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ARABS AND "INDO-ARABS" IN INDONESIA: HISTORICAL DYNAMICS, SOCIAL RELATIONS AND CONTEMPORARY CHANGES

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ABSTRACT

This article outlines the origins, development and historical dynamics of Arabs in Indonesia and discusses responses of Indonesians, particularly Muslims, towards this group. It sketches a variety of Indonesia's Arabs—sadah and non-sadah alike—and their contributions to the shape of Indonesian Islam, Islamic cultures and Muslim politics. It also traces the roots of—and depicts the historical dynamics and changes—social relations and interactions between Arabs and local populations. The relations between Arabs and non-Arabs in the country have always been marked with conflict and tensions on the one hand, and peace and cooperation on the other. Some Muslims in the country "have admired" and built a strong relationship with the Arabs and "Indo-Arabs" while others have denounced them as the destroyers of Indonesia's local traditions, civic pluralism, social stability and interreligious tolerance. This article tries to portray this paradox, discuss factors contributing to the damaging image of Arabs in contemporary Indonesia, and explain the rationales behind it. Lastly, it discusses prospects and the possibilities of the constructive relationships between Arabs, Indo-Arabs, and other nationals, social groupings, and ethnicities in the country.

Keywords: Islam, Indonesian Muslims, Arabs, Indo-Arabs, Indonesia

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INTRODUCTION

During the last decades, particularly since the downfall of the New Order authoritarian rule in 1998 Indonesia has witnessed an unprecedented upsurge in religious ritual, association, and observance that defies a "century of forecasts by secularisation and modernisation theorists of religion's immanent privatisation and decline" (Hefner 2010: 1031–1047). After the collapse of New Order regime of the late President Suharto (1921–2008), Indonesia, like other nations in Southeast Asia, has experienced a dramatic religious revitalisation, typified by, among other phenomena, the rise of piety industries, macrocosm-minded Islam, and transnational religious movements. Extremist terrorist-jihadist groups, Arab-inspired Salafi conservatives, the Indian-type Tablighi Jamaat piety movement, Hizbut Tahrir internationalists, and Muslim Brothers have moved rapidly across the region.[1] Besides the Islamist resurgence, contemporary Indonesia has also been marked by a series of seemingly religiously inspired intra-group conflicts such as, clashes between Muslim hardliners and Muslim minorities (e.g., Ahmadis, Shiites and followers of various indigenous sects of Islam), as well as Muslim-non-Muslim tensions.

One of particularly significant features of the post-New Order Indonesian Islamist movement has been the appearance of Arabs and Indonesians of Arab descent (Indo-Arabs) that act as extremist leaders and conservative clerics in both Indonesian politics and public Islam. I will explain later how these clerics and leaders have contributed to shaping a negative image of Indonesia's Arab groups and of anything related to Arab cultures, despite the fact that contemporary Arabs and Indo-Arabs have made innumerable positive contributions to the country. More importantly, these extremists' and conservatives' intolerant and violent acts have obscured the history and vital contributions of other Arab and Indo-Arab *ulama* (Islamic scholars) and leaders in shaping Indonesian Muslim culture, education, economy and politics. It is true that ever since their arrival in the archipelago, Arab communities have played productive roles in shaping Indonesian Islam, Muslim cultures, and Islamic schooling, among others, ensuring that historically Indonesian Muslims have generally given high respect to this group.

Unfortunately, however, in recent years, relations between Indonesian Muslims and Arabs have shifted from being positive to being slightly negative. Several factors that contributed to this changing nature of Arab relations with the rest of Indonesian society include the following: (1) the involvement of some Arab and Indo-Arab leaders in violence; (2) the practice of *kawin kontrak* (temporary marriage) between Arab men and local women and the

phenomenon of sex tourism; (3) the news of ill-treatment of Indonesian domestic workers and housemaids by Arab employers in the Middle East; (4) vulgar Islamisation and "Arabisation," and; (5) the ongoing intergroup violence and terrorism in some Arab countries.

These factors have generated fears, tensions and animosities in the Indonesian populace, against Indonesia's Arabs and Indo-Arabs, as well as against some forms of Arab Islam. Some groups use social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, or mailing lists for their campaigns, while others create a variety of websites to disseminate anti-Arab news, information and articles. The anti-Arab groups usually use particular words such as *onta* (camel) or *Arab bahlul* (stupid Arabs) to express their feelings, angers and disagreement with the Arabs or Indo-Arabs. It should be noted, however, that anti-Arab and anti-Arab Islam actions are not a new phenomenon in Indonesian history. Long before Indonesia gained its independence in 1945, such acts had already taken place. Narratives deriding Arabs and Arab Islam, for instance, can be found in the Javanese collection of classical texts *Serat Centhini* (also known as *Suluk Tambanglaras* or *Suluk Tambanglaras-Amangraga*), composed at the Surakarta Court and published in 1814, as well as *Serat Darmogandul* and *Serat Gatoloco*, all of which represent opposition against Arabs and Arab Islam in Java, while favouring local Javanese religious and cultural practices.

This article does not intend to suggest that all Indonesians and Muslims lack respect for Indonesia's Arabs and Indo-Arabs, or that all Indonesian Muslims refuse any form of Arab Islam. In fact, many Indonesian Muslims nowadays admire and practice Arab Islam by adopting Islamic practices, customs and discourses developed in the Arab world, and by wearing traditional Arab dress such as the *thawb*, *jalabiyah*, or even *niqab*. Some Indonesian Muslims have come to believe that forms of Arab Islam are more Islamic and purer than those of Indonesian Islam.

Equally important, this article does not argue that all Arabs or Indo-Arabs have contributed to the destructive images of their particular communities, or of Islam and Muslims in general. Many Arabs and Indo-Arab leaders nowadays still play an enormous constructive role in forming the country's civic cultures, civilised politics, tolerant Islam, and civil education. Nor does this article argue that other Indonesians have no responsibility for any of the post-New Order collective violence and intolerance in the country. In fact, many perpetrators of ferocious anti-pluralist campaigns in the country have been non-Arab Indonesians who have been shaped and influenced by particular forms of Islamic schools, narratives, discourses and teachings.

