



# Islamic Higher Education in Contemporary Indonesia: Through The Islamic Intellectuals of al-Azharite Alumni

Hiroko Kinoshita

Kyoto Working Papers on Area Studies No.79  
(G-COE Series 81)

August 2009

The papers in the G-COE Working Paper Series are also available on the G-COE website:  
(Japanese webpage)  
[http://www.humanosphere.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/staticpages/index.php/working\\_papers](http://www.humanosphere.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/staticpages/index.php/working_papers)  
(English webpage)  
[http://www.humanosphere.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/staticpages/index.php/working\\_papers\\_en](http://www.humanosphere.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/staticpages/index.php/working_papers_en)

©2009  
Center for Southeast Asian Studies  
Kyoto University  
46 Shimoadachi-cho,  
Yoshida, Sakyo-ku,  
Kyoto 606-8501, JAPAN

All rights reserved

ISBN978-4-901668-68-2

The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies.

The publication of this working paper is supported by the JSPS Global COE Program (E-04):  
In Search of Sustainable Humanosphere in Asia and Africa.

# Islamic Higher Education in Contemporary Indonesia: Through The Islamic Intellectuals of al-Azharite Alumni

Hiroko Kinoshita

Kyoto Working Papers on Area Studies No.79  
JSPS Global COE Program Series 81  
In Search of Sustainable Humanosphere in Asia and Africa  
August 2009

# Islamic Higher Education in Contemporary Indonesia: Through The Islamic Intellectuals of al-Azharite Alumni\*

Hiroko Kinoshita\*\*

## I. Introduction

This paper aims to clarify the influence of studying in the Middle East, or in other words spending intellectual life in that region, on the field of Islamic higher education in contemporary Indonesia.

Studying in the Middle East has its own long history in the Malay-Indonesian world<sup>1</sup>. Many ancient kingdoms which were engaged in enhancing the prosperity of their kingdoms, considered Islam as an extremely important factor with regards to the acquisition of an esteemed reputation from countries in Arabia who held the key to supremacy in the trade of the Indian oceans. Though the specific facts are still somewhat vague, some scholars have mentioned that distinctive '*ulamā*'<sup>2</sup> from the Malay-Indonesian world had departed to the Middle East for the sake of pursuing Islamic knowledge at least from the mid-sixteenth century onwards (Riddell 2001; Hirose 2003; Azra 2004)<sup>3</sup>. Major places which especially satisfied their purposes in the region were Mecca (*Makka*), Madina (*al-Madīna*), and Cairo (*Miṣr*). This paper deals with Indonesian al-Azharite in Cairo. Why?

al-Azhar was established in the late 10th century under the Fātima dynasty as the central mosque in Cairo. It began the task of educating a few years after its establishment. Since then Muslims from a number of countries have been coming to al-Azhar for the purpose of study. It is not an exaggeration to say that al-Azhar boasts a history as the world's oldest and greatest Islamic higher educational institution. In light of these characteristics, Muslims in the Malay-Indonesian world have been sailing across

---

\* The original version of this paper was presented at G-COE/KIAS/TUFS joint International workshop of the *Middle East & Asia Studies Workshop: New Approaches in Central-South Asia and Middle Eastern Scholarship* held on 7-8 February 2009 at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

\*\* Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University, Research Fellow of the Japan Society for Promotion of Science (DC).

E-mail: h-kinost@asafas.kyoto-u.ac.jp

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter Malay-Indonesian world is adopted when the historical perspective in the region is referred to and Indonesia is used regarding modern perspectives especially after independence.

<sup>2</sup> Islamic intellectuals who are specializing in Islamic knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> Before these Islamic intellectuals who originated from Malay-Indonesian world have started on a journey to the Middle East, some kingdoms especially in Aceh invited some prominent Islamic scholars from Arabia and India in order to spread "orthodox" Islam in their kingdoms. In particular they taught the Arabic language to the king and discussed exegesis of doctrines (Hirose 2003: 44-47).

the Indian Ocean seeking al-Azhar, quite a few Muslims could go there in the past and today nearly 5,000 Muslims study at al-Azhar. It can be said that spending one's intellectual life at al-Azhar is a diachronic phenomena in Islam in the Malay-Indonesian world even until today.

Institutions of Islamic higher education in Indonesia (Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam; hereafter *PTAI*) which will be discussed in this paper have been developing with intimate relationships with the Middle East. As its foremost example, *PTAI* were established in the 1950s by the devoted efforts of al-Azhar graduates; the development continues with the recent growth of Indonesian Islam.

A scarcity of research that focuses on study in the Middle East in the context of Indonesia exists; however, a varied and valuable account on experiences in the Middle Eastern countries has been provided by (Roff 1970), (Abaza 1994), and (Laffan 2004). Nonetheless, these studies do not illustrate the experiences of individual Indonesian students in Middle Eastern countries in enough detail. Not only do they lack historical continuity but also other secondary aspects such as the positioning of studying in the Middle East in Indonesian society are not considered in their entirety<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, though studies about Islamic education in Indonesia are abundant, few elaborate on Islamic higher education. One such study, (Hidayat & Prasetyo 2000) focused too much on institutional and administrative aspects.

It can thus be pointed out that academic discussion tends to overlook studying in the Middle East and the development of Islamic higher education in Indonesia; it particularly ignores the influence of studying in the Middle East on the field of Islamic higher education in contemporary Indonesia. By clarifying the relationship between these two factors, we can contribute to a comprehensive understanding of both contemporary aspects of studying in the Middle East and of fundamental components of Islamic higher education. In addition, through the fact that both factors supplement each other in the process of development, it is also beneficial to comprehend fragments of a network between Indonesia and the Middle East.

In order to address the subject of this paper, I would like to analyze the following three elements. In Section II, I will supply an overview of the Islamic educational system in order to certify its location in the national education system. Second, by tracking the historical development of *PTAI*, its transformation within Indonesian society will be ascertained. Section III focuses on the actual conditions of Indonesian al-Azharite students in contemporary Cairo; in this section, I will analyze the institutional aspects of student organizations and their activities, especially the act of publishing journals as part of the students' daily life. Finally, in Section IV, through the

---

<sup>4</sup> Though Laffan (2004) writes about Indonesian al-Azharite students on the basis of his field research in the 21st century, the article only contains characteristic of brief reports. Thus, I would like to mention here the necessity of focusing on the details of the lives of Indonesian students in Cairo.

narratives of teaching staff from both older and younger generations who have graduated from al-Azhar at the National Islamic University in Jakarta, I will ascertain the relevance of their experiences in Cairo and their careers in Indonesia. Section V will conclude the paper.

## **II. Educational Systems and the History of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia**

In this section, the following three factors will be highlighted: the educational system in Indonesia; the historical transformation of *PTAI*; and the establishment of *Dirasat Islamiyah* (faculty of Islamic studies) in the National Islamic University (*UIN: Universitas Islam Negeri*) Jakarta. By following the historical transition of Islamic education in Indonesia, the trends of Islamic higher education in contemporary Indonesia will be examined.

### **1. Educational Systems in Indonesia**

Educational systems in Indonesia show a dualistic structure. The Department of National Education (*Depdiknas: Departemen Pendidikan Nasional*) has control over *Sekolah* (School), which provide a general education. In contrast, the Department of Religious Affairs (*Depag: Departemen Agama*) is responsible for *Madrasah* (Religious school), which offer religious education. Both *Sekolah* and *Madrasah* have formal and non-formal education systems.

The *Sekolah* system provided by the Department of National Education has the following curriculums: Kindergarten (*Taman Kanak Kanak, TKK*), elementary school (*Sekolah Dasar, SD*), junior high school (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama, SMP*), high school (*Sekolah Menengah Atas, SMA*), vocational high school (*Sekolah Menengah Kejurusan, SMK*), and institutions of higher education (*Perguruan Tinggi Umum, PTU*). As for non-formal educational systems, *Depdiknas* has a nursery for children to attend before they enter school (*Taman Penitipan Anak, TPA*) and playgroups (*Kelompok Bermain, KB*) as well as Paket A, B, and C<sup>5</sup>.

The *Madrasah* system contains the following levels: Islamic kindergarten (*Raudatul Athfal, RA*), Islamic elementary school (*Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, MI*), Islamic junior high school (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah, MTs*), Islamic high school (*Madrasah Aliyah, MA*) and Islamic vocational high school (*Madrasah Aliyah Kejurusan, MAK*) are provided as a formal education. In non-formal education, there are al-Qur'an kindergarten (*Taman Kanak Kanak al-Quran, TKA*), a children's al-Qur'an class (*Taman Pendidikan al-Quran, TPA*), continuous study groups of al-Qur'an (*Talimul al-Quran lil Aurad, TQA*) and *Madrasah Diniyah*<sup>6</sup>. On the top of the *Madrasah* system, *PTAI* is positioned as

---

<sup>5</sup> Paket A, B, and C are regarded as equal to elementary school, junior high, and high school.

<sup>6</sup> *Madrasah Diniyah* is provided for learning only Islamic subjects. *Madrasah Diniyah* is divided into the

the highest Islamic educational institution under the jurisdiction of the Department of Religious Affairs (Hattori 2007: 5-7).

In recent years, both *Sekolah* and *Madrasah* have been inclined to diversify their curriculums and have broken their boundaries. Simultaneously, in 1994, with the establishment of nine years of compulsory education, the proportion of each general and religious subject was set at eighty percent for general subjects, and twenty percent for religious subjects in the *Madrasah* system. In the *Sekolah* system, religious subjects were also required to be taught, since under the Soeharto regime—and according to the curriculum set in 1994—at least two classes about religious subjects were mandatory. This indicates that the difference between the two systems had been growing ambiguous and it made it possible for mutual educational sharing between each sector (Hattori 2007: 12-13, 15)<sup>7</sup>. Moreover it can be said that the factors which have been mentioned above show a trend of emphasizing Islamic studies in the context of the educational system of Indonesia. This means that *PTAI*, which will be discussed in detail in the next section, is required to fulfill its position as the highest institution of Islamic higher education in the country since it's geared towards satisfying the demand especially of *Madrasah*-graduates or *Pesantren*-graduates for taking advanced education.

