the emphasis on practicing values such as *purdah* and polygamy.

After more than a year of the death of Mirza Ghulam, a man named H. Judge Nuruddin was appointed as the first caliph. After the death of the first caliph, the seeds of disunity began to appear. There are at least three factors that led to this split, the debate about the position of caliph, faith in Mirza Ghulam, and the issue of prophethood. In 1914, six years after the death of Mirza Ghulam, Ahmadiyya Lahore (Pakistan) figures formed by followers of Mirza Ghulam, known as *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore* which objective was to continue and maintain the primary mission and ideals of the founder of Ahmadiyya. Its members claim that Muslims must display the style of Islam that is tolerant, rational, progressive, compassionate, peaceful and faithful. This movement has stated that they fully follow the teachings in the Koran as exemplified by Prophet Muhammad.^{xxxvi}

As mention earlier, the split in Ahmadiyah has been caused by three major issues perceived differently among Qadian and Lahore. Ahmadiyya Qadian believes caliphate system is still needed, while Ahmadiyya Lahore believes that the caliphate system is not needed anymore. Muslim might only need *amirs*, but this position is also not entirely to be obeyed, because it has some specified conditions.^{xxxvii} In term of faith in Mirza Ghulam, Qadian Argues that it is an obligation. Lahore Ahmadiyya, by contrast, believes that faith in Mirza Ghulam is not an obligation. All those who call and believe in the

shahadah are Muslim. The most controversial issue is the prophethood. Ahmadiyya Qadian believe that the prophecy will always be open after the Prophet Muhammad, while the Lahore Ahmadiyya believe that prophethood was closed after the death of Muhammad and thus do not recognize Mirza Ghulam as a prophet.^{xxxviii}

Now, the members of Ahmadiyya about 10 million worldwide. In the beginning, the Ahmadiyya movement is active only around Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Today, Ahmadiyya have been dispersed to various countries.^{xxxix}

However, conflicts over the status of Mirza Ghulam has created rivalry between its followers and the Muslim community extensively, including the validity of the teachings that challenges the status of Prophet Muhammad as the last prophet, which is the most essential doctrines of Islam. Although the members of Ahmadiyya claim that they are Muslims, in some countries such as Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia, they are labeled deviant and lead to conflict and division.^{xl}

In Indonesia, Ahmadiyya Lahore movement came for the first time through its famous preacher, Prof. Dr. Maulana Kamaluddin Kwadja in 1920. He is the imam at the mosque Wokong, Surrey, London and editor at an Islamic journal published in London. In Indonesia, Maulana preached in a number of cities.^{xli}

Ahmadiyya Qadian Movement started to come to Indonesia in 1925 when a number of Indonesian students returning from studying at Ahmadis institutions in the Punjab, India.^{xlii} Accompanied by Rahmat Ali, Ahmadiyya representative from India, those students conducted missionary activity in many cities in Indonesia. Their activities are confined to areas in Sumatra primarily Minangkabau. But their presence was rejected by Muslim leaders there, even though they already have a small number of followers.^{xliii} In 1935, Rahmat Ali expanded his mission to include Java. However, this mission was confronted by three Muslim organization, the Muhammadiyah, Jong Islamieten Bond and *Persatuan Islam* (Islamic Unity).^{xliv} Ahmadiyya Qadian was challenged to come to public debate by *Persatuan Islam* in 1933, located in Bandung and Jakarta. This debate attracted the attention of many people including several members of the Dutch government in Jakarta. After debate, the conclusion drawn by the leaders of *Persatuan Islam* is the same as concluded by the leader of Muhammadiyah in Sumatra, that the teachings contained in the Ahmadiyya is against Islamic teachings. As a result of this reaction, the Ahmadiyya movement in Indonesia has remained relatively small and isolated all the time.^{xlv}

Jaringan Islam Liberal (JIL)

The emergence of radical organizations in the *Reformasi* era has prompted several organizations to form the Liberal Islam Network (JIL) to counter the thoughts and actions of these radical organizations.

One of the Co-founders of JIL, Luthfi Assyaukanie explained that the birth of this organization is a response to the emergence of extreme and radical groups in Indonesia. But later in its activities, the organization has not only confronted with radical groups such as *Laskar Jihad* and the FPI, it also often acts against the conservative and mainstream groups, namely the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). JIL positions itself as anti-fundamentalist, moderate, non-literalist and liberalist.^{xlvi}

According to Charles Kurzman, the most important figure in the discourse of liberal Islam is Shah Waliullah (1703-1762). Waliullah was very tolerant of local customs, which may be by the revivalists deemed contrary to the formulation of orthodox Islam.^{xlvii} In addition, some names of several figures in the 19th century like Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muhammad Abduh, have become important references for liberal Islam. These scholars emphasize the idea of freedom of *taqlid* and the expansion of the right to perform *ijtihad*. In the late 20th century, a number of prominent reformers emerged in the Middle East and other regions, including the West. They are Nasr Abu Zaid (Egypt), Abdulkarim Soroush (Irani), Fatima Memissi (women activists from Morocco), Muhammad Shahrour (Syria), Fazlur Rahman (Pakistan), Mohamed Arkoun (Algeria) and Ashgar Ali Engineer (India). Apart from the various background knowledge owned by those scholars, they have contributed to significant degree to the intellectualism of JIL.

In Indonesia, the ideas of liberalism began popularized in the 1970s. As repeatedly noted in the history books, the most important figure in the reform movement is Nurcholish Madjid. He mastered Arabic and English. Although Nurcholish himself never used the term for liberal Islamic ideas and thoughts, but his writings of the 1970s, clearly demonstrated liberal thoughts, thus he was considered as a pioneer of liberal Islam.^{xlviii} The name of the Liberal Islam also has become increasingly known in Indonesia with the publication of two books: *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies*, written by Leonard Binder and *Liberal Islam: A Source Book*, edited by Charles Kurzman.

In 2001 the Liberal Islam Network (JIL) established in Jakarta. This organization (more precisely movement) complements the emergence of similar

Islamic organizations that already exist before; Rahima, Lakpesdam, Puan Amal Hayati, the Association of *Pesantren* and Community Development (P3M) and the Institute of Religious Studies and Gender (LKAJ). Since its inception, the organization that spearheaded by young people such as Ulil Abshar Abdalla, Assyaukanie Lutfi, Ahmad Sahal, Saeful Mujani, is an umbrella organization or liaison for Liberal Islam organisations in Indonesia. Therefore, this movement does not take the name of the organization or institution, but the network. With a network name, JIL tries to be the community where Muslim activists of liberal Islamic organizations interact and exchange views freely.^{xlix}

The name of liberal Islam explains some fundamental principles: Islam that emphasizes individual rights and freedom as liberation from socio-political structures that are not healthy and from the majority that tightens personal rights. The word "liberal" has two meanings: "freedom" and "liberating". Islamic liberals believe that man was created with freedom, if freedom is deprived, the human nature will be lost. It is the basic right for one to adhere to one religion or not. No need for any intervention or action against one's faith and belief.