This article addresses these crucial, changing issues, and discusses how contemporary Indonesians have responded to Arabs and their cultural heritage. However, before explaining contemporary shifts and developments among Indonesian Muslims and citizens towards Arabs and Indo-Arabs in the country, it is helpful to describe the genesis and history of Arabs in the archipelago and their roles in Indonesian society, in order to understand the trajectory and changes of this community.

THE ORIGINS OF INDO-ARABS IN INDONESIA

Along with Chinese Indonesians, the Indo-Arabs comprise one of the two most significant "foreign" groups in Indonesia. After the Chinese, they compose the second largest Oriental minority in the country. Like the Chinese, they reside throughout Indonesia, from Aceh at the northern end of Sumatra Island in the west, to Papua in the most eastern area of the archipelago. Over the centuries, they, like the Chinese, have managed to find for themselves a unique and in many ways indispensable place in the society of the archipelago, especially in relation to Indonesia's cultural, religious, political and economic spheres. The Arabs, again like the Chinese, settled in coastal areas of today's Indonesia long before the European colonisers—primarily Portuguese and Dutch— first landed in the archipelago in the 16th century. After the arrival of the Portuguese and later the Dutch, the numbers of Arab immigrants gradually decreased, and then rose again after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 (de Jonge 1997; Boxberger 2002).

Since most, if not all, Arab travellers in the past centuries were men, they married local women (some of local nobility), thereby creating a new population known as "Indo-Arabs" (Arab Indonesians or Indonesian Arabs) or "Arab peranakan." These terms refer to Indonesian citizens of Arab descent born or raised in this archipelagic country. In Arabic, they are called *muwallad*, in contrast with *wulayati*, a term that describes those who have no mixed blood. Moreover, the presence of *Kampung Arab* (Arab districts) and the presence of Arab communities in major towns in Sumatra, Java, Moluccas, Sulawesi, Lombok and Kalimantan, among others, indicates their prolonged existence, as well as the prevalence of inter-marriage with other ethnicities.

The presence of Hadrami Arab immigrants in Southeast Asia has attracted the attention of some scholars, including van den Berg (1886, 1989), van der Kroef (1953, 1954, 1955), Reid (1972), Winstedt (1918), Azra (1992), de Jonge (1997), Freitag (2003), Ho (2006), and Jacobson (2009), among

many others. Some studies have simply been travel accounts, such as those by van der Meulen (1947), van der Meulen and von Wissmann (1932), and Stark (1940), while others, such as those by van den Berg (1886) and Ingrams (1937), were motivated by the socio-political interests of European colonial governments, particularly the Dutch and British.[2] More recently, the 1990s witnessed an upsurge of academic interest in Hadrami migration and diaspora (Heiss and Slama 2010). Arai (2004: 3) has argued that there are at least two factors that influenced an abrupt increase of studies on the Hadrami Arab communities in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, namely: (1) the unification of Yemen in 1990; and (2) the blossoming of diaspora studies as a field in anthropology and cultural studies.

As discussed by such noted historians of Southeast Asia as Vlekke (1943), Azra (1992), Reid (1992), Ricklefs (1993), Lombard (1996), de Jonge and Kaptein (2002), Jacobson (2009), and Laffan (2011), the Indonesian-Malay archipelago has had been in contact with the Arab world for hundreds of years, long before the advent of Islam in Indonesia. While Arabs were travelling to the Malay world long before European colonisers landed in the region, and the first Arab settlements in the archipelago may date from the fifth century, Hadrami first came to this area in significant numbers much later, probably in the 15th century, during the period of the Islamic Sultanate of Malacca (located in today's Malaysia).

L.W.C. van den Berg (1845–1927), a Dutch scholar in the Dutch colonial era famous for his research on Arab Indonesians of Hadrami descent, noted that the Arabs began to come to the Indies (present-day Indonesia) in large groups in the late 18th century. At first, they settled in Aceh, then Palembang in South Sumatra, and Pontianak in West Kalimantan. These groups started residing in Java in the 1820s, and by the 1870s, there were Arabs arriving to settle in eastern areas of the archipelago as well. Van den Berg (1989: 72–77) also noted that Palembang and Aceh remained the main Arab communities in Sumatra, because, in the early 19th century, Sultan Mahmud Badr al-Din of Palembang provided space for Arab communities to settle in his territory, signifying the harmonious relationship between the local populations and the Arabs.

Steamship technology in the 19th century and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 were instrumental in further stimulating Arab migration and travel to the region. The opening of the Suez Canal meant that ships could travel between Europe and South Asia without navigating around Africa, thereby reducing the distance of a sea voyage between Europe and Asia. At the time, most contact between Southeast Asia and the Arab world was through

trade, primarily of spice, although some teachers and preachers also engaged in cultural and religious exchanges. In the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, Hadrami Arabs composed the great majority of Arab immigrants to what is now Indonesia. The second largest Arab group came from Hijaz, in today's western Saudi, even though their numbers paled in comparison to those of the Hadramis (Ho 2006; Tagliacozzo 2014).

Sumatra in particular had long been a site of transit for foreign traders and travellers. By the 1300s, river ports along the Straits of Melaka in northern Sumatra served as stopovers for ships from India, Central Asia, and the Middle East. Perhaps it was only in the Batak region where Islam was introduced later. The early coastal Arab and Muslim presence in the island had little direct impact on most Batak peoples. Moreover, Islam was introduced in Batak areas mostly during the 1820s and 1830s, when the Padris, the Saudi-influenced Muslim reformists, moved north from West Sumatra into the southern areas of the Batak, making large-scale conversions of local believers to Islamic faith in that area (Ooi 2004: 224–225).

Other Arab and Indo-Arab groups in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago are descendants of the great preacher of Hadrami origins Shaikh Jamaluddin Akbar al-Husaini, more widely known as Shaikh Maulana Husain Jumadil Kubro, or simply Jumadil Kubro, who was believed to be a descendent of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), through Husain bin Ali. Van Bruinessen (1994) states that, the different opinions about the origins of Jumadil Kubro notwithstanding, it is commonly agreed that most Muslim preachers and Islamic missionaries in Java and other islands in the 15th and 16th centuries, including some of the Walisongo, the "Nine Saints," who are considered to have been the first Islamic "agents," or missionaries that introduced and spread Islam in Java, were the descendants of Shaikh Jumadil Kubro.