In sum, Islamic education has a diverse status in contemporary Indonesia. The border between *Sekolah* and *Madrasah* tends to be dissolved and pupils are provided with multiple opportunities to pursue a religious education, such as in *Madrasah* or in the non-formal education sector, *Madrasah Diniyah*. *PTAI* for the purpose of pursuit of advanced Islamic studies is provided as the later selection of these pupils.

## 2. The History of Islamic Higher Education

*PTAI* consist of three institutions: *UIN*, *IAIN* (*Institut Agama Islam Negeri*, National Islamic Religious University), and *STAIN* (*Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri*, National College of Islam)<sup>8</sup>. Figure 1 shows the location of these institutions in Indonesia. We can understand that opportunities of Islamic higher education are disseminated all over the country.

Figure 2 shows the transition in the number of students at *UIN* and *IAIN*. From 2000/2001 to 2005/2006, the number of students in all of the institutions has increased,

---

following three levels: Islamic religious elementary school (*Madrasah Diniyah Ura/Awaliyah*); Islamic religious junior high school (*Madrasah diniyah Uththa*); and Islamic religious high school (*Madrasah Diniyah Ulya*). *Madrasah Diniyah* is categorized as non-formal education pupils cannot advance a grade. It is rather provided for pupils in *Sekolah* as supplement their religious education.

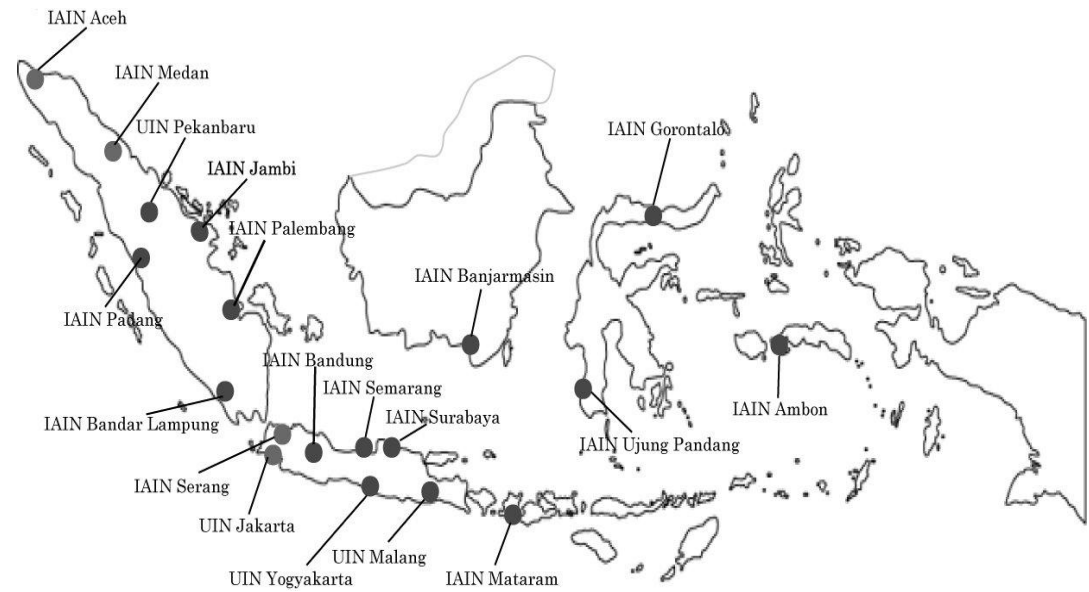
<sup>7</sup> Hattori also pointed out that in recent years, there are some *Pesantrens*, which is a general term for Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, which have absorbed and set *Madrasah* inside of them. Further, it can be observed that some *Pesantrens* offer *Sekolah* beside them (Hattori 2007: 16-17).

<sup>8</sup> *STAIN* is a regional campus of *IAIN*. According to data from 2008, there are thirty-two branches of *STAIN* in Indonesia. It means that there are one or two faculties in each *STAIN*. Because of lacking the data numbers of *STAIN* is not included in this paper.

except on a few campuses. In 2000/2001, the total amount of students was only 66,150; in 2005/2006, the number soared to nearly twice that, at 113,164. In 2002, *UIN* Jakarta, formerly *IAIN* Jakarta, was promoted to university status, and since then the student population has been growing each year; in 2005/2006, the number amounted to 15,645.

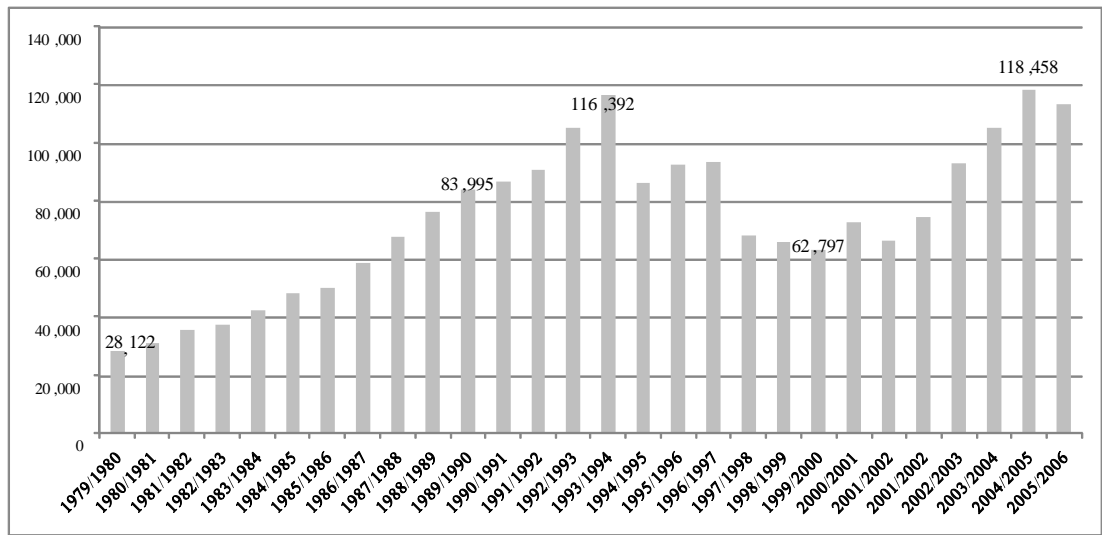
The *PTAI* represented by *UIN* and *IAIN* have had a diverse historical development. As mentioned above, *PTAI* exist as specific matrices for *Santri*’ who wish to enroll in Islamic higher education.

Figure 1: Location of *UIN* and *IAIN* in Indonesia



Source: Created by author based on (BPS 2007)

Figure 2: Transition of the students’ number of *PTAI* from 1980s



Source: Created by author based on (BPS 1985; 1986; 1993; 1994; 2001; 2007)

The foundation for the *PTAI* was laid in the 1940s, during the Soekarno era. In



1946, Abdul Kahar Muzakkir, along with some others who had graduated from al-Azhar, established a School of Islamic Higher Education (*STI: Sekolah Tinggi Islam*,) in Jakarta, which later relocated to Yogyakarta. In 1948, *STI* shifted to the Islamic University in Indonesia (*UII: Universitas Islam Indonesia*) in accordance with the declaration of its innovation committee. *UII* had four faculties: Religion (*Agama*), Law (*Hukum*), Economy (*Ekonomi*), and Education (*Pendidikan*). In 1950, the Faculty of Religion became independent, reformed as the National Institute of Islamic Higher Education (*PTAIN: Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri*), and founded three majors: Islamic Education (*Tarbiyah*), Law (*Shariah*), and Mission (*Dakwah*)<sup>9</sup>. Later, in 1951, this institution was officially recognized as National.

Based on the decision of the first Minister of Religion in 1957, the Academy of Religious Knowledge (*ADIA: Akademi Dinas Ilmu Agama*) was established in order to meet increasing demands for religious teachers all over the Indonesia. This Academy set up three basic years and two additional advanced courses, aiming to nurture religious teachers with more academic abilities. The majors were Islamic Education (*Pendidikan Agama*), Arabic (*Bahasa Arab*), and Mission (*Dakwah*) (Azizy 2000: 19-22).

In 1960, according to the decision of the President, no. 11, *PTAIN* and *ADIA* were integrated and *IAIN* was born. The Soekarno regime was nearing its end; since the military authority feared the expansion of communism through the country, it tried to make religious subjects compulsory in public school and attempted to establish them as compulsory at the level of higher education. During the 1960s and 1970s, numerous *IAIN* were established all over Indonesia and contributed to the spread of higher education around the country.

In 1970, *IAIN* experienced intellectual innovation and suddenly switched around their curriculum structure. These series of innovations were led by three Islamic intellectuals: Harun Nasion (1919–1998)<sup>10</sup>, Mukti Ali (1923–2004)<sup>11</sup>, and Munawir

<sup>9</sup> The highest degree attainable by people graduating from this institution was a bachelor's degree.

<sup>10</sup> Harun Nasion was born in North Sumatra in 1919. His parents were famous for being pious Muslims in their community. He went to HIS (*Hollandsch Ilandsche School*, Dutch School for Native East-Indies), studied the Dutch language, and was also sent to religious school in order to keep up with Islamic studies. After finishing his studies there, his parents sent him to Makkah for advanced Islamic studies and also for a pilgrimage. In 1938, however, he moved to Cairo and entered al-Azhar. Later, he was engulfed in the maelstrom of WWII and was forced to cease studying. After WWII, he entered the American University of Cairo and majored in Sociology. In 1953, he returned to Indonesia and started working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from which he was dispatched to both eastern and western countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Belgium. He then resigned from his job and went to Cairo to continue his advanced studies. In Cairo, he was accepted to a scholarship program at McGill University in Canada and decided to move there. He obtained a Ph. D degree in 1968 (Muhammad Said 2006: 9-36).