In addition, JIL want a separation between religion and state or the separation between ukhrawi (Hereafter) and worldly (mundane). JIL wants Indonesia to remain a secular state, because, the religion was in the private sphere. As stated by Ulil, secularism is a constant negotiation between the ideal society and reality. Islamic Sharia has failed not only to protect human freedom, human rights and gender equality, but also in creating a public benefit. For JIL what is more important is the substance and principles of the shari'a law (maqasid al-Shari'ah) which emphasize on public benefits (*kemashalatan*) through the process of collective *ijtihad*, where all truth is determined by sort of 'fit and proper test' for its vision.¹

Fachry Ali Effendi and Bahtiar identify essential factors in the approach adopted by liberal Islam in Indonesia: the separation in absolute science (eternal truth) and the relative knowledge (truth that can be modified and changed throughout the ages). There are three principles that can be drawn from this separation: the emphasis on individual freedom in terms of faith, an emphasis on personal development and individual responsibility, and rejection on *taqlid* and the use of *ijtihad*.ⁱⁱ

To propagate its organisational ideas, JIL established Islamic Liberal Writer Syndication, talks shows on various radio and television and publishing books and set up a website. The name of the Liberal Islam Network used in its website: www.islamlib.com

Background and Life Experiences of the Ahmadiyah, JIL and FPI Members

To maintain confidentiality, there are certain data that are not included in this study. We also do not include the real names of the respondents.

Respondents from Ahmadiyah

Amin

Amin was born in 1951 in Garut. He admitted that he was raised and educated in a fairly religious family. However, Amin practices religious rituals only as an obligation and to certain extent had been coerced by his father. Amin was educated at junior and senior high school of Muhammadiyah Garut. He admitted only attended classes in Muhammadiyah school, without learning Islam adequately. After graduating from high school, he began studying the Ahmadiyah.

Rizal

Rizal was born in a religious family. Her father is a civil servant who worked as a teacher. He is the only member of the family who decided to become a member of the Ahmadiyah. After he married a daughter of a *kyai*, he also took his wife and his children to become members of the Ahmadiyah. Rizal simultaneously attended his elementary school and *madrassa* in Surabaya. In 1955, he went to Gontor boarding school for 4 years. He admitted that he was a pretty good achiever, although he did not finish his education at Gontor because his father was seriously ill. He entered the PGA (religious teacher training institution) Malang and served as a teacher. Later he was sent to the IAIN (State Islamic Institute) to continue his study until 1977. Rizal served as a section chief in the District Office of Religious Affairs and later was its Head office.

Irfan

Irfan admitted as a descent of royal family which was a fanatic follower of the Masyumi. After completing his high school education, he went into Bogor Agricultural Institute (IPB). In this college he was active as a member of the Muslim Students Association (HMI). Within this circumstance, he came to know Ahmadiyah Movement intensively.

Respondents from JIL

Iwan

Iwan was born on March 4, 1980 in Makassar. He was the first child of four children. His father works as a farmer and his mother is a merchant. His father graduated from the PGA and his mother graduated from high school. According to Iwan, no significant influence of family on his religious education. Iwan further stated that his father is not a figure who strictly practices religious activities and does not give religious education to his children firmly. His father gave him full freedom to choose any religious thought. This is not due to his receptive view on

liberal thoughts, but rather caused by his inability to break the argument owned by Iwan.

Walid

Walid grew up in a pious family who come from the NU background. Both his parents are religious leaders and well respected in their neighborhood. Despite such religious background, Walid admitted that he did not get the religious understandings which are inline with his ideals.

He explained that his big family demonstrate significant degree of animosity towards a liberal religious understandings. Walid came to know Liberal Islam when he was studying in Al-Azhar University in Egypt. He was at time an active member in a study group. Within this environment, he began reading liberals books and discuss it intensively with her friends. Walid determination to adopt liberal values are also due to the phenomena that occur in his life experiences, such as the emergence of radical religious groups, and groups which easily branded the other group is wrong or misguided in understanding Islam.

Elsa

Elsa was born in Malang, Central Java in 1979. She grew up in a religious family with a mixed culture of the NU and Muhammadiyah. Greater religious influence is given by her grandmother than her parents. Elsa began her education at the elementary boarding school in Gontor Darussalam. Then she went on to junior and senior high schools in Gontor for 6 years and continued for 1 year serving as a teacher. Since her life in this pesantren, she knew a wide range of Islamic thoughts. But she called herself at the time, as a conservative, because she thought that other religions than Islam is false and the followers are infidels.

Respondents from the FPI

Ahyar

Ahyar grew up in the military environment. Ahyar's father was a fighter involved in independence war. He was actively participated in the organization of Islamic movements, Laskar Sabilillah, which claims to fight for the rights of Muslims, especially in Indonesia. He was disappointed with the government which in his view did not treat Muslims fairly. After retirement, Ahyar's father became an anti-government. For this reason Ahyar's father joined the Laskar Sabilillah Ahyar. Ahyar's mother is a housewife, but she has tough thoughts. Often, she showed her emotions towards oppressions or violations committed by the government against the Muslim community. She also greatly pays attention with the problems faced by Muslims in the world. She had allowed Ahyar for jihad to Palestine,

although it did not come to reality due to visa applications problems.

From elementary through high school, Ahyar attended public schools in Depok. After graduating from high school, Ahyar continued his study at Education Faculty (Tarbiyah), at the time State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. However Ahyar only stayed until the third semester. Ahyar did not complete his study at IAIN because he felt that he could not deal with teaching system at the IAIN at the time. Finally Ahyar continued his studies at the National University. Ahyar has joined the FPI during his university days, on his own initiative after he heard the FPI recruitment from one of private radio.

Ahyar started his organisational career in the FPI from paramilitary member. Currently Ahyar holds secretary position in District Representative Council Of the FPI as well as a head of West Java Representative Council of the FPI.