Moreover, van Bruinessen (1994: 320–321) and Djajadiningrat (1983) note that, according to the early 19th-century chronicle *Babad Cirebon*, Jumadil Kubro is regarded as the ancestor of some great Javanese saints, including Sunan Gunung Djati, Sunan Bonang, Sunan Ampel and Sunan Kalijaga. Furthermore, a Javanese chronicle from Gresik (East Java) mentions Jumadil Kubro as the grandfather of Sunan Giri, another noted Javanese saint, as well as a blood relation with Sunan Ampel of Surabaya. Two chronicles from West Java, *Sajarah Banten* and *Babad Pajajaran*, also mention Jumadil Kubro as a major figure who was a blood relative to some Javanese saints.

Another category of Indo-Arabs in what is now Indonesia was the offspring of the Ba 'Alawi family,[3] who take the name 'Alawi from a grandson of Ahmad bin Isa al-Muhajir (873–956), the 10th descendant of the Prophet

Muhammad (PBUH).[4] This group, widely known as *sadah* (singular as *sayyid*) or, more precisely, as the Ba 'Alawi *sadah* group, played a central role in the spread of Islam, not only in Indonesia, but also in other areas of Southeast Asia (Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei, among others), India, and Africa, particularly Tanzania, Somalia, Kenya, and Comoros (Ho 2006; Al-Mansyur 2010). The progeny of Ahmad bin Isa al-Muhajir formed multiple families of Hadrami Arabs, whose family names are well known throughout the region, including Alatas, Aljunied, Alhadad, Alkaaf, Assagaf, Shihab, Alydrus, Alhabshi, Aljufri and others. Since the *sadah* group is considered descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), they receive privileges and special treatment and are sometimes treated as holy men from some Indonesian Muslims. Moreover, many of the early *sadah* migrants, who were mostly males, were employed by local kings as respected teachers, judges, or advisors to the royalties or sultanates, and many married into royal families (Aljunied 2013; Arai 2004).

The Irshadi, or non-*sadah* community, is another Arab group in the archipelago. As more Arab migrants reached Indonesia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Arab population became more diverse, and began including non-*sadah* families, who were widely known as *shaikh* but called themselves "Irshadi." During the colonial period, the 'Alawi and Irshadi groups were involved in tensions and conflict over the status of *sadah* and other socio-religious-political issues (Freitag and Clarence-Smith 1997).

It is important to note that, although Arabs had been travelling to today's Indonesia since long before Europeans landed in the 16th and 17th centuries, it was only in the 19th century that Arabs migrated to the archipelago in large groups. In 1860, the Netherlands East Indies government recorded 8,900 registered Arab inhabitants, 6,133 of whom lived in Java and Madura. By 1885, the populations of both Arabs and Indo-Arabs in Southeast Asia increased significantly: more than 20,000 were registered in Dutch territories (10,888 in Java Island and Madura) and 9,613 (outside Java, including in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Lombok, and Maluku), and another 529 in British Singapore and Melaka (van den Berg 1989). Between 1870 and 1900, the population was stable at about 27,000, but by 1920, the Arab population increased to 45,000, and by 1930, the number was at 71,355, with 41,730 in Java and Madura. As a result of continued immigration, the number of Arabs would have been 80,000 by the time of the Japanese occupation (de Jonge 1997: 94–95). In response to the expansion of the Arab population, the Dutch colonial rule created special districts for them, known as Kampung Arab. These districts were implemented in such major cities as Jakarta, Pekalongan, Semarang, Surabaya, Solo, Palembang and Pontianak, among many others (de

Jonge 1997; van den Berg 1989; Jacobson 2009). The creation of Kampung Arab made it easier for the Dutch to control and oversee Arab activities.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ARABS AND INDO-ARABS TO INDONESIAN RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Numerous Arab and Indo-Arab figures, including political leaders, educators, preachers and Islamic scholars, have contributed to shape Indonesia's Islamic and Muslim cultures. Some of these individuals will be briefly highlighted here, in order to emphasise the role of Arabs and Indo-Arabs, particularly from the *sadah* groups, in the spread of Islam in the country (Shahab 2009). Even though the *sadah* are highly esteemed, the graves of prominent Arabs are often venerated, and some Arabs feel themselves superior to local Muslims, they were not the only actors in the Islamisation of Indonesia. Indigenous Muslim leaders, preachers, teachers, clerics and *hajj* pilgrims were also active agents of the spread and entrenchment of Islam. Chinese Muslims also played a vital role in the introduction and spread of Islam in Indonesia, particularly before European colonial powers took hold in the area (Al Qurtuby 2003).

The eminent Indo-Arab *ulama* (Hadrami included)—past and present—who contributed to the shaping of Indonesian Islam and Muslim cultures include, among others, Sayyid Husain bin Abu Bakar al-Aydarus, Abdurrahman bin Mustafa al-'Aydarus, Habib Ali bin Abdurrahman al-Habsy, Shaikh Salim bin Abdullah Ba Sumayr, Sayyid Uthman bin Abdullah al-Alawy al-Husayni, Habib Ahmad bin Hamzah al-Attas, Shaikh Sa'id bin Salim Na'um, Shaikh Abdullah Arfan Baraja, and Habib Salim Djindan (Mauladawilah 2009, 2010; de Jonge and Kaptein 2002; Al Gadri 1988; Azra 1997; Aziz 2002; Ellisa 2007). Due to limited space, this article will only briefly highlight a few of the contributions of these religious scholars.

Habib Husain bin Abu Bakar al-'Aydarus was a respected scholar, an energetic preacher, an influential religious leader, and an ascetic mystic who contributed significantly to the development of Islam in Jakarta and its surroundings (Pemda DKI 1982; Murti 2016). It is unclear when he was born, but he reportedly died in 1756 and was buried in the region of Luar Batang in today's Jakarta, and thereby became widely known as the Saint of Luar Batang (De Jonge and Kaptein 2002: 185). His graveyard is close to a mosque he built. Pilgrims continue to visit his shrine to conduct prayers, give alms and perform rituals for "rewards," which are usually dedicated to the deceased, as well as the Saint's blessings and mercy, so that their future lives may be successful and safe (Gilsenan 2003: 7–11).