<sup>11</sup> Mukti Ali was born in Central Java in 1923. He studied at HIS and also at *Madrasah Diniyah* for religious studies. After graduating from HIS, he was sent to a *pesantren* in Kediri. There, he received his secondary education and participated in private lessons (*ngaji*). When he was at *pesantren* in the 1940s, his society changed enormously under the control of Japanese military, including the formation of Masyumi. Ali was influenced by these occurrences and joined the militia corps. After the country gained independence, Ali became the head of Masyumi in the region and met with various distinguished people from Muhammadiyah.

Sjadzali (1925– )<sup>12</sup>. Harun Nasion held the position of president of *IAIN* Jakarta from 1973 to 1984, while Mukti Ali served as Minister of Religious Affairs for seven years, from 1971 to 1978. Under their leadership, *IAIN* adopted various methodologies for reformation. The two insisted on the intensification of teachers' abilities, the cultivation of a critical spirit, the introduction of positivism and empiricism, and approaches to pluralism and comparative religion. Sjadzali was selected as Minister of Religious Affairs in 1983 until 1994. Under his initiative, distinctive Islamic intellectuals, such as Fazlur Rahman and erif Mardin, were consulted for advice on further reorganization. He also increased the number of *IAIN* teachers who were sent to the West for training (Feener 2007: 138–139)<sup>13</sup>.

Simultaneously in the 1980s, some faculties at *IAIN* were enriched by the establishment of new ones. In examples of *IAIN* Bandung, five new majors were opened in the Faculty of Mission (*Dakwah*). These are *Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam (KPI*; Development of Islamic Communication), *Pengetahuan Masyarakat Islam (PMI*; Knowledge of Islamic Society), *Manajemen Dakwah (MD*; Missionary Management), *Bimbingan dan Penyuluhan Islam (BPI*; Islamic Counseling and Enlightenment), and *Ilmu Jurnalistik (IJ*; Journalism). This means that there were certain streams that attempted to expand existing subjects and integrate Islam with various methodologies for the sake of compatibility with modern Indonesian society (Azizy 2000: 21).

In 1998, a certain number of faculties were enlarged. At *IAIN* Jakarta, for instance, departments of Psychology and Mathematics were opened in the Faculty of Education, and departments of Economics and Islamic Finance were established in the School of Law. In 2001, the department of Psychology was promoted to faculty, and a Faculty of Islamic Studies (*Dirasat Islamiyah*) was constituted. *Dirasat Islamiyah*, which will be discussed in the next chapter, adopted the al-Azhar educational system completely and all the teachers at this faculty have graduated from schools in the Middle East.

---

In 1950, he went to Makkah for a pilgrimage with his father, and soon after his arrival, he moved to Cairo to study. He later left Cairo as well and moved to Karachi in Pakistan, entering the University of Karachi. He majored in Islamic History in the college of Arabic Literature and obtained a bachelor's degree there. In 1955, Ali moved to McGill University and was promoted to the Master's course. He completed his course of study in Comparative Religion and obtained a Master's degree in 1957 (Munhanif 1998: 269-319).

<sup>12</sup> Munawir Sjadzali was born in Central Java in 1925. He was educated in *pesantren* until he was seventeen years old. After he got *ijazah* from *pesantren*, he began work as teacher at Muhamaddiyah School, where he developed connections with people from Muhammadiyah. During the 1940s, he was active in the military corps and participated in some student movements. He entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was dispatched to United States of America. In the US, he studied at Georgetown University and majored in International Relations and Political Philosophy. He subsequently worked in Sri Lanka, London, and Kuwait. In Kuwait, he held the position of ambassador to Iraq. In 1980, he returned from Kuwait and became the head of diplomatic policies for the Middle East in Indonesia, and in 1983, he became Minister of Religious Affairs (Effendy, Prasetyo & Subhan 1998: 367–412).

<sup>13</sup> In 1988, a training program for teachers in *IAIN* was begun, and many teachers and candidates were sent to western schools such as McGill University, Leiden University in the Netherlands, UCLA, London University, and Harvard University. The program ended in 1991, but during those three years, many teachers and candidates obtained Master's or PhD degrees in the West.

These surges of innovation at *PTAI* from the early 1970s onward, however, were not promoted from inside the institution, but were rather led by the Soeharto regime. His policies against Muslims were very extreme. When his New Order regime took over, he integrated all existing Muslim political parties into one party, called the *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP; Unity Development Party)* and tried to crack down on that party in order to prevent them from obtaining political power<sup>14</sup>. On the other hand, he promoted religious education in order to stanch the influence of communists [Hefner 1997: 78; Hattori 2007: 15]. In addition, his regime led to the innovation of *IAIN* in order to eradicate the older structure. Soon after he became president, Soeharto realized that he could not institute cooperation with the Ministry of Religious Affairs because the Ministry was what is called a “bastion” of the NU. As soon as he recognized this truth, he dismissed the Minister at the time, Muhammad Dafran, and replaced him with Mukti Ali, who had studied in the West.

After the mid-1980s, however, Soeharto changed his attitude toward Muslim powers. He took back his former policies that enhanced religious education as a counterattack against communist power, while at the same time oppressed Muslim political powers and making their social influence minimal. Thereafter, he attempted to bring their power over to his regime. In other words, he tried to merge entire powers into his strong constituency. This attitude was reflected by the establishment of the Association for Muslim Intellectuals in Indonesia (*ICMI: Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia*)<sup>15</sup> in 1990. Soeharto also embarked on a pilgrimage and attempted to erase the negative image that he was inclining toward Javanese mysticism (Miich 2005: 179–180).

*PTAI* is the highest educational institution in Indonesia and is under the control of *Depag*. It has spread throughout the country and plays a decisive role as *Santris'* major choice of higher education. As figure 2 shows, the number of its students has increased every year, indicating that *PTAI* is in demand in the country. During the Soeharto regime, under the influence of his policies and agenda, *PTAI* transformed its structure from being dogmatically oriented to adopting approaches toward western-oriented methodologies through the efforts of western graduates. Consequently, *PTAI* today provides non-scripturalistic characters; it features not only Islamic doctoral studies, such as theology, law, and Arabic, but also subjects that are integrated with a wide spectrum of learning, which can accommodate modern Indonesian society with a religion-oriented methodology.

---

<sup>14</sup> Nationalist and Christian parties were also integrated as PDI (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia*, Indonesia Democratic Party) and restricted their political activities to prevent their social influence.

<sup>15</sup> *ICMI* was established in 1990 by the initiative of Soeharto, and Habibi was selected as its head. Since its establishment, Islamic intellectuals from various sectors—including political parties, university professors, and NGOs—were called upon to join it.

### 3. Establishment of *Dirasat Islamiyah*

As stated before, *UIN* Jakarta has a faculty specializing in Islamic Studies called *Dirasat Islamiyah*. Since it is located in the capital city of Indonesia, *UIN* Jakarta has played a leading role among *PTAI* in Indonesia since its establishment. It also serves as the symbol *PTAI* outside of the country.

*Dirasat Islamiyah* was established in 2001, a year before its rise in status from *IAIN* to university. The plan to establish this faculty had begun in 1998 with the efforts of Noer Samad—who was serving as educational and cultural envoy at KBRI in Cairo at that time—and of some attachés of KBRI who had graduated from al-Azhar University. These represented *Depag* and worked out a scheme with al-Azhar in order to establish a faculty that conformed to the educational system of al-Azhar University.

Before this, in 1996, a protocol of cooperation was signed between al-Azhar and *IAIN* Jakarta. This project evoked the interest of some teachers who had graduated from al-Azhar University and began with full-scale cooperation with each other (Abaza 2003: 146). Finally, in 2002, *Dirasat Islamiyah* drew up a cooperation of education treaty with al-Azhar University and contrived to upgrade the quality of education, expanding and enriching the curriculums of the faculty. In the faculty, all the lectures are given in Arabic, except in English or other language classes. Furthermore, one of the requirements for graduation is the memorization of eight *juz*' of al-Qur'an, which is also conducted at al-Azhar University in Cairo<sup>16</sup>. Upon graduation, students are able to obtain two degrees: a Bachelor of Islamic Studies degree from *UIN* Jakarta and an LC<sup>17</sup> from al-Azhar University. In order to obtain the latter degree, however, students are required to study at al-Azhar University for at least one year after graduating from *Dirasat Islamiyah*. All positions of the professors in the faculty are occupied by the Middle Eastern graduates, and al-Azhar University graduates are the majority.

In sum, the following two points can be made. Firstly, *PTAI* plays the role of a huge institution in which able to embrace the diversity contained within Islamic education in contemporary Indonesia, as represented by the establishment of numerous new majors. Secondly, *PTAI* have “institutional al-Azharized” by means of the opening of *Dirasat Islamiyah*. Under the Soeharto regime, *PTAI* were mainly composed by methodological approaches. This did not mean, however, that *PTAI* were absorbed in western academism; rather, it indicated a reconsideration of the university's structures. *Dirasat Islamiyah* established in 2002, *UIN* Jakarta adopted the whole educational

---

<sup>16</sup> According to an interview with one of the teachers at *Dirasat Islamiyah*, this examination is usually held four times a year. Approximately twelve to fifteen students succeed at each examination; in a whole year, about fifty students pass. In addition, in the al-Azhar educational system, Egyptian students are required to memorize the whole al-Qur'an as a requirement for graduation. Non-Egyptian Arabs only have to memorize ten to fifteen *juz*', and non-Arab students are only assigned the memorization of four to eight *juz*'. The number of *juz*' that students are required to memorize differs according to their faculty and major (Ka'bah 2006: 48).