Soleh

Sholeh was raised from the family that come from the NU culture. His father was a civil service staff and his mother was a lecturer in one of the Islamic university in Jakarta. Sholeh's parents are devout Muslims. In the beginning, his parents did not allow Sholeh to get involved in the in the FPI. But over time they changed their attitude to be very supportive and sympathetic to his struggles. Soleh graduated from private schools that has religious background. He completed his elementary education from *madrasah pembangunan* that was established and run by State Islamic University, Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. Sholeh went to junior high school Muhammadiyah 9, South Jakarta and finished his senior high school from SMA in Islamic Village Tangerang, Karawaci. After graduating from high school, Sholeh went to Egypt to study the language and Quran for three years. Sholeh then went on to study at the Faculty of Da'wa (College of Quranic Sciences, PTIQ) for two years. After that, he moved to the College of Madinatul Ilmi. During his days in the college, he joined the FPI. Sholeh joined early declaration of the FPI in Um Al-Islamic School, Kampung Utan. Sholeh was the first a soldier in FPI and now occupies important positions in the FPI.

Mukhlis

Mukhlis was raised from the moderate family. He comes from a small village in Magelang. His Parents died after he graduated from high school. Mukhlis's educational background was influenced by strong Islamic religious education. Mukhlis went to *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* and *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*. Mukhlis finished his senior high school education from Islamic Boarding School, Darussalam Gontor. During his days at Gontor, Mukhlis learned discipline

and leadership. Mukhlis also came to know the liberal thoughts in Islam. However the kyai always forbade his students to learn about liberalism. After graduating from Gontor, Mukhlis went on to study Diploma in teaching Arabic at LIPIA (the Institute of Islamic and Arabic sciences sponsored by the Suadi government) in Jakarta, for 1 year. There, Mukhlis was friends with Ulil Absor Abdalla, who is chairman of JIL. Mukhlis stay one dormitory with Ulil and he often exchange ideas with him. Mukhlis then received scholarships at the Faculty of Education, King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. During the study in Riyadh, Mukhlis has close ties with Habib Rizieq, one of prominent figure in the FPI.

The Meaning of Islam for the Followers of Ahmadiyah, JIL and FPI

Expression is a transformation from a collection of individual experiences into a form of action, text, etc.^{lii} It is based on the calculations of the previous experiences and also a reference for the future.^{liii} Therefore, it is important to see how one perceives the meaning and what are his/her experiences in order to understand his/her expressions.

Meaning emerges when someone brings up his experiences with what he felt, wanted, and thought during the course of his current life.^{liv} However, people involved in the same experiences do not necessarily perceive the same meaning from such experiences. In our study, to understand how the members of the FPI, JIL and Ahmadiyah perceive the meaning of Islam, we will analyze the structure of their experiences and meet what they felt, wanted and thought at particular point of time they involved in those experiences.

Experience is something that continues to happen in the course of life. There is a difference between "general experience" with "an experience". "general experience " is all that is received by a person's consciousness all the time, while "an experience" is specifically interpreted by the individual. It has a beginning and an end, and can bring up the expression.^{lv} In this study, The meaning of Islam perceived by the respondents came from "an experience" felt by the respondents. For this reason, by exploring their experience, then the meaning of Islam for them can be revealed, and thus their expressions that emerge from such meaning can be understood. Experience always increases in one's life, but the meaning or interpretation of the whole experience will lead one to find his/her expressions in particular contexts or situations. In other words, based on the interpretation of her experiences, respondents could choose actions appropriate to the circumstances and the needs of certain situations.

JIL

In the case of JIL, the respondents have received the teaching of Islam from the family and educational environments that emphasize on one understanding of Islam and tend to be textual in interpreting Islam. Iwan was educated at boarding school associated with the NU culture, Darut Da'wah wal Ershad (DDI) in Makassar, South Sulawesi. In this *Pesantren* only Shafi'i school is learnt. The Pesantren considers other schools incorrect. Walid grew up in a pious family with a strong NU tradition. Walid whose parent are religious leader and well respected in his neighborhood, also have received Islamic education from an early age. He attended Islamic elementary school and junior secondary school at Darul Ma'arif in Jakarta, and then went to Tambak Beras boarding school, Jombang. After studying for 5 years in this Pesantren, he continued his education at the Department of Aqeedah and Philosophy, Faculty of Islamic Revealed Knowledge, Al-Azhar University, Egypt. pesantren life, Walid like other students, learnt classic books of islam. But he claimed that his understanding of Islam was narrow and rigid. Elsa grew up in a religious family with a mixed tradition of NU and Muhammadiyah. Greater religious influence is given by her grandmother than her parents. Elsa began her education at the elementary boarding school, Gontor Darussalam. Then she went on to junior and senior high schools also in Gontor for 6 years and continued for 1 year teaching service. She learnt a wide range of Islamic thought. But she considered herself as a conservative, because she thought that religions other than Islam is false and the followers are infidels. When she was studying at the International Islamic University Islamabad in Pakistan, she considered herself even more conservative due to its curriculum and environment.

This three respondents show that the meaning of "Islam" for them was originally very rigid, because the construction of this meaning was very much influenced by the family and educational environments that tend to inculcate rigid and conservative Islam.

The respondents started to change to their meaning of "Islam" as they have engaged in environments outside their family and educational environment. When they began actively involved in the study group and in the JIL, respondents faced a wide range of understanding of Islam. The discussions which upholds rationality requires that religion must constantly be given context and not just based on the sacred texts. At this stage, the respondents interpret Islam differently than they used to be.

In fact, Iwan has actually started to feel discomfort with the meaning of "Islam" taught in pesantren. Iwan and his friends were not satisfied to the

understanding of Islam taught in his pesantren. Therefore, they made a non-formal discussion groups to discuss any discourse, beyond what is taught in the curriculum. However, the environment in his pesantren made Iwan held normative understanding firmly. This view is also still dominant for Iwan in the first years of his secondary education in State secondary Islamic school in the city of Makassar. The expression of such meaning was demonstrated by Iwan through his activity as a religious speaker who has always emphasized ideal of Islam to the non-Muslims. Nevertheless, Iwan who still involved in a group discussion always questions things in the *pesantren* which he could not find the answer. At this stage Iwan started having different understanding of Islam from those taught in the school. This made him almost expelled from the school. The establishment of the meaning of "Islam" for Iwan was more crystallized when Iwan got more conducive environment, that is when Iwan continued his education at the Department of Aqeedah and Philosophy, Faculty of Islamic Revealed Knowledge, UIN Jakarta. In this campus, Iwan is also active in the study group called the *Formaci* which intensively discussed liberal ideas. In this discussion group Iwan came to know some activists of JIL who often hold discussions in collaboration with the *Formaci*. Now Iwan holds a position as coordinator for the campus network in JIL.