Other noted figures were Habib Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hamzah al-Attas (or Habib Ahmad bin Hamzah for short), who founded the Zawiyah Mosque in Pekojan, Jakarta, and Habib Usman bin Abdullah bin Yahya (Haryono 2015: 176–178). Born in Du'an al-Ayman, Yemen, Habib Ahmad bin Hamzah visited Mecca for *hajj* and *umrah*, and continued his journey to Java, the Indonesian archipelago, staying at Pare-Pare (Sulawesi), Sumenep (Madura), and finally Betawi (today's Jakarta), where he then chose to live in Pekojan and build the mosque known as Zawiyah bin Hamzah or the "Corner of bin Hamzah"[5] in 1877. During his lifetime, he used this mosque as a centre for teaching and learning, introducing some classical Islamic books, such as *Fathul Mu'in*, one of the main books on *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) in the Shafii school of thought. Still today, this book is widely used at *pesantren* (traditional Islamic boarding schools) across Indonesia. Since the death of Habib Ahmad bin Hamzah, the mosque has been used by the al-Attas family and other *habaib* (singular *habib*) groups for family gatherings, particularly during Eid al-Fitr (Idul Fitri) and Eid al-Adha (Idul Adha) (al-Mansyur 2010; Fadli 2011).

Shaikh Salim bin Abdullah bin Sa'ad bin Sumair al-Hadrami (d. 1855) was another noted Arab figure. He was a brilliant scholar and a great educator. Born in Hadramaut, he lived and died in Jakarta. The author of *Safinatun Naja*, a renowned classic guide to Islamic law that has been used in Indonesian-Malay's traditional Islamic boarding schools, he was both a Sufi mystic and a specialist in Islamic jurisprudence of the Shafii school. Shaikh Salim was not only an avid Islamic scholar but also a passionate anti-colonial activist. At the same time that he taught Islamic sciences and knowledge and preached Islamic teachings, he also encouraged Muslims not to "enslave" themselves to political rulers and colonisers. Shaikh Salim ardently criticised religious figures who worked with bureaucrats and colonial governments to gain material advantages and political-economic interests (Mauladawilah 2010; Fadli 2011; Munir 2013).

In contrast to Shaikh Salim, who strongly opposed the Dutch colonial rule, Sayyid Uthman bin Abdullah bin 'Aqil bin Yahya al-'Alawi al-Hussaini (or Sayyid Uthman for short) (born in Pekojan, Batavia, 1822) built friendship and partnership with the colonisers (Azra 1997; Aziz 2002; Al Gadri 1988). In 1889, following the recommendation of Snouck Hurgronje, the Dutch appointed him "Honorary Advisor for Arabian Affairs." Due to this position and his closeness to the Dutch, he was widely accused of being a Dutch spy and even of betraying Islam for his own political agenda and material interests. His accomodationist political stance forced him to make certain sacrifices to his

political-religious identity, such as granting permission to the Dutch to appoint Muslim judges and issuing rulings prohibiting Muslims from criticising or waging war against the Dutch.[6] Sayyid Uthman also warned that any Muslim involved in the wars against the Dutch would be subject to severe penalties at the hands of the authorities (Azra 1997: 253–254; cf. Noupal 2013).

Another noted Arab figure in the past was Shaikh Said bin Salim Na'um (known Shaikh Said Na'um). The Said Na'um Mosque and School in Tanah Abang of Jakarta are attributed to this legendary figure. He was buried in Tanah Abang at a special cemetery for *sadah* families, including non-Arab (*Malay*) wives. In this graveyard, the graves of Shaikh Salim bin Abdullah bin Sumair, Habib Muhammad bin Abu Bakar Aidid, Habib Ahmad bin Alwi al-Masyhur, and Habib Usman bin Abdullah bin Yahya, among many others, can be also found. During his life, Shaikh Said Na'um established several mosques in Jakarta, including the famous one in Pekojan, named Langgar Tinggi (built in 1833), which was used to conduct a variety of ritual ceremonies and religious activities (besides regular prayers), in accordance with the Islamic traditions and cultures of Tarim of Hadramaut, the place where the *sadah* group originated (Lohanda 2007; Mauladawilah 2010; Haryono 2015; Ho 2006).

Last but not the least, Habib Ali bin Abdurrahman al-Habsyi (or Habib Ali Kwitang for short) (1870–1968), was a respected Islamic scholar, cleric and preacher in the 20th century. Born in Jakarta, Habib Ali Kwitang was the founder of the Islamic Center of Indonesia and the Majelis Taklim Kwitang, a forum for discussion, instruction and preaching concerning socio-religious matters, which he started in 1911 in the district of Kwitang, Central Jakarta. He not only gave religious sermons and taught Muslim students, but also wrote books. In 1918, he expanded an existing mosque in Kwitang, named Al-Riyadh Mushalla, and built an Islamic school, Madrasah Unwanul Falah, next to the mosque. Many Islamic scholars from Jakarta and across the country (and even from Singapore and Malaysia) received training in this madrasah and went on to establish Majelis Taklim (Islamic centres) in their regions. Habib Ali played an important role in the founding of al-Rabithah al-Alawiyyah in 1928 and its sub-organisation al-Maktab al-Daimi in 1940. An esteemed cleric, Habib Ali was respected by many Indonesian officials and was a close friend of Sukarno, the first Indonesian president. Due to his eminence, when Habib Ali died in 1968, thousands of people came to pay their respects (Mauladawilah 2009, 2010; Alhabsyi 2010; AY 2013).

The description sketched above is only a small example of Arab and Indo-Arab figures who contributed to the shaping of Islamic scholarship and the spread of Islam in Indonesia. There were also non-Hadrami scholars, teachers

and preachers who contributed to the introduction and proliferation of Islam. They were also some leading figures of Arab descent who made significant contributions to subjects like art, politics, economy, business and education. Considered the first modern artist from Indonesia (Dutch East Indies), Raden Saleh Sjarif Boestaman (1811–1880) was one of the noted figures in these areas. Born in Semarang into a notable Hadrami family (his father was Sayyid Hussein bin Alwi bin Yahya), he was a pioneering Indonesian Romantic painter of Arab-Javanese ethnicity, whose paintings corresponded with the 19th-century Romanticism that was popular in Europe at the time. Raden Saleh's interest in art began in Bogor when he studied under the Belgian artist A. J. Payen, who recognised his talent and persuaded the Dutch to send him to the Netherlands to study art under the great 19th-century Dutch artists Cornelius Kruseman and Andreas Schelfhout. It was from Kruseman that Raden Saleh perfected his skills in portraiture.