<sup>17</sup> A degree of “License,” which is regarded as identical to a bachelor's degree.

system of al-Azhar University. Hence, this event can be regarded as the point at which the al-Azhar institution was transplanted into *PTAI*.

### III. Indonesian al-Azharites in Contemporary Cairo

As mentioned in the history of *Dirasat Islamiyah*, most of the professors in the faculty are al-Azhar alumni (or “al-Azharites”). In order to analyze the significance on *PTAI* of study in the Middle East, it is appropriate to examine the life of Indonesian al-Azharites in Cairo. Thus, in this section, I will analyze the conditions of students’ lives in contemporary Cairo. First, I create an outline of a sample student’s life; second, I describe the structure of student organizations, as these organizations play a decisive role in students’ various affiliations. Third, publishing activities will be examined in detail in order to show a fragment of the whole of students’ activities.

#### 1. Outline of Students’ Lives

al-Azhar has three campuses in Cairo. One is for men, located next to the al-Azhar mosque, and one each for men and women are located at Nasr City, approximately 10 miles northeast from the central part of Cairo. al-Azhar has experienced some innovation during the 1960’s and now it has various faculties of science and humanities as well as religion, including medicine, biology, mathematics, education, literature, foreign languages, and religion, which students can study in foreign languages. Figure 3 indicates the transition of Indonesian al-Azharite in the twentieth century. It is clear that the number of students has rapidly increased since late 1980s. According to data from 2008, 4,964 Indonesian students are studying at al-Azhar: 4,602 students are at the bachelor’s level; 336 at the master’s level; and 26 at the Ph. D level<sup>18</sup>. To be more precise, Indonesian students are one of the biggest communities in foreign al-Azharite in Cairo. Almost all of the Indonesian students study in faculties of religion, such as Theology (*kullīya Uṣūl al-dīn*), Islamic Law (*kullīya al-Sharī‘a*), Arabic (*kullīya al-Lughah al-‘Arabīya*) and Islamic Studies (*kullīya al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmīya wa al-‘Arabīya*)<sup>19</sup> (KBRI 2008: 1).

Some scholarship programs are provided for Indonesian students. al-Azhar provides scholarships through the *Depag* in Indonesia. The examination is held in July at *UIN* or *IAIN* and the students are tested on their skills in Arabic, knowledge of Islam, and

---

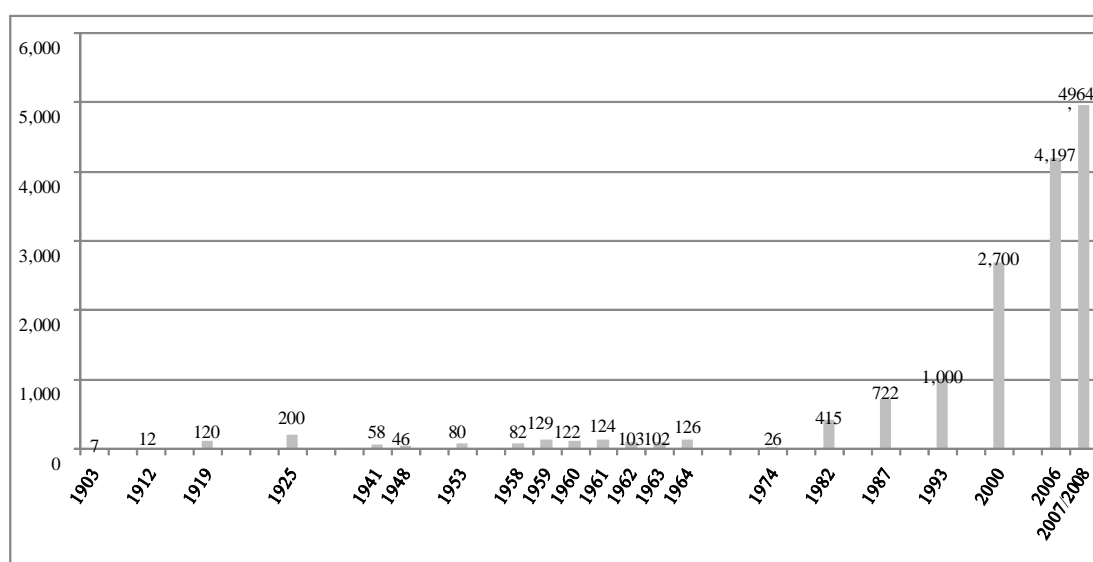
<sup>18</sup> al-Azhar has other campuses in the northern part of Egypt at which some Indonesian students study at: 80 students in *Zaqāzīq*, 70 in *Manṣūra*, 75 in *Ṭanṭa*, 120 in *Taḥnā*, 6 in *Damanhūr*, 15 in *Dimyā*, and 5 in *Iskandarīya*.

<sup>19</sup> Students studying at faculties of religion or majoring in religion at other faculties, such as Islamic Teaching in Faculty of Education, are not required to pay school and admission fees; however, those who study at other faculties, such as medicine, biology, chemistry, and literature, have to pay a certain number of fees for tuition and admission.

ability to memorize al-Qur'an. Each year, about one hundred fifteen students pass this examination. In addition, the governments of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt provide scholarships to the students. However, since there are nearly five thousand students in Cairo the number of the students who can receive these scholarships is quite small. In contemporary Cairo, the number of the students who do not receive scholarships is far in excess of the number of those who do.

Most of the Indonesian students, except for those who receive al-Azhar scholarships, live in Nasr City. They rent apartments near their campuses and share them with five to ten students. They often come from the same region or *pesantren* in Indonesia and they rarely live by themselves.

Figure 3: Transition of Indonesian al-Azharite in the twentieth century



Source: Created by author based on (Abaza 1994; Eccel 1984; KBRI 2006, 2008; Laffan 2004; Roff 1970)

## 2. Students' Organizations

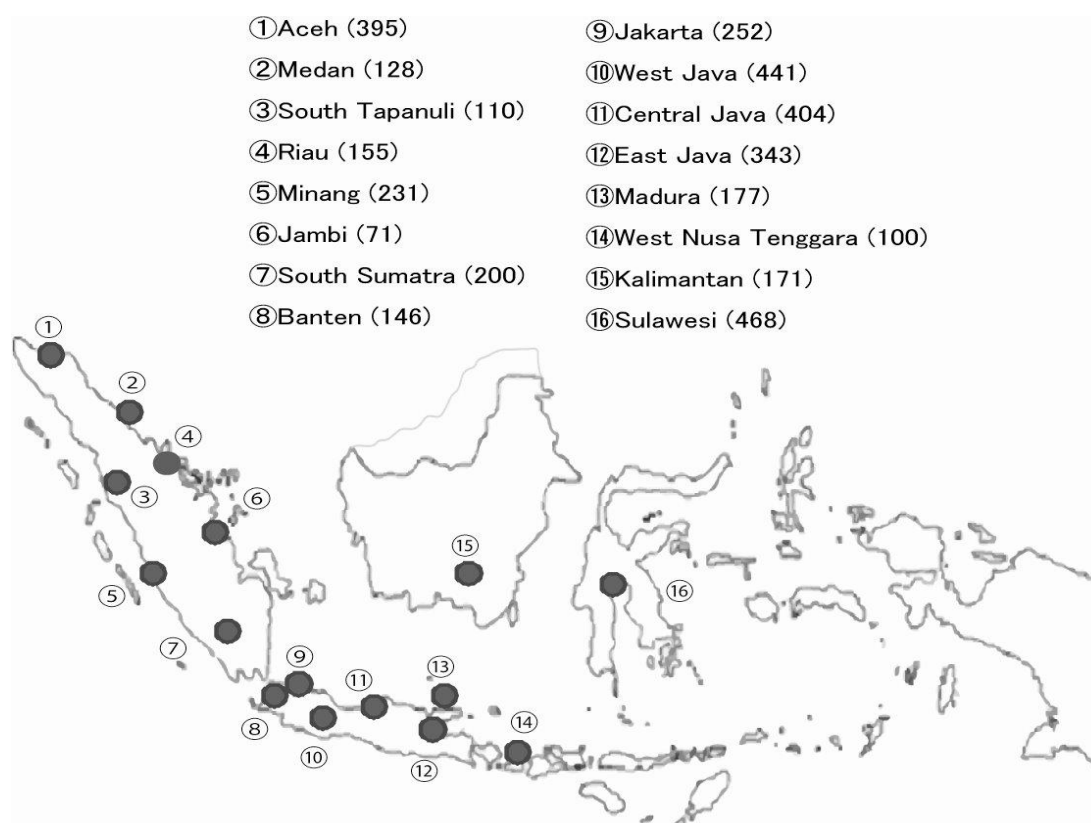
Within the student community, students organize via the *Persatuan Pelajar dan Mahasiswa Indonesia (PPMI; Indonesian Students and University Students Organization)*. Within *PPMI* are various organizations that are classified by individual affiliations or orientations, such as: *Wihdah (Organisasi Khusus Mahasiswi, Special Girls' Student Organization)*; *Senat Mahasiswa Fakultas, (SMF; Senate of Faculty Students)*; *Organisasi Daerah/Keluargan (Orda; Regional/Alumni Organization)*; *Afilatif (Affiliate Organization)*; *Almamater (Mothers' Organization)*; *Lembaga swadaya Masyarakat (LSM; Volunteer Group or NGO)*; *Kelompok Bimbingan Belajar (KBB; Organization of Lecture Guiding)*<sup>20</sup>. I would like to give accounts of two distinctive

<sup>20</sup> Some other organizations have also been incorporated in Cairo. For instance, *IKPM (Ikatan Keluarga Pesantren Modern, Alumni Association of Modern Pesantren)* is organized by the alumni of *Gontor* in East

organizations, *Orda* and *Afiliatif*.