Walid know liberal Islam when he was studying at Al-Azhar university. He participated in a study group held by Indonesian students organization in Egypt. In this environment, he began reading the liberal books intensively and discussed them with his friends. Through such reading and discussion, he felt the current thirst for understanding Islam was satisfied. From that time, his understanding of Islam has been no longer narrow and closed to other interpretations. For him, Islam should be treated as a living religion, to be reconstructed over and over according to the changes and needs of the Muslim society. What is more important, for him Islam has to be a religion which gives a liberating color. This indicates Islam must always be reinterpreted. Walid determination to adopt liberal values has been also caused by the phenomena he witnessed in his life experiences, such as the emergence of radical religious groups and groups who judge the other group is wrong or misguided in understanding Islam.

Elsa was introduced to Islam Liberal for the first time in 2001, when she was taking a master program at the University of Indonesia, majoring in Middle Eastern studies. Previously Elsa assumed that JIL is misguided, and was the enemies of Islam. This view started to change when she began involved in the JIL environment, discussed and read liberal books that she never found during her life in the pesantren and

college. In this JIL environment, Elsa also met her husband who has been also an activist of JIL. Personally Elsa has been very much influenced by her husband who was active in JIL before her. Elsa is now a web editor in JIL.

From the above description, it can be seen that the meaning of Islam owned by the respondents is the result of the interpretation of the experiences they have. This study identifies some similar experiences leading to the changing meaning of Islam perceived by the respondents, namely: (1) Pesantren background. (2) Generally coming from a religious family. (3) Feeling their Islamic understanding during the *pesantren* and the family life was narrow, rigid and was not open for other interpretations. (4) Activity in off-campus study groups. (5) Reading books, having discussion and interaction with individual associated with liberal thoughts.

The understanding of Islam held by the respondents based upon their experiences during the course of their life, of which is reading a book. Umberto Eco says that the meaning owned by the reader is strongly influenced by environmental conditions and the experience of the reader.^{vi} This process of reading to certain extent has influenced the changing of Islamic understanding perceived by the respondents. When the respondents were still in the family, or educational environments which support narrow understanding of Islam which does not give room for other interpretations, they grasped textual and literal meanings from the books they read. Environmental conditions and different experience that what affects the informants over the meanings of the books they read. However, once they engaged in the environments of the study groups such as JIL and Formaci, which is conducive to embrace liberal ideas, they started to experience changes in their understanding of Islam. Furthermore, the discussions which flew in favor for liberalism has also influenced the respondents in reconstructing the meanings of the books they read. Respondents also showed a tendency to not be restricted by the mainstream Islam. At least, for them, what matters is doing good for humanity at large, so their actions can bring benefits for others. It can be said, with such religious behavior, they can be considered as a humanist religious circles.

Another important thing showed by the respondents is that their understanding of Islam was restricted by the family and educational environments. They were exposed with one-side understanding of Islam that is highly determined by the educators (parents, ustadz, or religious scholars). Within these circumstances, their capacity to criticize such meaning of Islam had not yet developed. Therefore, when they engaged in the study group, which uphold freedom of thought,

they dare to challenge their own understandings and reconstruct them into new meaning distinct from what they understood before. In addition, physical limitations, (except for Iwan), which separate them from the family and educational environments which often curb or guard their understanding of Islam, have facilitated the process of changing the meaning of Islam. So once the respondents went to the UIN and al-Azhar for instance, their parents can no longer curb their thoughts intensively.

Ahmadiyah

The respondents from the Ahmadiyah members claimed to be born and raised in the family that is not too concerned about religious views. Amin for instance was raised and educated in a fairly religious family. However, his religious views were influenced by the elements of *kejawan* (mysticism). Nevertheless, his father was hard enough in educating and inculcating the understanding of Islam towards him. Amin were not basically satisfied with this conditions Rizal felt that the influence of his family on his understanding of Islam is ordinary, in the sense that no particular understanding of Islam was emphasized in his family. Even his family has given him freedom to side with one of religious thought. In the case of Irfan, he confessed to have zealous understanding of Islam and dream of an Islamic state based on *shariah*. This is due to the influence of his family who are the follower Masjumi teaching.

The respondents began experiencing some changes in their religious views when they acquainted with friends, leaders or institutions that support Ahmadiyah. Amin was first heard about Ahmadiyya from his friends after he graduated from his secondary high school. Amin who initially rejected the teachings that were contrary to his belief at the time, eventually involved in the discussions and interaction with a number of Ahmadiyah followers. His father, who finally knew these new activities of Amin, became angry and expelled Amin from his home. After studying Ahmadiyah for one year, he was sent to Pakistan for further studying Ahmadiyah and appointed one of Ahmadiyah preachers sent to several countries. For Rizal, his contact with Ahmadiyah teaching for the first time was through his reading. When he studied at IAIN, he proposed 14 topics related to the interpretation of religious thought in Indonesia, including the Ahmadiyya interpretation, for his research topic. Having been active in discussions and interaction with a number of the Ahmadiyah followers, Rizal finally decided to join the organisation. What motivated him to embrace Ahmadiyah teaching has been his rational and reasonable interpretation. He felt that the Ahmadiyah teachings made him feel closer to God and the Prophets. Irfan has a bit different experiences

from the other two respondents. In his case, the influence of both parents has been significant for him. Both parents often talked about Imam Mahdi. He also witnessed the oppression and violence directed against the Ahmadis. At this stage, he actually felt sympathetic to Ahmadis. This sympathy even grew stronger when he met one of the Ahmadiyya leaders. He was impressed with the religious understandings and teachings explained by this leader of which was the explanation of Imam Mahdi that had reminded him to his parents religious legacy. Furthermore, his readings also have significant impact on his religious view. He read books related to the Ahmadiyya with the explanation from prominent figures of the Ahmadiyya until he finally believes that Mirza Ghulam is a prophet after Muhammad.

From the aforementioned elaboration of the experiences of the respondents, it can be concluded that there are several factors influencing their conversion to the Ahmadiyya, as described below: (1) Most respondents came from the family that has a loose understanding of Islam. (2) most respondents have Islamic educational background, yet they felt their understanding of Islam was shallow. (3) Having great sympathy to the violence experienced by the Ahmadis. (4) The influence of Ahmadiyya's preachers (5) Greatly influenced by books related to Ahmadiyya's teaching.

Of all these factors, there are two factors that greatly affect all respondents, namely the influence of preachers and Ahmadiyya books. From the above explanation, it can be seen that the understanding of Islam perceived by the respondents are highly influenced by the experiences in their lives including that of the books they read. And this once again confirms Umberto Eco's thesis.