One of the famous leading Arab figures in Indonesian politics was Abdurrahman Baswedan (1908–1986). Born in Surabaya, Baswedan was a political leader, journalist, writer, nationalist, anti-colonial activist and diplomat, involved in numerous political activities and a member of several political parties and organisations. He also served as Deputy Minister of Information of the Third Sjahrir Cabinet, a member of Indonesian parliament, member of Constitutional Assembly, and was one of Indonesia's first diplomats involved in successfully lobbying international political leaders and governments to grant political recognition to the newly independent Republic of Indonesia. In 1934, he gathered young Indo-Arabs in a congress in Semarang, leading to the declaration of a Youth Pledge for Indonesian Arabs that proclaimed Indonesia as their motherland and supported Indonesian freedom from colonisers. Not only leading the congress, he also chaired the Indonesian Arab Party, founded in 1939, a political body for Indonesian Arabs aimed at mobilising Indo-Arabs in support of a national movement, helping struggle for Indonesia's independence, and providing a political body for Indonesian Arabs (de Jonge 2004: 237–400; Al Gadri 1988).

In recent Indonesian history, there are also numerous notable Indo-Arabs, both religious and secular, who have helped to define Indonesian politics, economy, education and general culture. Unfortunately, due to limited space, I cannot mention them all. Among the prominent contemporary figures of Arab or Hadrami origins are Ali Alatas, former Minister of Foreign Affairs in Suharto's New Order era; Muhammad Quraish Shihab, a noted Islamic scholar and a Qur'anic exegete; Alwi Shihab, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and a special envoy for the Middle East; Said Aqil Husein Al Munawar, former

Minister of Religious Affairs; Salim Segaf Al-Jufri, former Minister of Social Affairs; Haidar Bagir, entrepreneur, philanthropist, author and educator; Haddad Alwi, a Nasheed singer; Ahmad Albar, a rock singer; Najwa Shihab, a TV presenter; Anis Baswedan, former Minister of Education and Culture and the respected clerics and preachers Habib Muhammad Luthfi bin Yahya, Habib Umar bin Hafidz, Habib Munzir bin Fuad Al-Musawa, Habib Hasan bin Ja'far Assegaf, and Habib Syech Abdul Qadir Assegaf, among many others.

It is important to observe that the notable figures of Arab origins have not only lived in Jakarta but also in the many Arab districts throughout the country, including in Bogor, Semarang, Cirebon, Solo, Tegal, Surabaya, Pontianak and Ambon, among others. Due to their significant roles and contributions to the religious and non-religious (economy, politics, culture) spheres alike, as well as the mantle many, but not all, carry as being a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Indonesian Muslims have generally paid respect to this group. Most Indonesian Muslims do not understand and are not able to distinguish between *sadah* and non-*sadah* groups. It is true that some Arab or Indo-Arab figures have been involved in practices or actions that offended Indonesian society at large, such as past cooperation with the colonialists or their contemporary involvement in corruption, (as in the case of Said Aqil Husein Al Munawar) but these "individual issues" generally do not have a negative effect on the image of Indonesians of Arab descent. What are the factors, then, that damage the image the rest of Indonesian society holds of this group?

INDO-ARABS AND THE NEGATIVE IMAGE OF THE ARAB WORLD: CONTEMPORARY NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

There are at least five factors that have contributed to the turn towards a negative portrayal of Arab or Indo-Arab communities in Indonesia and more contentious relations with the rest of society.

The first factor is the practice of temporary marriage in some parts of West Java, attributed to (mostly foreign) Arab men and Indonesian women, especially from the Sundanese ethnic group. The practice of *kawin kontrak* ("temporary" or "contract" marriage) as it is widely known nowadays, between Arab men and Sundanese women, has become a subject of public knowledge and discourse. News about this issue has been disseminated across the country primarily by print and virtual media reports of activities and information, including the locations of the centres of temporary marriage

activities in regions such as Cisarua, Cipanas, Ciawi, Badong, and Bogor in West Java, collectively known as *Puncak* (hilltop), because the villas, hotels, or hostels where these activities take place are mainly located in the highlands or mountains.[7]

Since the public assumption is that these activities mainly involve Arabs, these areas have become known as Kampung Arab. However, unlike the Kampung Arab that have existed since the European colonial era, the ones in the Puncak are a relatively new phenomenon. Local people refer to them as Kampung Arab not because Arabs have settled for many years in the areas, but because many Arab tourists stay in hotels and villas there, and to accommodate them, many signs are written in Arabic and many businesses employ workers who can speak both Bahasa Indonesia and Arabic. Restaurants and minimarkets sell Arab or Middle Eastern foods, drinks, and other goods typical in the Arab regions such as *sisha* (tobacco), and the interiors and furniture of villas, hotels, and restaurants are designed in a Middle Eastern style. All of this is designed to make Arab tourists more comfortable during their stay in the area.[8] Local workers in the Arab-style minimarkets whom I interviewed during my fieldwork in these areas said that some "Arab stuffs" are directly imported from some countries in the Middle East, while others are produced in Jakarta or West Java, to minimise costs.[9]

The wave of Arab tourists from the Middle East has caused several consequences, both positive and negative. For businesses, this is an opportunity to create a variety of operations, while for local people in the area, it has involved an increased momentum in informal economies, such as motorcycle taxis, tourism guides, part-time security, laundries and others. For local prostitutes, who are mainly of Sundanese background, Arab tourists are a *rejeki nomplok* (windfall) of high-paying customers. Local informants told me that most prostitutes who service the tourists and the women and girls who engage in the temporary marriages with the Arab men are from neighbouring villages and regencies in West Java, not from the local area. Temporary marriages and other forms of sexual activities between Arab tourists and local women lead to problems as well, including sexually transmitted diseases and unclear status of children resulting from temporary marriage, since the Indonesian government only recognises marriages as legal when they are in accordance with the Indonesian marriage laws and children born to these relationships, whom the local people call *anak jadah* or *anak haram* (unlawful child), are considered to be born out of illegal sexual relationships, outside a legal marriage and hence ineligible for access to social services and public schools.