One of the biggest organizations is *Orda*, which consists of sixteen regional sub-organizations.

Figure 4: Number of *Orda*'s participants and it original district in Indonesia



Source: Created by author based on (KBRI 2006)

Figure 4 shows the number of students who participated in *Orda* in 2006 and its original region in Indonesia. These sixteen regional organizations are composed of the following; Aceh, Medan, Jambi, Minang, Riau, South Tapanuli (*Tapanuli Selatan*), South Sumatra (*Sumatera Selatan*), Banten, Jakarta, West Java (*Jawa Barat*), Central Java (*Jawa Tengah*), East Java (*Jawa Timur*), Madura, West Nusa Tenggara (*Nusa Tenggara Barat*), Sulawesi, and Kalimantan.

In 2006, among the 4,197 Indonesian al-Azharite students, 3,792 students participated in the organization. Indeed, more than 90 % of all students join it<sup>21</sup>. This reflects the fact that more than half of the Muslim populations in Indonesia are concentrated on Java Island,

---

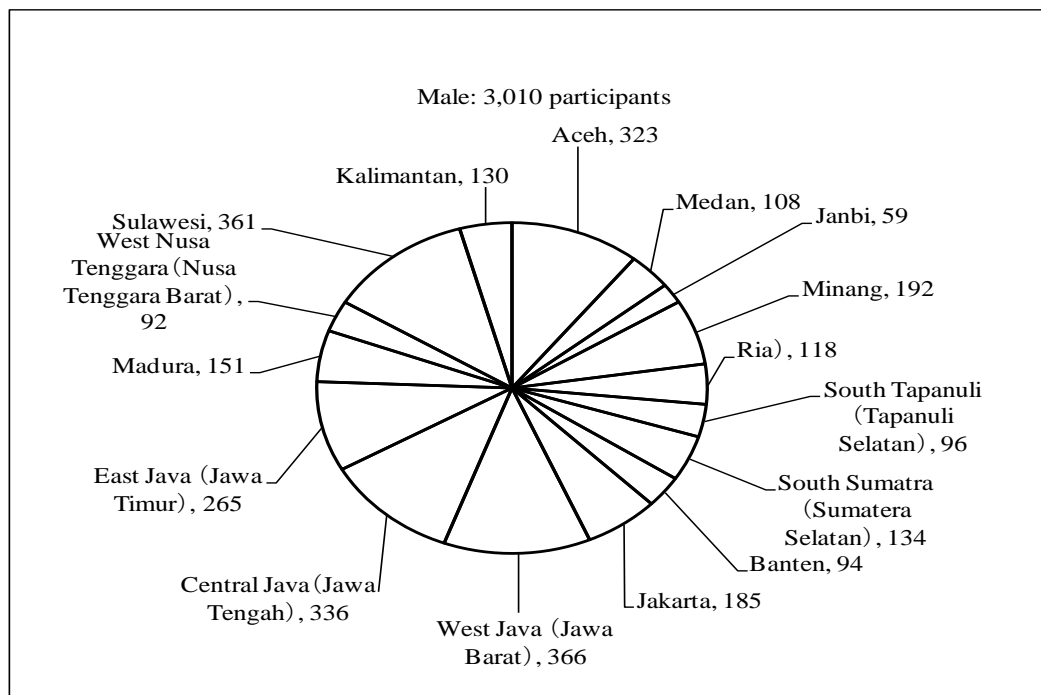
Java and also by alumni of linked *pesantren*. Several such organizations, which consist of alumni of certain *pesantren*, exist in Cairo, but the *IKPM* is the largest group.

<sup>21</sup> According the interview with KBRI, it is unclear whether the remaining 405 students joined the organization or not, as answers from those students were not available.

although the largest individual group is Sulawesi with 468 participants. Figure 5 and 6 (below) show the number of participants in *Orda* classified by gender.

In 2006, 3,010 male students participated in *Orda*. The groups and the corresponding number of participants were as follows: 366 in West Java, 361 in Sulawesi, 336 in Central Java, 323 in Aceh, and 265 in East Java. Both West Java and Sulawesi have over 360 members in each group, making these two groups the largest within the Indonesian community in Cairo. In East Java, each group has over a hundred participants except for Janbi, South Tapanuli, Banten, and West Nusa Tenggara.

Figure 5: Male participants of *Orda*



Source: Created by author based on (KBRI 2006)

As for female participants, in 2006, 782 female participants joined the *Orda*—a group that formed approximately one-fourth of the size of the male participants. Sulawesi has the biggest number with 107, and there are 78 in East Java, 75 in West Java, and 68 in Central Java. The smallest groups are 12 in Jambi, 14 in South Tapanuli, 20 in Medan, and 8 in West Nusa Tenggara. The minority groups are almost identical in both the male and female sectors.

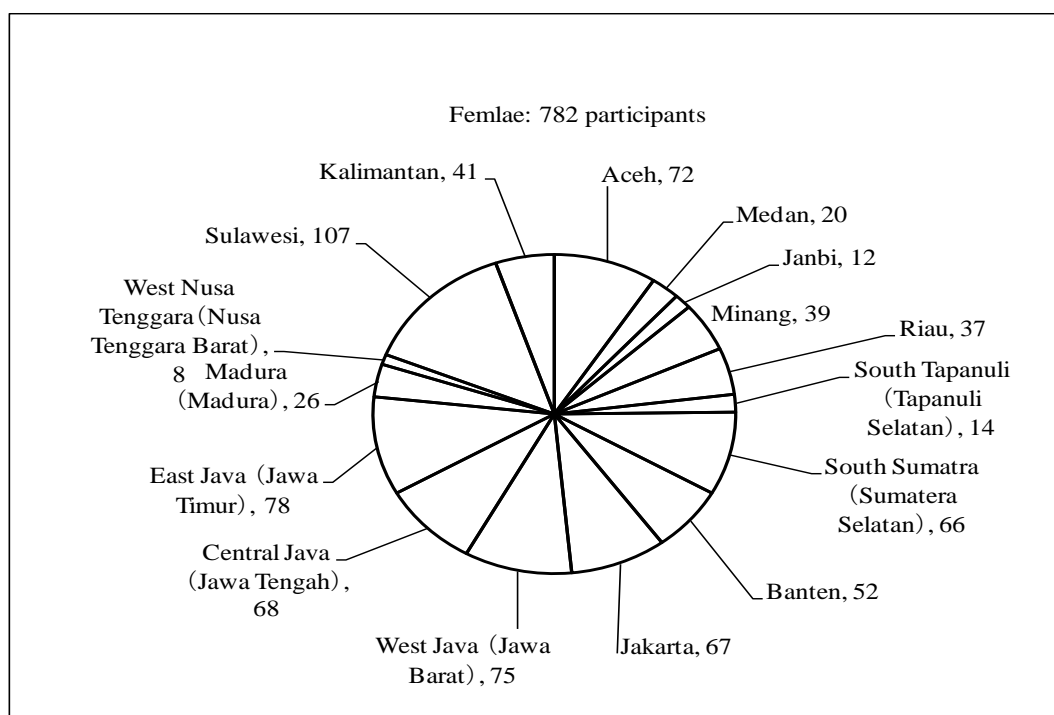
According to my field research, the ties within these sub-groups are very stable. The following are some of the experiences I had during the process of conducting participatory fieldwork with some regional groups in Java.

While conversing with students in the East Java group, I was asked whether I was conducting research with students from other regional groups. When I told them that



I had interacted with some students from other regions, they told me about the difficulties of communication with other Indonesian students because of the different dialects that they use in daily life. Additionally, I found that they know little about students from other regions, and when they meet them on campus or in other places, they either exchange courtesy greetings or ignore each other. One of the students told me that he dared not have a conversation because he did not understand what the other students said (*berbeda bahasa*). Although they did not specifically mention which region's students they had difficulty communicating with, the same cases were observed in other regional groups.

Figure 6: Female participants of *Orda*



Source: Created by author based on (KBRI 2006)

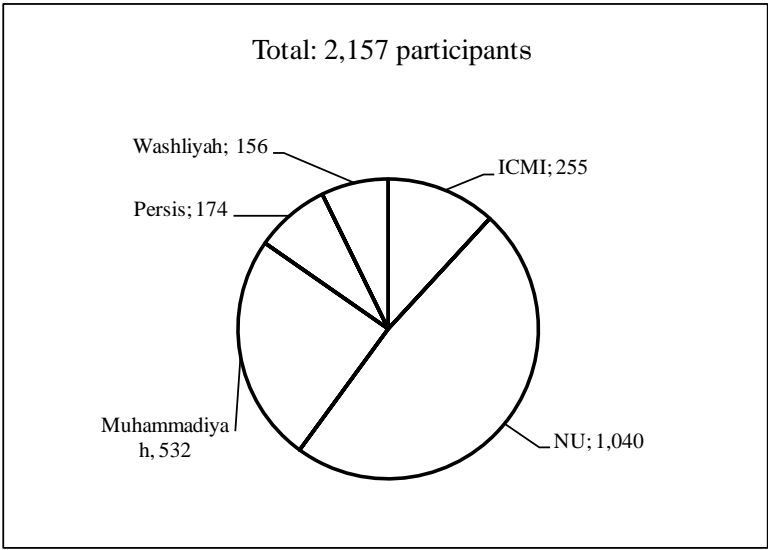
Another umbrella organization is *Afiliatif* that includes students with various Islamic orientations, such as *Nahdhatul Ulama (NU)*, *Muhammadiyah*, *ICMI*, *Washliyah*, and *Persis (Persatuan Islam)*. Table 5 shows the total number of participants in some organizations of *Afiliatif*, while Tables 6 and 7 show their numbers classified by gender.