Ahmadiyya, according to respondents showing Islam as a religion of tolerance, respects human values, and appreciates the various interpretations of Islam. With the new understanding of Islam they own now, they find it more beneficial to humanity. In addition, they feel strong brotherhood with their fellow Ahmadis and value religious worship more than it used to. In addition, the environment within the Ahmadis which emphasize on the different interpretations in Islam is something new for the respondents that they could not obtained before they joined the Ahmadiyya. For them, this is something to be cherished. They believed that if they consistently implement the Ahmadiyya teaching which value high degree of tolerance, possibility of violence attack can be minimized. This stance confirms the meaning of *jihad* for Ahmadis.

The FPI

Majority of respondents from the FPI members has a religious family background. Sholeh was raised in the family that is embedded with the conservative religious culture of NU. Similarly Ahyar who was born of a father who worked as military officer and held strong religious teachings of Islam. While Mukhlis, although come from ordinary family, but had received great influence from his uncle who is a devout religious man.

Most respondents also have general educational backgrounds. Sholeh and Ahyar graduated from non-Islamic schools. Nevertheless after graduating from high school, they continued their study in Islamic college and university to deepen their understanding of Islam. Mukhlis had been educated in the Islamic institution from elementary school to college. The experiences encountered by Mukhlis pushed him more to the understanding of Islam as he perceived now. Moreover Mukhlis continued his education in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia within the environments that support heavily his current understanding of Islam. Mukhlis was also influenced by the religious discussions with Habib Rizieq, one of key figures in the FPI.

In addition, all respondents had a similar experience of witnessing a variety of moral problems and marginalization of the Muslim community and Muslim states in international relations. Ahyar for example, often watched injustices suffered by Muslims in the news media. Marginalizations were also experienced by Muslims in Indonesia. Although Indonesia's Muslims are the majority, but in reality Muslims are always marginalized. Therefore, Ahyar has been determined to lift up Muslim's dignity and self-esteem. The same factors was also behind Soleh's decision to join the FPI when he was in the college. Furthermore, all respondents feel that a number of mainstream organizations of Islamic orthodoxy does not do much to correct the situations depriving Muslims. They acknowledged that these organizations emphasize more on commanding the good (*amr ma'ruf*), but do nothing in enjoining the evil (*nahy munkar*). Thus, their disappointments to Islamic orthodoxy organizations in addressing problems of the people, lead them to engage actively in the FPI.

All respondents also claimed to have been greatly influenced by the books they read and their discussion with their religious teachers who are prominent figure in the FPI. The three respondents are very close to Habib Rizieq. Ahyar and Sholeh for instance follow the lectures regularly held every Thursday night at the FPI Headquarter in Tanah

Abang. Sholeh had known Habib Rizieq long before the FPI was founded. In addition Ahyar and Sholeh and Mukhlis also often consult prominent figures such as Habib Rizieq, Habib Mohsen and other influential people in the FPI to exchange ideas on issues facing local and international level. In terms of the books they read, most are classical books of Islam.

Currently Sholeh became head of the pesantren he founded in Parung. While this pesantren does not have many students, but Sholeh claimed to have been succeed in carrying out its programs. Sholeh and some teachers / teacher at boarding schools often give public lectures for the community in the neighborhood, whether for kids, teens and adults. This pesantren also dedicate its services for community development through empowering the community's economic level by providing capital and equipment loans.

THE MEANING OF ISLAM FOR THE AHMADIYAH, JIL AND THE FPI

The Meaning of Islam for JIL

Iwan

Inline with the values of liberalism he embraces, Islam according to Iwan, must be enlivened by freedom. His current religious belief also emphasizes on the appreciation of mankind. He even judge there is no right or wrong religious belief. Human being does not have a right to judge other beliefs as wrong or misguided then prohibited them or acted brutally against them. Furthermore, Iwan revealed about his opposition to the MUI fatwa which banned the Ahmadiyya. The fatwa said as if to legalize a group to commit violence against the Ahmadis. According to him, Ahmadis have the right to reject advice from the government to become a new religion called Ahmadiyya which is distinct from Islam. He opposed the dissolution of Ahmadiyah for it is considered a threat for the Muslims peace. Ahmadiyya as a religious organization should be protected and be given freedom of worship and preaching.

Walid

As the principles of liberal Islam dictate, Walid rejects Islamic law enforced in Indonesia. He emphasizes on contextuality and the rationality of the teachings of Islam. Islamic values should be adjusted with the environment and particular times. He considers humanity that need to be upheld in religious life as the essence of Islam. Therefore any belief one holds, such as the Ahmadiyya, must be respected and protected as a person's individual rights. In term of the meaning of jihad. He explained that jihad should always be within the scope of humanity. Physical jihad or jihad with a weapon or violence is no longer relevant with the times and

against humanity. Similarly with Iwan, Walid also expressed disagreement with the MUI fatwa. Fatwa is not something that must be followed by Muslims. In fact according to him, the MUI is not entitled to judge certain groups heretical or not.

Elsa

Elsa holds meanings similar to other two respondents such as humanity as the essence of Islam, the meaning of jihad, religion as a private area and her views about the Ahmadiyya, and the MUI fatwa.

She admitted that before she joined JIL, she never approached religion with her reason, so the humanitarian aspect of understanding Islam practiced by Elsa was not like what she did after she adopted the values of liberal Islam. She expressed that she wanted more people to be a liberal to make Islam synonymous with tolerance, high human values, and not rigid with the progress of time. She also expressed her view about the *hijab* which according to her is more cultural rather than religious.

Islam interpreted by the three respondents is individual, private rights of person, contextual, rational and in accordance with the times. Actions demonstrated by the respondents based on the meanings they have about Islam. This meaning is formed when the respondent is present and active in environment supporting JIL group. This is exactly what Herbert Blumer says that humans act toward an object based on the meaning of the object for him/herself. The meaning is influenced by social interactions that occur between individuals.

Meanings is not single, but a combination of several meanings which drive the respondents to perform a variety of expression. The respondents consider some religious groups as an institution that interpret textual and narrow Islam. This has encouraged the respondents to come to various discussions, talk shows, articles, and so to counter the ideas which they considered radical and conservative.

Ahmadiyya

According to Amin, Ahmadis have a different interpretation of the prophecy because it has its own view of *khatamun nabiyyin* (the last prophet). According to him, the mainstream interpretation of *khatamun nabiyyin* not in accordance with the intent of its revelation itself.