These practices have also contributed to the shape of destructive images about Arabs and Indo-Arabs, as well as Indonesian society in general. In 2006, some 70 women's organisations, including Fatayat of Nahdlatul Ulama, Institut Ungu, Kalyanamitra, and Srikandi Demokrasi Indonesia, held a press conference in Jakarta to address the phenomena of the sex industry in West Java. A group of *Kaukus Perempuan* (female legislators) also organised several meetings with the government to speak out about these issues, which they considered a shame for *nilai-nilai ketimuran* (Eastern values) and a disgrace to Indonesian culture. Moreover, the female activists and legislators defined temporary marriages as no more than *pelacuran terselubung* (veiled prostitution), and identified the need to address the practice as a serious problem.

According to Maria Arga Nita, a psychologist who conducted fieldwork on this issue in West Java, the pervasive practices of *kawin kontrak* with Arabs, as well as of prostitution among Sundanese women are strongly linked with the habits of Sundanese culture and habits, where it is easy to have sex with a stranger and individuals are reluctant to do hard work to make money. Nita said, "the characteristics of Sundanese women are that they want to live comfortably but are too lazy to do hard work; therefore prostitution is their solution."[10] Moreover, female journalist Mariana Amiruddin argued that the phenomena of *kawin kontrak* is a syndrome of a "Cinderella Complex" (quoted in Lesmana 2011: 233–234), namely that women from poor families are willing to get married to Arabs, even temporarily, hoping that by this marriage they will produce handsome and beautiful children with brighter and better futures than their parents. Jakarta-based *Jurnal Perempuan* (Woman Journal) documented the *kawin kontrak* practices in a documentary film, titled *Don't Buy Don't Sell.*[11]

As noted earlier, despite bringing some benefits for local people, the practice of contract marriage and the sex industry in West Java have cultivated a damaging image, of both Indonesians and the Arabs and Indo-Arabs who refuse such practices. In other words, the behaviours of some Arab tourists are responsible for creating harmful portrayals of other good foreign Arabs of the Middle East, and of Indo-Arabs who have settled in the archipelago for centuries, as well as the general Indonesian population. Although some Arab tourists do believe that the practice of temporary marriage, either in the form of *nikah mut'ah* (contract/temporary marriage) or *nikah misyar* (tourism marriage), is religiously legitimate (Lesmana 2011: 232–244), Muslims and Indonesians in general consider these practices a form of prostitution.[12] Indonesian law also does not recognise contract marriage. Although many

have condemned contract marriage and the sex industry, it is difficult to end these practices, since there are syndicates behind them that included connected local government, security forces, the police, business, politicians, *preman* (gangsters), *mucikari* (pimps) and so on, all of which are united by the desire for money.[13]

A second factor is the involvement of some Arab and Indo-Arab leaders in various cases of communal violence, intolerant actions, and anti-pluralist movements in the aftermath of the fall of Suharto's dictatorial government in 1998, after he spent 32 years in power. Indonesia has witnessed dramatic shifts, both for bad and for good. On one hand, Indonesian citizens' freedom to express their political wants and desires is guaranteed by the law and Constitution. On the other hand, however, undemocratic, anti-pluralist civilian groups, including, but not limited to, radical conservative Muslim groups, have also grown in some parts of the country, as one result of relatively unchecked civil liberties. The seeds of post-Suharto-era Islamic radicalism, among other things, were planted by radical conservative Muslim clerics, many of whom are devout followers of Salafi teachings, through *madrasah* (Islamic schools), *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), and clandestine gatherings.

Some Arab and Indo-Arab leaders have contributed to these violent and intolerant actions. They include such notorious figures as Ja'far Umar Thalib, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Habib Rizieq Shihab, Habib Salim Selon, Habib Hussain Al-Habsyi, Salim Mubarak Attamimi, and Habib Ahmad bin Zain Al Kaff, among many others. Of Hadrami descent, Ja'far Umar Thalib is the founder of Laskar Jihad, a Java-based holy war paramilitary group that played an important role in exacerbating Christian–Muslim violence in Maluku between 1999 and 2004. A veteran of the Afghan War, Thalib led thousands of jihadists from Java to Ambon City, the provincial capital of Maluku in eastern Indonesia, to battle against Christian fighters. He was not alone in this effort. Other Indo-Arab leaders from Maluku, including Muhammad (Mo) Attamimi, Salim Basoan, and Umar Ali Attamimi, also joined the Laskar Jihad and battled fiercely against Christians of Maluku (Al Qurtuby 2016).

Furthermore, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, co-founder of the Jamaah Islamiyah, dubbed by the U.S. government as Southeast Asia's terrorist hub, and leader of the Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid, has been charged by the Indonesian authorities for his involvement in several bloody terrorist incidents around the country. In Solo, Central Java, Ba'asyir founded an Islamic boarding school, named Pesantren Ngruki, which teaches a strict, conservative form of Islam. Some perpetrators of terrorism and activists of jihadist groups in Indonesia have been linked to this Pesantren. Habib Rizieq Shihab and Habib Salim Selon

are the leaders of the Islamic Defender Front. Habib Hussain Al-Habsyi is the leader of Ikhwanul Muslimin Indonesia. Habib Ahmad bin Zain Al Kaff is the chairman of Majelis Syura Aliansi Nasional Anti Syiah, an Indonesian national alliance of anti-Shia factions. Moreover, Salim Mubarak Attamimi (or Abu Jandal), recently deceased, was an activist of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). A resident of Malang, East Java, of Arab-Hadrami decent, Attamimi has attracted much attention since he appeared on YouTube in June 2014, claiming to be the Indonesian leader of ISIS and calling on Indonesian Muslims to join the terrorist group and wage jihad against the Iraqi and Syrian regimes.[14]

Of all the above radical-Islamist organisations, the Islamic Defender Front (or "Front Pembela Islam"; hereafter FPI) is the most notorious. The Laskar Jihad was disbanded following the Bali bombings in 2002 and its members dispersed, some choosing to remain in Ambon and surrounding regions, while others headed back to Java. Its members were believed to have been pacified, although some of them may have joined other Islamist groups in the country. The terrorist group Jama'ah Islamiyah also faded away due to the loss of Muslim support and the Indonesian government's ruthless treatment of terrorists. FPI remains powerful, with branches in many provinces and districts across the country. In some areas, such as Central Java, Maluku and Kalimantan (with the exception of Pontianak), the organisation has lost the support from local Muslims. However, in other regions (West Java, Banten, and Jakarta, among others), it has gained support from some local Muslim groups. FPI was inaugurated on 17 August 1998, just three months after Suharto's fall from power, by Muhammad Rizieq Shihab (known as Habib Rizieq) and several other radical-conservative Muslim leaders, mostly of Hadrami Arab descent. Its initial aims were twofold: (1) to fight against the plague of drugs, pornography, gambling, and prostitution which it deemed *maksiat* (vices) and public immorality; and (2) to respond to suspected human rights transgressions against Muslims[15] (Jahroni 2008).