Based on data from 2006, 2,157 students participated in *Afiliatif*. In *NU*, 1,040 students participated while 532 participated in *Muhammadiyah*, 255 in *ICMI*, 174 in *Persis*, and 156 in *Washliyah*. In total 1,631 participants were male while 517 were female. *NU* has 835 male and 205 female participants and is the group with the majority in *Afiliatif*.

As for the other groups, there were 350 men and 173 women in *Muhammadiyah*, 193 men and 62 women in *ICMI*, 123 men and 51 women in *Persis*, and 130 men and 26

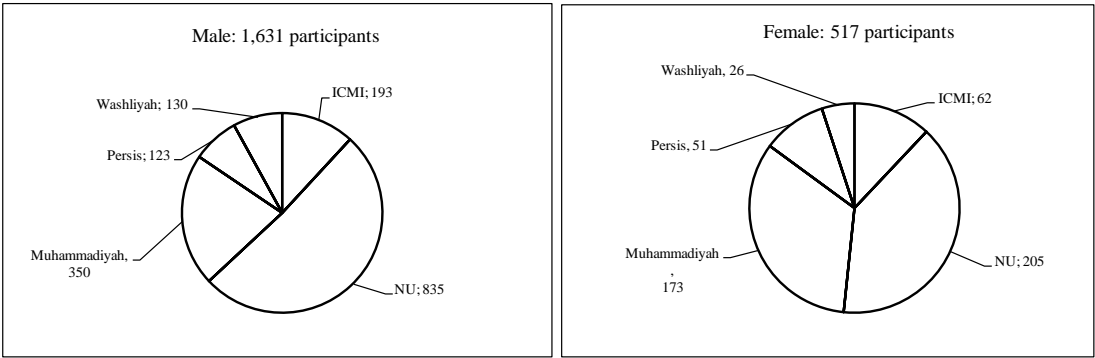
women in *Washliyah*. A composition ratio of men shows that *NU* has more than twice the number of men as *Muhammadiyah*, but in terms of the ratio for women, the numbers participating in *NU* and *Muhammadiyah* are not substantially different. As a whole, *NU* which comprises over half of the participants in *Afiliatif*, and *Muhammadiyah* follows as its second largest group, whose number of participants is approximately one half of the *NU*. Moreover, in accordance with members of *Orda*, it is clear that *NU* is the largest because so many students are from East and Central Java, where the social roots of *NU* are very strong.

Figure 7: Total number of participants in *Afiliatif*



Source: Created by author based on (KBRI 2006)

Figure 8 and 9: Number of male and female participants in *Afiliatif*



Source: Created by author based on (KBRI 2006)

In this section, I analyzed two distinct student organizations in which numerous students participate. Various organizations are formed on the basis of students' affiliations, such as alumni associations of particular *pesantren* or learning groups. Thus, most of the students participate in more than one organization and also in some activities.

For this reason, the affiliations and identifications of those students are inclined to fracture and diversify. The case of *Orda* represents that students live in environments where removed from each other.

### 3. Students' Activities within Organizations

Though students live in removed environments, some students attempt to surmount the barriers of their living conditions. Some senior students in Master's or Doctorate Courses serve as advisors for various organizations such as *NU*, *Muhammadiyah* or *Persis*. Most of the senior students consist of functionaries of *Depag*, researchers at a research institute that is under *Depag*'s control, or young teachers at *PTAI*. It can also be observed that alumni of *pesantren Gontor* are among the seniors<sup>22</sup>. These seniors give advice from the perspective of the abundant Islamic doctrine for students' activities, especially regarding the writing of journal articles. They also write articles for major newspapers in Indonesia, such as *Tempo*. For this reason, I will analyze students' extracurricular activities through publishing.

The students who participate in the organizations mentioned in the previous section are also active in other extracurricular activities. These activities are held within each organization and lectures are often attended<sup>23</sup>. One of the most remarkable activities is publishing. Various organizations publish their own magazines or journals in Cairo. In 2006, nineteen separate journals were issued by the organizations. Figure 10 gives a sample of journal titles and their descriptions.

Six of the nineteen journals are published by *Afiliatif*, one each by *Persis* and *Muhammadiyah*, and two each by *NU* and *ICMI*. The content of the journals is usually related to Islam, especially Islamic polity, the situation in the Islamic world, and Indonesian social matters. Some regional groups of *Orda* have journals of their own as well. Aceh, Banten, Jakarta, and East Java each publish journals, though the frequency of issues is irregular. Organizations of particular *pesantren* also publish journals, including *IKPM* and *IKPDN* (*Ikatan Keluarga Pesantren Darunnajah*, Alumni Association of *Pesantren Darunnajah*). All of the articles in these journals are written by students, who also edit and proofread them. The journals by *PPMI* and *Wihdah* have some financial support from the KBRI.

According to the KBRI, the embassy encourages students to engage in publishing activities, including writing, editing, and learning more about Islam, because

---

<sup>22</sup> Since *Gontor* has no particular supporting Islamic organizations, such as *NU* or *Muhammadiyah*, pupils with various Islamic affiliations study at *Gontor*. Hence, the color of the *pesantren* does not incline toward a particular orientation.

<sup>23</sup> A sports competition called the "Indonesian Cup" is held once a year. Soccer is the most popular activity among Indonesian students. *Orda* has its own soccer team, which practices very often. Other popular sports include basketball. Lectures on the use of PCs, debate clubs, language classes (including English, French and German), and study of al-Qur'an and Hadith are also instigated by the organizations.

the al-Azhar educational system places emphasis on “memorizing,” which is “input-oriented.” This is a matter of concern for the KBRI because Indonesian al-Azharite students tend to be regarded as lacking the ability to “output.” Hence, KBRI makes an effort to have students write what they think or feel during their lives in Cairo [KBRI 2008: 7].

Figure 10: Titles, organizations and publishing frequency of journals

Title	Organizations	Publishing frequency
Majalah Sinar	Muhamadiyah	every second month
Majalah Sinai	SINAI (Studi Informasi Alam Islami)	irregular (latest in September, 2008)
Buletin Afkar	NU	every second month
Buletin al-Furqan	Persis (Persatuan Islam )	monthly
Buletin Informatika	ICMI	1st and 15th day in a month
Buletin Terobosan	Independen	N/A
Buletin Suara PPMI	PPMI	every second month
Buletin Citra	Wihdah	irregular
Buletin Cahaya Keadilan	PKS (Partak Keadilan Sejahtera)	N/A
Buletin la-Tansa	IKPM	monthly
Buletin Perdana	IKPDN (Ikatan Keluarga Pondok Darunnajah)	N/A
Buletin Ahsanta	KMB (Keluarga Masyarakat Banten)	N/A
Buletin Surya	Gamajatin (Keluarga Masyarakat Jawa Timur di Mesir)	irregular
Buletin Kreasi	IKPMA (Ikatan Keluarga Pelajar dan Mahasiswa at Taqwa)	irregular (about twice in a year)
Buletin Prestasi	KSW (Kelompok Studi Walisongo)	irregular
Buletin Fajar	KPJ (Keluarga Pelajar Jakarta)	irregular
Buletin el-Asyi	KMA (Keluarga Masyarakat Aceh)	irregular
Jurnal Nuansa	NU	irregular
Jurnal Oase	ICMI	irregular

Source: Created by author based on (KBRI 2006)

The narrative of one of the female students I encountered in Cairo shows the presence of publishing among the students. She writes extensively for a journal of *IKPM* and told me that she realized the importance of writing about what she thought. Soon after she started writing articles, she began to learn more about the world situation and environmental issues. She also said that she felt her breadth of knowledge has expanded and she wants other students to know about not only the world situation but also the relationship between Islam and society.

It appears that publishing activities provide a valuable opportunity for students to become aware of the problems in their society and to assert their opinions. Publishing is a chance for them to cultivate the ability to argue about Islamic doctrines that they have learned about while studying at al-Azhar University, along with problems in the contemporary Islamic world. Some senior students serve as advisors of some organizations, through which they serve to dissolve the walls around each organization.

To summarize this discussion: as soon as Indonesian students arrive in Cairo, they are absorbed into specific organizations on the basis of their Islamic affiliation or orientation, or on the region from which they came. Their sense of belonging, which at first was merely Indonesian, tends to be gradually fractured into smaller affiliations. Differences in the students’ dialects and habits and the ensuing problems in

communication with students from other regions make them removed from each other. This means that there exist barriers between the organizations. Due to the systematically enriched environment of the *Orda*, students do not have to—or dare not—rely on networks that exist outside of the organization, at least in their daily lives. This does not, however, mean that these environments are as the result of a reproduction of Indonesian society in Cairo. Rather, in consequence of the activities of *Orda* or *Afiliatif*, especially the publishing of journals, students are provided with an opportunity to express their Islamic experiences through various impetuses in the Indonesian community.

In addition, though ties within the organizations are very strong and the relationships with other organizations are insubstantial, these groups live right next to each other. Thus, the students can have contact with activities or ideologies of other organizations that they could not experience, or were not familiar with, when they were in Indonesia. Consequently, it can be said that they find a new and diverse Indonesian Islam in Cairo. In other words, the Indonesian Islam that they have hitherto been practicing and enjoying is extended and enlarged by living in Cairo<sup>24</sup>.