Ahmadis believe in the literal interpretation of this verse as its essence. He believes in QS. al-Ahzab verse 41 states that Prophet Muhammad was granted the status as *khatamun nabiyyin* the last prophet. Therefore, everyone is obliged to believe it. The interpretation of this *khatamun nabiyyin*, means there will be no prophet after Prophet Muhammad, who will bring a new Shariah. In other words, prophecy has been concluded that the Prophet Muhammad. the

only prophet who brought Sharia perfect and final. According to Amin, Prophet Muhammad is the most perfect human being. However, that does not mean there will be no prophet after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, because although *shariah* was closed, the door of Prophethood is still open. Mirza Ghulam received revelations as a prophet, and he was assigned to continue the deployment and implementation of Sharia which has been awarded to the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, Mirza Ghulam task is not to bring a new Shariah.

Amin said that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad claimed to be Jesus Christ and Imam Mahdi who is eagerly awaited by Muslims. Amin believes the Lord has shown His signs of the true status of Mirza Ghulam, by giving him miracles with the ability to revive a dying man, the miracle is almost the same as the ability of Jesus. He believes Allah has protected Mirza Ghulam in his life and death as God has done the same on the Prophet Muhammad. This is demonstrated by a variety of enemies and opponents of Mirza Ghulam owned, but he did not die because his enemies are killed. In addition, although various kinds of intimidation and destruction of Ahmadiyya occurred in various places, but with the help of Allah, Ahmadiyya still exist and continue to grow up to have stood in 170 countries. This opinion is also conveyed other respondents namely Rizal and Irfan.

Respondents emphasizes that there is no holy book other than the quran. In this case, *Tadhkirah* as a name claimed to be given to Ahmadiyah holy book is coined by the author of *Ahmadiyah dan Pembajakan al-Quran* (the Ahmadiyya and the Hijacking of the Koran) that is M Amin Djamaluddin in 1992, not by Ahmadiyyah.

Respondents also said that since the time of Mirza Ghulam (1835-1908) until now, they never call *Tadhkirah* as scripture. In fact, during the life of Mirza Ghulam, there is no book called *Tadhkirah*. *Tadhkirah* is actually a book that contains a collection of revelations, Mirza Ghulam *kasyaf* and his dreams for over 30 years. This *Tadhkirah* was arranged through initiative of Bashiruddin Mirza Mahmud several years after the death of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. This view is shared by other respondents that Rizal and Irfan.

According to respondents, the MUI fatwa has no basis at all and violated Islamic teachings. They argue, according to the Koran, only God has the right to label heresy against other groups. This opinion is shared by the three respondents.

This study aims to understand the meaning of Islam for Ahmadiyah followers. This study revealed there are some similar experiences experienced by the respondents. The experience was increasingly

forming their meanings of Islam. In addition, there are some experiences that are unique to each respondent that affects the meaning of Islam. Example, some claim that they are exposed to the story of Imam Mahdi since they were young and the experience of seeing violence against the Ahmadis. These individual experiences have less impact than the same experiences felt by respondents. Individual experience only strengthens similar experience that strengthens the meaning of Islam to them.

Ahmadis often hold various discussions of books on the teachings of Ahmadiyya. In this case, the respondents felt the discussions held provides a significant influence on their understanding of Islam. They say that to understand Islam, not only to consult al-Quran and Hadith sahih as the reference, but also the traditions that are categorized by *ulama* as having weak status. This is because they believe that the sacred text has multiple interpretations, but should lead to rationality and contextuality. This is reflected in the statement of Umberto Eco that way readers interpret texts greatly influenced by environmental conditions and experiences.

Meanwhile, Herbert Blumer said human action to an object depends on their meaning and significance of these objects. This is strongly influenced by social interactions that occur in a social environment. Meaning emerges from the process of interpretation and later expressed in the actions. Action of the rejection of the MUI fatwa expressed by Ahmadis is a manifestation of their interpretation of Islam. The meaning of Islam for them is a reference for the actions raised in the face of the surrounding environment.

In defending their profession of faith, members of the Ahmadiyya respond in various ways: (1) The members of the Ahmadiyya reject the argument that the MUI fatwa MUI does not have the right and authority to accuse other groups as heretics. They still run their activities inside and outside the Ahmadiyya like to publish a number of books to counter the claims of other groups. (2) They demanded revocation of the MUI fatwa, as they consider such fatwa as a form of intimidation to individual beliefs and human rights violations.

This study reveals that the early Islamic understanding of the respondents developed mainly because of the influence of family and educational environment where, according to the respondents understanding of textual Islam is the only common and acceptable one. It can be said, some respondents did not obtain complete information about Islam so that they do not understand Islam correctly. While in the educational environment, the Ahmadiyya, respondents exposed to environmental conditions that are liberals and then affects their understanding.

They began to dare to re-interpret understanding of Islam and asked about the religious issues of interest to them. They are also greatly influenced by the readings that exist within the Ahmadiyya and the explanation given by the Ahmadiyya preachers.

We can conclude that the Ahmadiyya environment provides an atmosphere conducive to an unconventional interpretation of Islam. In other words, the meaning of Islam for members of the Ahmadiyya stem from their experiences during his life as opposed to the Islamic understanding of the Muslim majority. The study also found the atmosphere of brotherhood and kinship that are high among the Ahmadiis that may be caused by common sense of suffering as a minority and also a common experience of violence and intimidation experienced by other groups.

FPI

Sholeh

Sholeh is often expressed concern over the problems that occurred in society characterized by injustice and disobedience so that eventually Sholeh felt obliged to conduct propaganda from one place to another. But these efforts have not been sufficiently felt Sholeh. Sholeh strongly supports the establishment of the caliphate system in Indonesia. However, Sholeh does not reject entirely the application of the democratic system, provided in accordance with Islamic Shari'a.

Sholeh offers one solution to solve the problems that occurred in Indonesia, namely to enforce Islamic law. But Sholeh disappointed with the government that cannot apply Islamic law, as has been agreed in the Jakarta Charter.

Sholeh also commented on the freedom. Sholeh rejects absolute freedom. According to him, freedom can be done in the context of doing the truth, not for something that is forbidden.

Sholeh Muslims reject the classification that divides Muslim organizations into fundamentalists, liberals, modernists and traditionalists. This categorization can be harmful the FPI which were classified as fundamentalists. Sholeh believes that the FPI is a firm group, not hard and fundamentalists. According to him, the correct classification is based on the Qur'an, i.e. believers, hypocrites, and unbelievers. According to Sholeh, jihad has a special and general meaning. General meaning requires every effort done earnestly for the good. While the specific meaning of jihad is interpreted as physical resistance.