Since FPI was founded in 1998, its members and activists are often found in the headlines of mass media for intimidation and violent acts against civilians, religious sects, and minority groups (both non-Muslims and Muslims) in major cities and small towns across the country. FPI's mandate *amr ma'ruf nahi munkar*" (commanding right and forbidding wrong) is derived from its understanding of Qur'anic injunctions (see Sura Luqman (31), verse 17, for instance), but it has moved beyond its initial objectives, now no longer only combating what it considers to be a vice, but also battling against Christian evangelicals and non-conformist Muslim groups it carelessly dubs as deviant,

sacrilegious, liberal and infidel. Such "infidel" groups include Ahmadiyah, Shia, Salamullah, Satariyah, al-Qiyadah, Liberal Islam Network and Gafatar, among many others.

Still, while exploiting public moral anxieties about vice and immorality, FPI has challenged pro-democracy students, anti-extremist government officials, pro-peace religious leaders, progressive scholars, human rights activists, and defenders of Muslim tolerance and religious pluralism from both state and social arenas. Of all local religious sects and belief-systems, the Ahmadiyah and Shia communities probably have suffered the most: their mosques have been razed, their offices plundered, and their followers expelled from their homes, making them refugees in their own country. Survey results from various research centres and academic institutions, including the Wahid Institute, the Maarif Institute for Culture and Humanity, and Gadjah Mada University's Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies, have placed FPI on the top of their lists of perpetrators of religious violence, extremism, and anti-tolerance and pluralism in post-Suharto Indonesia.

FPI's brutality has indeed met with widespread criticism and peaceful resistance from various groups and individuals throughout the archipelago, including ordinary local villagers and townspeople, academics, grassroots activists, interfaith practitioners, pro-democracy leaders, and the country's moderate Islamic organisations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. Organisations and networks opposed to anti-FPI and other extremist-Islamist organisations have been created on Facebook and other social media as expressions of citizens' anger, worry and disagreement with these radical groups. From time to time, NU uses its youth militia wing, the Banser, to protect churches and holy sites of other religious minorities from FPI attacks. Recently, this has happened in the regions of Cirebon, Yogyakarta, Semarang, Solo, and many places in East Java. Outside Java, in Kalimantan and Sulawesi, local governments, *adat* (customary law) chiefs, traditional leaders, NGO activists, and college students have all also challenged FPI's intimidation and anti-pluralist acts.

Religious leaders of NU (e.g., KH Said Aqiel Siradj, known as Kiai Said) and of Muhammadiyah (e.g., Muhammad Syafii Ma'arif, known as Buya Syafii) frequently take stands against the positions of the commanders of FPI (e.g., Habib Rizieq and Habib Selon) concerning various controversial issues from religious pluralism and minority rights to the permissibility of Christmas greetings and local regulations based explicitly on Islamic Sharia (known as Perda Syariat).[16] While Kiai Said and Buya Syafii represent the defenders of peaceful and tolerant Islam, Habib Rizieq and Habib Selon are leaders of a

violent and intolerant Islam. Kiai Said and Buya Syafii argue that the minority rights of Indonesian citizens, including their rights to express their religious beliefs, should be defended, as mandated by the Indonesian Constitution and the Qur'an. The two religious leaders also demand that every Indonesian citizen be understood as equal, no matter what their faith or ethnicity. In contrast, Habib Rizieq and Habib Selon argue that Muslims, since they are the majority in Indonesia, must be prioritised by the government. Whereas Kiai Said and Buya Syafii disagree with the implementation of the Perda Syariat, Habib Rizieq and Habib Selon support the Perda. Currently, Kiai Said and Buya Syafii have expressed no concerns about the candidacy of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (known as Ahok), a Christian, for Governor of Jakarta. Habib Rizieq, however, is fiercely against Ahok, and mobilises masses to reject him.[17] The criticism and disagreement between the two opposing groups has been widely spread throughout many media.

Notwithstanding the pervasive popular resistance, disparagement and condemnation, FPI's intolerant and violent actions continue to persist. Efforts, including collecting signatures and endorsements from a diverse network of societies and associations or campaigns of a million of support from Facebook and Twitter users, have been made demanding to have FPI disbanded and close down its offices and centres, but the paramilitary group has not come to an end. Many people point fingers at certain high-ranking bureaucrats and politicians, as well as some elite members in the police and military, who seemingly approve of and benefit from FPI's destructive deeds. It seems that no Muslim political elites in the country want to lose support from Muslims in elections by standing up for the interests of religious minorities, risking being labelled un-Islamic or foes of Muslims. Instead of condemning FPI's brutality, an increasing number of Muslim leaders have denounced the Ahmadiyah, Shiites and other local sects as deviant religious groups, referring to *fatwa* (Islamic edicts) issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) and the Islamic Community Forum (FUI).

It is thus obvious that the rise and persistence of FPI and other anti-pluralist and intolerant religious groups is not simply driven by the group's founders' dissatisfaction with the country's law enforcement, or as a response toward the state's weakness, as some analysts have observed, but rather that the group's existence is the fruit of mutual collaboration between anti-pluralist and intolerant factions in both the government and society, military and civilian alike. In other words, the emergence of FPI and similar groups is the product of synergy, to borrow the terms of Robert Hefner (2001), between uncivil states

and uncivil society. The phenomenon of FPI on the Indonesian political stage also mirrors the pattern of the old political-religious coalitions to run society.

Indonesia's Blasphemy Law[18] provides further legal legitimacy for the vigilante actions of FPI. As Melissa Crouch (2012: 1–2) has observed, this law casts a bleak outlook for deviant groups, "leaving religious minorities vulnerable to convictions for blasphemy and the risk of violence in the future." Together, these structures have formed an image of FPI members as happy hooligans, cloaking themselves in religious dress. In contrast to FPI's claims that it acts on behalf of restoring public order and morality, FPI rampages have made the public arena more chaotic and insecure. Their vicious and vandalistic activities, more importantly, have done great harm to the image of Indonesia and Indonesian Islam internationally, as well as to that of Arabs and Indo-Arabs more specifically.