#### **IV. al-Azharite Alumni in Islamic Higher Education: The Case of UIN Jakarta**

As I examined students' life in Cairo, it became clear that students' living environments are far removed from one another. Nevertheless, through activities such as publishing, students found diversity in Indonesian Islam in Cairo. In order to analyze the influence of studying in the Middle East on *PTAI*, in this section I will examine the following factors: how students regard their experience in Cairo and how they use their experiences in Cairo in their teaching. In order to accomplish this purpose, I conducted a sample of al-Azharite graduates and chose three professors from different generations of *Dirasat Islamiyah*. Those from the older generation are graduates over fifty years old with some important position in the faculty or university, while the younger generation consists of graduates who are younger or new to the faculty<sup>25</sup>.

##### **1. Narratives of Professors in *Dirasat Islamiyah***

Firstly, for informants from the older generation, I conducted interviews with three professors: A<sup>26</sup>, B<sup>27</sup>, and C<sup>28</sup>. In analyzing their narratives and careers, it is apparent that

---

<sup>24</sup> It should also be mentioned here that Indonesian students are also removed from relationships between Egyptian societies and from relationships between al-Azharite students who come from other countries, due to the differences in languages, cultures, and habits. I have elaborated upon these cases in my thesis, but in this paper it will not be necessary to mention them in detail.

<sup>25</sup> When I discuss informants, I adopt fictitious names using letters of the alphabet. The narratives mentioned in this paper are based on my field research during August 2008 in Jakarta.

<sup>26</sup> A was born in West Sumatra in 1950 and was educated at a *pesantren*. After he finished studying at *pesantren*, he entered the Faculty of Theology at *IAIN* and obtained a bachelor's degree. B moved to Cairo in 1976 and stayed there for twenty-four years. During his stay, he entered a university in Sudan and

most of them had academic careers—such as lecturing at educational institutions—before they moved to Cairo, and they were in their mid-twenties when they entered al-Azhar University.

During his stay in Cairo, A served as head of *PPMI*. He also had a career as an attaché in KBRI Cairo and had ceased his own studying during the seventeen years in which he held the job. He was engaging the protocol between *IAIN* Jakarta and al-Azhar in 1996 during his career in KBRI. His long-term career in KBRI was clearly a decisive factor in his becoming dean.

In my interviews with B, he told me that the influence on Indonesia that is brought by Middle Eastern graduates is considerable (*Orang-orang yang belajar di Timur Tengah, banyak sekali pengaruhnya terhadap Negara masing-masing*). Furthermore, he believes that the development of Indonesian Islam could not have been achieved without the efforts of these Middle Eastern graduates; the most important thing is their efforts have been maintaining Indonesian Islam and its education.

C also has his own private school at his residence, in addition to his teaching job in *Dirasat Islamiyah*. He usually teaches Hadīth and al-Qur'an to neighboring children and people without any school fees. He also teaches at private schools around the Jakarta district and goes around each school within a week. In his narrative, he said:

“Indonesia is the biggest Muslim country and no other Arab countries are inferior to Indonesia; therefore, it is necessary for Indonesian Muslims to preach and spread Islam all over the world (*Indonesia itu negara terbesar dan terbanyak muslim di dunia, bahkan bangsa Arab pun tidak memiliki komunitas muslim seperti di Indonesia. Makanya, wajah Islam harus diperkenalkan ke dunia oleh bangsa Indonesia*).”

Furthermore, C added that according to his experience, true Islam can only be acquired in the Middle East, so students must go to the Middle East in order to obtain advanced Islamic knowledge. What can be gleaned from narratives of this generation is that they regard the Middle East, especially al-Azhar University, as a “Center” of Islamic intelligence.

Second, for the younger generation, I conducted interviews with D<sup>29</sup>, E<sup>30</sup>, and

---

obtained a PhD from Omdurman University.

<sup>27</sup> B was born in West Sumatra in 1939 and studied at *sekolah*, after which he entered a school for training teachers. After graduation, he entered a private university. Z studied at al-Azhar University from 1959 to 1965. After he obtained an MA degree from the University, he remained in Cairo for three years and returned to Indonesia in 1968.

<sup>28</sup> C was born in Aceh in 1956 and was educated at a *pesantren*. He was then promoted to a private university, where he majored in Islamic Law. He obtained a bachelor's degree in 1985 and moved to Cairo in 1986. After he obtained a degree from al-Azhar University in 1991, he moved to Sudan and acquired an MA from Omdurman Islamic University and a PhD from the Islamic University of Africa.

<sup>29</sup> D was born in Jakarta in 1971 and studied at *pesantren Gontor*. He then studied at other *pesantren* in order to memorize al-Qur'an. M had already become Hafiz before he went to Cairo in 1992, majoring in theology and staying there until 2000. Temporarily, he returned to Indonesia from 2000 to 2002 and worked as a functionary of *Depag* and also as a lecturer at *STAIN*. In 2002, he went to Cairo again and obtained a PhD from al-Azhar in 2006.

F<sup>31</sup>. When in Cairo, each participated in *Orda* and *Afiliatif* and were also active in publishing journals.

The most remarkable example is provided by D's career. When he was in Cairo, he participated in a regional organization of Jakarta and in *NU*. In *NU*, he actively wrote articles and edited journals of *Nusanwara* and *Fajar*. He also served as a leader of *IKPM* in 1995. In 2000, when he was in Indonesia temporarily, he was engaged in editing *Tafsīr* in the Indonesian language. He participated in exegesis as core member. When he returned to Cairo as a functionary and as a member of *PSQ* (*Pusat Studi al-Quran*, Center for al-Qur'anic Studies), he taught al-Qur'an and Hadīth to undergraduate students. He has other jobs in addition to being a teacher at *Dirasat Islamiyah*, including being the head of *PSQ* and advisor to the Middle East Affairs Bureau in Department of Religious Affairs. In the latter position, he is dispatched to multiple Muslim countries more than five times a year. He believes that in order to study Islam, one should choose al-Azhar University, viewing the University as the best institution at which to learn Islam. Furthermore, he considers his degrees from al-Azhar University act effectively when he visits Middle Eastern countries and attempts to construct relationships between the Department of Religious Affairs and the relevant organizations in the countries he visits.

The case of E shows a unique career pattern. Whereas almost all of the Indonesian al-Azharite students choose a Faculty of Religion, he chose the Faculty of Education and majored in Islamic Studies and Arabic. He obtained a bachelor's degree from the faculty in 1985 and worked at KBRI for seven years, until 1992. Then he was readmitted to the post-graduate program and obtained a PhD degree in 2000. As a student in Cairo, he held the position of advisor to various *Afiliatif*, such as *NU*, *Muhammadiyah*, and *Persis*, and was also vice-chair of ASS (ASEAN Student Solidarity). After he returned to Indonesia, he was invited to be a lecturer at *Dirasat Islamiyah*. It should be mentioned here that in addition to his job as a professor at the university, he serves as principal of the "Azhari Islamic School." This school was established in 2004 by S and some other Indonesian al-Azharite alumni. The school's curriculum is completely identical to the al-Azhar educational system<sup>32</sup>. According to him, as he studied at

---

<sup>30</sup> E was born in 1961 in Jakarta. He was educated at *pesantren* until the high school level. In 1979, he entered al-Azhar high school in Cairo and studied there for a year. Then in 1981, he entered al-Azhar University and majored in Islamic Studies and Arabic in the Faculty of Education. After he obtained a bachelor's degree in 1985, he worked as an attaché until 1992. Then he returned to the university and was promoted to the post-graduate course. In 2000, he obtained a PhD in pedagogy from al-Azhar University.

<sup>31</sup> F was born in East Java in 1966. He was educated at a *Muhammadiyah*-oriented elementary school and at *Gontor* for junior high and high school. He entered al-Azhar University in 1988 and majored in theology. After he got a bachelor's degree from the university in 1993, he continued his post-graduate study in Malaysia. He got an MA from the International Islamic University in Malaysia and a PhD from University of Malaya. Through his post-graduate years, he also majored in Theology.

<sup>32</sup> According to E, in 2008, 240 pupils studied at the elementary level, with about 60 pupils per grade. Since the school opened in 2004, it has operated only at the elementary level, but in the future, an expansion of the school is planned, accompanied by pupils' promotion. School fees are expensive in the context of the current economic situation in Indonesia: the admission fee is one million Indonesian Rp. and tuition is five hundreds

al-Azhar from the high school level on, originated from the Faculty of Education, and furthermore, had a seven year career at KBRI, the negotiation between him and al-Azhar was smooth and easy.

Both generations of professors have had the experience of assuming a position of leadership in student organizations. They also have the common perception that al-Azhar University is the best place to study Islam, though the younger generations have a tendency to duplicate their participation in organizations.

## **2. Perception Gap between the Generations on Studying in the Middle East and its Significance for *PTAI***

In focusing on the narratives of Islamic intellectuals who work as professors at *Dirasat Islamiyah* in UIN Jakarta, I have found that they share the perception that studying at al-Azhar represents studying in the Middle East and that the university is considered a center of advanced Islamic intelligence. Nevertheless, they have significant differences in the factors that affect the way in which they regard their experiences in Cairo and utilize them in *PTAI*.

One of the older professors has his own private school and provides people in the neighborhood with lessons in Islamic texts, such as Hadīth or al-Qur'an. All of the older professors regard al-Azhar University as having supremacy and think that Middle Eastern graduates should spread the knowledge that they obtain in Cairo around Indonesia. On the other hand, younger generation professors apply the fact that they hold degrees from al-Azhar University and utilize this in their diplomatic policies about Middle Eastern affairs as advisors of the Department of Religious Affairs. Moreover, one of them concluded a direct treaty with al-Azhar and established a private school that adopts the educational system of al-Azhar as a role model. The latter case in particular can be understood as the establishment of this private school made the "institutional al-Azharized" system being taking hold from elementary education. Nevertheless, since the school is administered by the younger generation, it educates the students who will later shoulder the responsibility of new Indonesian Islamic higher education in the "institutional al-Azharized" system.