Ahyar

Ahyar regarded democracy as a threat to Muslims. Democracy is a concept derived from the Jews and Christians who aim to break the arguments contained in the Qur'an. With democracy, Muslims were forced

to accept the concepts that are contrary to Islam. Ironically, Ahyar views that the progress made by the West is not obtained through democracy, but through the colonial occupation that has been done long before.

Ambiguous governmental actions in implementing democracy made Ahyar increasingly convinced that democracy cannot be applied in Indonesia. For example in the application of Islamic law, Ahyar thinks that it can be actualized through regional autonomy. However, in practice the government has been reluctant, although large community approve it. On the other hand, there are still many people assume the application of Islamic law will destroy non-Muslims and their lives. However Ahyar think otherwise. Ahyar is confident with the application of Islamic law, the non-Muslims will be protected.

Additionally Ahyar disappointed in the government who cannot see the national identity which is actually a Muslim. According to him, the government of Indonesia has long betrayed his Muslim citizens. In terms of pluralism Ahyar states that there are currently a misleading opinion is confusing a religion with other religions. And this should not be done on the religion of Islam.

Mukhlis

In term of the application of Islamic law, Mukhlis agree that Islamic law is applied in Indonesia, but need to look at situations and conditions that exists in the community. He also argues, the caliph system someday can be applied in the entire Islamic community.

Mukhlis interprets Ahmadiyya as a movement that is misleading to Islamic teachings. He did not agree with the policy of the government which only issued a decree. In this case, he asked the government to act more decisively to disband Ahmadiyah. However, Mukhlis does not agree with the opinion to kill the Ahmadis.

The meaning of Islam perceived by the FPI respondents has been strongly influenced by their experiences which produce the expressions. Among those experiences are witnessing marginalization of Muslims in the development and prosperity. For example Sholeh often see many of his friends who died of drug overdose, the circulation of very cheap pornographic VCDs and so forth. Similarly Ahyar watched many Muslims are marginalized, both economically and politically. While Mukhlis sees immorality in Indonesia is rampant and backed by the thugs and the important people in Indonesia.

Their concern on the problems of Muslims encourage them to find the organizations that can actualize their hopes and ideals. All respondents also felt disappointed with the government or orthodoxy

organization which do not have a real words to solve problems of Muslims. Disappointments are shown by respondents in various forms of expression. In this case, the respondents see the FPI as a the organization that can channel their understanding of Islam and has more real actions in the realization of Islamic values.

In addition, the weak law that has long been practiced in Indonesia is also one of their disappointment. As a solution, all respondents agreed to implement Islamic law in Indonesia. But in terms of how to apply, each respondent has a different way. Similarly, I term of the application of the caliphate system. The majority of respondents agreed to implement the caliphate system in Indonesia. In terms of democracy, some respondents have a different interpretations. Sholeh and Mukhlis support democracy provided in accordance with Islamic Shari'a. But not with Ahyar. He said democracy is the way the enemies of Islam destroy the Muslims. Thus Ahyar not agree when democracy is applied in Indonesia. All respondents perceived the meaning of *jihad* similarly. Jihad is divided into two, namely the special and general jihad. General *jihad* is all the energy and effort done earnestly for good. Special Jihad is a war in the way of Allah against the unbelievers to exalt the word of God (*Kalimatullah*) with certain requirements.

With such meanings that they have about Islam, most expressions are geared towards opposing the emergence of JIL and Ahmadiyah through protests and lobby to the government, sweepings, raids, and destruction of places that facilitate immoral actions, sending *jihad* and humanitarian volunteers and closing relations whatsoever with the Western world (particularly the United States), and so on.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The debate in the interpretation of Islam is a discourse that has been consuming much energy in the realm of human life. A variety of interpretations on Islam is something which possibly happen due to many opportunities to interpret the differences in Islam. In this paper, the differences in the existing interpretations generate the meanings that are strongly influenced by environmental conditions and one's experiences.

This study involve respondents from the Ahmadiyya, JIL, and the FPI members as the unit of analysis. These movements have played an active and important role in shaping, developing, and suggesting unique values among their members. The meaning of

Islam for the members of FPI, JIL, and Ahmadiyya is based their experiences, in which meaning is formed to produce somee expressions. the meanings owned by the FPI members could be contradictory to the meanings owned by members of Ahmadiyya and JIL, and vice versa. The same thing applies to the interpretation of the MUI fatwa banning Ahmadiyah from these groups.

Several theories have been analyzed to give an explanation in the social life of these groups, as well as their expression due to different interpretations of Islam. In this context, the explanation E. D. Hirsch Jr..is relevant. He explained that an interpretation by the reader to gain meaning from a text, in this case the Qur'an and the Hadith, sometimes are not necessarily the same because of differences in socio-cultural factors and the level of knowledge of a reader. In addition, Umberto Eco says readers play an important role in interpreting the text that are strongly influenced by the socio-cultural factors and experiences. In addition, the nature of the text itself is basically open to multiple interpretations.

This study has been to analyze *the patterns of thinking and Behaviours* of the members of JIL, FPI and the Ahmadiyya, the meaning of Islam they perceived, and their expression due to the understanding of Islam. Futhermore the study also analyzed pros and cons behind the MUI fatwa.

In a broader scope, this study shows that humans are active agents in shaping and developing the culture and in shaping the meaning to realize an expression. Differences of religious expression in society can be seen as part of the process of forming a complex culture. In this process, experience plays a crucial role. The actions of the groups involved in this study is a form of response to environmental conditions and based on their interpretations of the experiences that they have been gone through in everyday life.

This study of the expression and the meaning of Islam is focused on three religious with a limited scope. To that end, a more comprehensive study is needed to obtain a broader view of religious groups. Sociological stuy of the FPI, JIL and Ahmadis in the perspective of meaning and experience has never been done before, so this is the first study. A number of focus areas which are not covered in this study require further investigation. One example is how the three religious groups has a number of followers who has the same educational experience, to be precise coming from the same the same Islamic educational institutions, i.e. Pesantren Gontor.

End notes

ⁱ See Martin van Bruinessen, *Gerakan Sempalan di Kalangan Umat Islam Indonesia: Latar Belakang Sosial-Budaya*, in *Ulumul Quran* vol. III no. 1, 1992, 16-27. From http://igitur-archive.library.uu.nl/let/2007-0313203322/bruinessen_92_gerakan_sempalan.pdf (accessed on March 20, 2010), pp. 1-2.

ⁱⁱ Al Chaidar, *Pemetaan Kelompok Islam Radikal Di Indonesia*, (Banda Aceh: Universitas Malikussaleh, 2007), pp. 12

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} E. D Hirsch, "The Aims of Interpretation". dalam Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltp, 1982), pp. 98-99.