Two obvious distinctions can be observed between the generations. First, the older generation regards al-Azhar University as all-knowing regarding Islam and as contributing to the development of Indonesian Islam over the long term and up to the present day. Second, the younger generation considers a degree from al-Azhar University as a resource, incorporating it into their careers. As was mentioned in Section III, by assuming the leadership of student organizations via the position of advisor, they see and objectively accept diverse aspects of Indonesian Islam in Cairo. Furthermore, through

---

fifty thousand Indonesian Rp. It is obvious that the school is for wealthy families.



publishing activities, they have opportunities to express their response to the diverse Indonesian Islam that they encounter. This helps widen their knowledge so that they can embrace multiple ideologies of Islam. Through these series of experiences, the younger generations of professors have paved the way for Indonesian Islam

As a result, both streams of al-Azharite alumni now coexist in *PTAI*. They have transformed the experiences that they obtained in Cairo into the contemporary Indonesian context. In short, they try to integrate the Indonesian Islam that they discovered in Cairo into *PTAI*.

## V. Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to clarify the influence of studying in the Middle East on Islamic higher education in contemporary Indonesia. *PTAI*, represented by *UIN* or *IAIN*, was established through the dedication of Middle Eastern graduates. The development of *PTAI* in Indonesia could not have been achieved without the devotional efforts of these graduates. Moreover, according to interviews with professors of the older generation, *PTAI* has been developing and enriching itself through the efforts of the Middle Eastern graduates.

Through the establishment of *Dirasat Islamiyah* at *UIN* Jakarta, the institutional system of education of al-Azhar has been transplanted into Indonesian Islamic higher education. This indicates that “institutional al-Azharization” is occurring. *Dirasat Islamiyah* has adopted the al-Azhar educational system as its role model. For this reason, students are able to take classes in al-Azharite education in Indonesia without even going to Egypt. Before this, the images of al-Azhar University and its education were symbolized by individuals who graduated from al-Azhar University.

It is inappropriate to conclude, however, that Islamic higher education in Indonesia is wholly al-Azharized; it is “institutionally al-Azharized” but “practically” not. As was determined in Section II, students who have studied in al-Azhar University discover differences and diversities in the practice of Indonesian Islam in Cairo, especially due to their service as advisors. These graduates realize the diversity of Indonesian Islam not in Indonesia, but in Cairo, hundreds thousands of miles away from their homeland. In addition, according to interviews with the younger generation of professors at *Dirasat Islamiyah*, the absoluteness of al-Azhar’s authority tends to decrease despite the fact that they maintain the notion that al-Azhar is the center of Islamic intelligence. Subsequently, they consider degrees from al-Azhar University simply as strategic resources.

In conclusion, *PTAI* have dualistic tendencies; some regard al-Azhar University as supreme, and others regard al-Azhar University as a strategic resource. Since the

younger generation experienced the life that I explicated in Section II, they regard the authority of al-Azhar University in a relative manner. Moreover, as professors at *PTAI*, they attempt to integrate diverse Indonesian Islam in an “institutionally al-Azharized” field.

### Appendixes

Campuses	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006
IAIN Ar-Raniry (Banda Aceh)	2,399	3,497	5,602	5,460	6,010	6,062
IAIN Sumatera Utara (Medan)	3,868	3,655	3,945	4,490	4,942	4,934
IAIN Imam Bonjol (Padang)	4,554	4,885	5,446	5,240	6,637	6,587
IAIN Sultan Thaha Saifuddin (Jambi)	2,797	3,612	5,058	5,143	5,666	5,771
IAIN Raden Fatah (Palembang)	4,142	4,028	3,785	3,580	3,710	3,761
IAIN Raden Intan (Bandar Lampung)	2,548	2,218	2,402	2,493	2,254	2,288
IAIN Sunan Gunung Jati (Bandung)	4,077	6,160	8,628	10,971	12,070	12,026
IAIN Walisongo (Semarang)	4,232	4,687	5,127	5,528	5,387	5,421
IAIN Sunan Ampel (Surabaya)	5,514	6,255	6,528	6,567	6,310	6,291
IAIN Antasari (Banjarmasin)	3,225	3,225	3,281	3,238	2,923	2,907
IAIN Alauddin (Ujung Pandan)	4,781	4,530	3,760	3,649	4,708	4,766
IAIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin (Serang)	935	1,547	2,275	3,189	3,510	3,475
IAIN Mataram (Mataram, NTB)	2,323	2,338	2,657	2,268	2,496	2,509
IAIN Sultan Amai (Gorontalo)	283	502	710	1,054	1,159	1,191
IAIN Ambon			2,988	3,868	3,855	3,913
UIN Syarif Hidayatullah (Jakarta)	6,439	7,982	10,728	14,141	15,571	15,645
UIN Malang	1,770	2,614	3,769	4,940	5,435	5,894
UIN Sunan Kalijaga (Yogyakarta)	8,568	8,347	9,624	9,379	15,096	9,068
UIN Sulutan Syarif Qasim (Pakanbaru)	3,695	4,412	6,781	9,741	10,719	10,655
Total	66,150	74,494	93,094	104,939	118,458	113,164

Source: Created by author based on BPS (2007) and Depag website: (<http://www.depag.go.id>)

Figure 11: Some journals which were published by Indonesian students



Figure 12: Students from East Java, inside their apartment



## Referance

- Abaza, Mona. 1994. *Indonesian Students in Cairo: Islamic Education, Perceptions and Exchanges*. Cahier d' Archipel.
- . 2003. Research Notes and Comments: Indonesian Azharites, Fifteen Years Later. *Sojourn* 18 (1): 139-153.
- Azizy, Qodri. 2000. Mengembangkan Stuktur Kefakultasan IAIN. In Komaruddin Hidayat & Hendro Prasetyo eds., *Problem dan Prospek IAIN: Anthologi Pendidikan Tinggi Islam*, Jakarta: Departmen Agama RI, pp. 19-40.
- Azra, Azyumardi. 2004. *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Midle Eastern 'Ulama in the Seventtenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press.
- BPS. 1985. *Statistik Indonesia 1985*. Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik.
- . 1986. *Statistik Indonesia 1986*. Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik.
- . 1993. *Statistik Indonesia 1993*. Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik.
- . 1994. *Statistik Indonesia 1994*. Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik.
- . 2007. *Statistik Indonesia 2007*, Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik.
- Eccel, Chris. 1984. *Egypt, Islam and Social Change: al-Azhar in Conflict and Accomodation*. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag.
- Effendy, Prasetyo & Subhan. 1998. Munawir Sjadzali, MA. In Azyumardi Azra & Saiful Umam eds., *Menteri-Menteri Agama RI: Biografi Social-Politik*, Jakarta: Department Agama, pp. 367-412.
- Feener, Michael. 2007. *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hattori, Mina. 2007. Aimai ka suru kyoukai-madorasa no seidoka to pesantren no tayouka. In Nishino Setsuo, & Hattori Mina eds., *Henbou suru Indoneisa Islam Kyouiku*, Japan: Touyou Daigaku Asia Bunka Kenkyusho, Asia Chiiki Kenkyu Center, pp. 3-34.
- Hefner, Robert. 1997. Islamization and Democratization in Indonesia. In Robert Hefner, & Patricia Horvatic eds., *Islam in an Era of Nation-States: Politics and Religious Renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia*, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, pp. 75-127.
- Hidayat, Komaruddin & Hendro Prasetyo eds., 2000. *Problem dan Prospek IAIN: Anthologi Pendidikan Tinggi Islam*, Jakarta: Departmen Agama RI.
- Hirosue Masashi. 2003. *Tounan Asia no Kenkoku Shinwa*. Japan: Yamakawa Shuppansha.
- Ka'bah, Rifyal. 2006. *Belajar dari Mesir*, Jakarta: Penerbit Renaisan.
- Kudutaan Besar Repblik Indonesia. 2006. *Informasi Pendidikan di Misr*. Cairo: KBRI.
- . 2008. *Dukungan Terhadap Peningkatan Prestasi Mahasiswa Indonesia di Mesir*, paper presented at 24-25 March 2008 at al-Azhar conference center in Cairo, pp.1-26.
- Laffan, Michael. 2004. An Indonesian Community in Cairo: Continuity and Change in a Cosmopolitan Islamic Milieu. *Indonesia*, 77: 1-26.

- Miichi Ken. 2005. 'Islam Hyou' ha Dou Ugoitaka- Minami Kalimantan Shu ni Okeru Fukushi Seigi Tou no Yakushin Kara. In Matsui Kazuhisa, & Kawamura Kouichi eds., *Indonesia Sousenkyo to Shinseiken no Shidou*, Japan: Asia Keizai Kenkyusho, pp. 176-201.
- Muhammad Said, Nurhidayat. 2006. *Pemraruhan Pemikiran Islam di Indonesia: "Studi Pemikiran Harun Nastion"*, Jakarta: Pustaka Mapan.
- Munhanif, Ali. 1998. Prof. Dr. A. Mukti Ali; Modernisasi Politik-Keagamaan Orde Baru. In Azyumardi Azra & Saiful Umam eds., *Menteri-Menteri Agama RI: Biografi Social-Politik*, Jakarta: Department Agama, pp. 269-320.
- Nishino Setsuo, & Hattori Mina eds., 2007. *Henbou suru Indoneisa Islam Kyouiku*, Japan: Touyou Daigaku Asia Bunka Kenkyusho, Asia Chiiki Kenkyu Center.
- Rahim, Husni. 2001. *Arah Baru Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia*, Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu.
- Riddle, Peter. 2001. *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses*, London: Hurst & Company.
- Roff, William. 1970. Indonesian and Malay Students in Cairo in the 1920's. *Indonesia* 9: 73-87.

#### **Website**

Department of Religious Affairs Republic of Indonesia <http://www.depag.go.id> accessed 8th Dec, 2009.