^v Robert W Hefner, *Islam, Pasar, Keadilan: Artikulasi lokal, Kapitalisme dan Demokrasi*, (Yogyakarta: LkiS, 2000).

^{vi} Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 9-10.

^{vii} Ibid, pp. 62.

^{viii} Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism Perspective and Method*, (University of California Press, 1986), pp. 2.

^{ix} Ibid, pp. 79.

^x Victor W. Turner dan Edward M. Bruner, *The Anthropology of Experience*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), pp. 35.

^{xi} Ibid, pp. 33

^{xii} Ibid, pp. 6-15.

^{xiii} Martin van Bruinessen, pp. 16-27.

^{xiv} Martin van Bruinessen, pp. 3-4.

^{xv} Ibid, pp. 3

^{xvi} Al Chaidar, pp. 1-2.

^{xvii} Martin van Bruinessen, pp. 10.

^{xviii} Ibid, pp, 11.

^{xix} Ibid, pp. 12.

^{xx} Ibid

^{xxi} These types are: conversionist sect, whose attention especially to the moral improvement of individuals; revolutionary sect, which requires a radical change in society; introversionis that appears when the eschatological expectations remain unfulfilled; manipulationist or Gnostic ("ma'rifat"); thaumaturgical sects, which are based on the treatment and the development of "inner energy" or the mastery supernatural world; sect of reformers, who saw the movement of social reform efforts and / or good deeds (charity) as the essential obligations of religion; and utopian movement. They try to create a ideal community, apart from motivation to be a role model for the wider community. Martin van Bruinessen, p. 12-15.

^{xxii} Ibid, pp. 26-27.

^{xxiii} Melly G. Tan, "Masalah Perencanaan Penelitian", in Koentjaraningrat (ed) *Metode-Metode Penelitian Masyarakat*, (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia, 1977), pp. 42.

^{xxiv} Koentjaraningrat, "Metode Penggunaan Data Pengalaman Individu", dalam Koentjaraningrat (ed) *Metode-Metode Penelitian Masyarakat*, (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia, 1977), pp. 158.

^{xxv} Suroso Imam Djazuli, Hidayatullah, Edisi 09/Th XIII, Januari 2001, 12.

^{xxvi} Jamhari-Jajang Jährani, *Gerakan Salafi Radikal di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo, 2004), 131.

^{xxvii} See, AD/ART Front Pembela Islam.

^{xxviii} Hamid Ibrahim, "Front Pembela Islam (FPI) Dalam Upaya Memperjuangkan Pemberlakuan Syari'at Islam di Indonesia", (Skripsi, Universitas Negeri Islam Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2008).

^{xxix} The FPI Constitution, Chapter 3, Article 3.

^{xxx} The FPI Constitution, Chapter 4, Article 1-2.

^{xxxi} Among others, by forcing the Governor of Jakarta to issue a circular letter concerning the prohibition of immoral entertainment places open during the holy month of Ramadan, see Sabili, No. 13 Th. VIII December 13, 2000, 82.

^{xxxii} FPI made sweeping action against the citizens of the United States (U.S.) as a reaction to the planned U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. This had forced the U.S. ambassador in Jakarta, Robert S. Gelbard to react by ordering U.S. citizens returning to their country and give warning to the threat, Eva Nailufar, 17.

^{xxxiii} The 4th President of Indonesia Abdurrahman Wahid or Gus Dur on December 12, 2000 asserted that the FPI must be dissolved for violating the law, establishing a state within a state, and jeopardizes the welfare of the community, see Rizieq Syihab, *Dialog Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar*, (Jakarta: PIS, 2000), 4. Muhammadiyah chairman Din Syamsuddin, also state that the action is the real crime.

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- ^{xxxiv} Some actions against the FPI occurred in Banyumas, Central Java, Mojokerto, Malang, Jember and Surabaya, East Java, by hundreds of organizations such as the PMII, Banser, Task Force, National Guard and GP Anshor which is generally a partisan Gus Dur's political party.
- ^{xxxv} Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in Indian Subcontinent*, (London: Brill, 1980), 215.
- ^{xxxvi} Iskandar Zulkarnaen, 123-124.
- ^{xxxvii} *Ibid*, 123
- ^{xxxviii} A Yogaswara, *Mengapa Ahmadiyah Tidak Langsung Dibubarkan*, (Yogyakarta: Narasi, 2008), 52.
- ^{xxxix} Roger Whiting, 65.
- ^{xl} Gianluca P Parolin, *Citizenship in Arab World*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 54.
- ^{xli} Ahmad Fajar Kurniawan, 24-25.
- ^{xlii} Howard M Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State: The Persatuan Islam (Persis), 1923 to 1957*, (New York: Brill, 2001), 61.
- ^{xliii} *Ibid*, 61.
- ^{xliv} *Ibid*, 62.
- ^{xlv} *Ibid*, 62-63
- ^{xlvi} Azyumardi Azra, *Pergolakan Politik Islam: Dari Fundamentalism, Modernisme Hingga Post-Modernism*, (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1996), 15.
- ^{xlvii} Charles Kurzman, "Kata Pengantar: Islam Liberal dan Konteks Islaminya," dalam *Wacana Islam Liberal: Pemikiran Islam Kontemporer tentang Isu-isu Global*, terj. Bahrul Ulum dan Heri Junaidi (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2003), xv.
- ^{xlviii} Biyanto, , Tren Liberalisme Dalam Pemikiran Islam, lihat <http://jurnalushuluddin.files.wordpress.com/2008/03/liberalisme.pdf>
- ^{xlix} Nicolaus Teguh Budi Harjanto, "Islam and Liberalism in Contemporary Indonesia: The Political Ideas of Jaringan Islam Liberal (The Liberal Islam Network)", (Thesis: Ohio University, 2003), 62.
- ^l *Maqasid Shari'ah* requires five objectives, namely: respect and save the arguments or reasons of human, religious, soul, and family well-being and dignity (freedom itself).
- ^{li} Ali, Fachry. And Effendy Bahtair. 1986. *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam: Rekonstruksi Pemikiran Islam Indonesia Masa Orde Baru*. Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, First Edition.
- ^{lii} Victor W. Turner dan Edward Bruner, *The Anthropology of Experience*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986, hal 5.
- ^{liii} *Ibid* pp.. 6-15.
- ^{liv} *Ibid* hal. 33
- ^{lv} *Ibid* pp. 3-6
- ^{lvi} Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 9-10.