The third factor that has contributed to damage the image of Arabs in Indonesia is the widely publicised news of maltreatment of Indonesian housemaids and menial labourers by some Arab employers in the Middle East, which has generated mass protests and public criticism against Arabs. The Indonesian government first agreed to formally allow Indonesian workers to be recruited to the Middle East in 1983. In the first year, approximately 47,000 fully documented laborers left Indonesia to Arab regions, mostly to the Gulf, and this number grew rapidly every year thereafter. The majority of this migrant group between 1984 and 1999 were women, almost all of them intending to work as domestic workers. These statistics do not include the undocumented workers that left as well.

Silvey (2004: 145–146) has shown that migrant domestic workers in the Middle East have faced a range of problems. First, domestic service jobs are unregulated and come with no legal protections. Nor are they protected by state regulation or monitoring by the Indonesian government agencies. Second, popular and state-supported understandings of the domestic sphere as a private space make exploitation and abuse more difficult to expose than if it took place in the public wage-earning sphere. Third, the many migrants who overstay their work visas or migrate without complete documentation are ineligible for even the minimal state protections that would be available to them if they held regular contract work visas in a regulated employment sector. Undocumented migrants' stateless status makes them particularly vulnerable to abuse by both middlemen and employers. Indeed, there have been media reports of migrants who were overworked, underpaid and forbidden to leave the homes of their employers, and also of ones who died mysterious deaths. As

such cases gained widespread attention, public resistance to women's overseas migration intensified (Silvey 2004, 2006, 2007). The Indonesian government also responded to these hostile cases by stopping dispatch of housemaids and menial workers to certain Arab countries, particularly in the Gulf. Although the situation is now more stable, the public memory of this domestic violence has not gone away. People still express their hate and insolence against Arabs in social media, seminars, and other public means.

The fourth factor is the vulgar proselytisation, Islamisation and Arabisation attempted by some Indonesian alumni of universities, schools, or Islamic centres in the Middle East or their Indonesian branches. It is imperative to emphasise that not all graduates of these institutions participated in harsh Islamic evangelisation and intolerant, violent *da'wah* (proselytisation). In fact, there are Arab universities and graduate schools of Islamic studies that teach tolerance and pluralism, and spread a peaceful form of Islam. Equally important, some alumni of Indian and Pakistani schools have also spread a strict form of Islam. Those who urge such harsh Islamisation of Indonesia and purification of local traditions and cultures have primarily been trained in the Middle East, in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan and Yemen, among others. The Islamic studies alumni use media, campuses, schools, mosques, public sermons, and other means to spread puritanical, reformist forms of Islam that do not practice tolerance of local cultures, traditions and religious practices and symbols. There are hundreds of cases of religious campaigns with powerful anti-local culture or tradition themes, initiated by these alumni and their networks. Such cases often generate opposition to the Arabs and Arab Islam.

The fifth factor that contributed to the damage of the Arab image in Indonesia is the ongoing violent conflicts, acts of terrorism, and the social-political disarray in some Arab countries, such as Iraq, Yemen, Egypt, Libya and Syria. The carnage, terrorism and war in these Middle Eastern countries have spread a negative image of Arab culture and reputation. The barbaric acts committed by some radical religious militias and terrorist groups have contributed to the decline of Arab image in contemporary Indonesia. Many Indonesians have stood against the bloodshed and condemned the terrorists and the extremists since they worry about the diffusion and transmission of their violence into Indonesian society. The concern and fear of Indonesians towards the Arab influence can be understood in part as the result of the fact that some Arab, Indo-Arab or Arab-influenced Indonesian Muslim elites have publicly declared their support to (or even affiliation with) violent terrorist groups in the Middle East, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, Hamas, or Jabhat al-Nusra, which they considered to be the "true Islamic groups" that

struggle for Islam and for Muslim societies. Although actors or ethnic groups involved in violence in the Middle East vary, including not only Arabs but also Kurds, Persians, Turks, and so forth, most Indonesians equate the Middle East with Arabs. It can therefore be understood why most Indonesians portray the Middle Eastern conflict as Arab conflict, a conflation that contributes to the worsening reputation of Arabs in contemporary Indonesia.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A MORE MULTICULTURAL INDONESIA

The descriptions and analyses outlined above suggest that the history of Arabs in Indonesia began long before the influence European colonialism, although there were a great number of Arab migrants in the 19th century and onwards. The social relations between the Arabs and other Indonesians have been dynamic, marked by conflict and tensions, as well as by peace and harmony. The presence of Arabs and Indo-Arabs has received multiple responses in the local societies they inhabit. Some Indonesian societies greatly appreciate their presence, stating that the Arabs could help introduce a true form of Islam for local Muslims. Others, in contrast, respond negatively, noting that the Arabs are an asocial group, stingy people, troublemakers and destroyers of local traditions and customs.

In recent years, particularly since the collapse of Suharto dictatorial regime in May 1998, perceptions of Arab and Indo-Arab communities by Indonesian Muslims have changed. In the past, Indonesian Muslims generally tended to hold Arabs and Indo-Arabs in high esteem, because of the positive roles played by respected *haba'ib* and *ulama* of Arab origins (both *sadah* and non-*sadah*). However, after the fall of Suharto, there have been shifts among Indonesian Muslims regarding their support, opinions and perceptions towards Arabs and Indo-Arabs, both positive and negative. As mentioned before, there were several factors and rationales that contributed to this shift. It should be noted that the change is not linear since there has been a plurality of responses among Indonesian Muslims towards the Arab and Indo-Arab groups.

Some Indonesian Muslims still give their support to the Arabs and admire Arab Islam, which they consider to be the true and pristine Islam. Even though some radical, Islamist Arab and Indo-Arab clerics and leaders propagated, initiated and led campaigns aimed at destroying local Indonesian cultures in the name of "true Islam," these Indonesian Muslims follow their paths, sometimes becoming "foot soldiers" of the Arabs and Indo-Arabs, since

they believe that religious Islam is more important than secular customs. Others, especially the nationalists, moderates, liberals, nominal Muslims, and non-Muslims, denounce and blame the Arabs and their local Indonesian networks and counterparts as being the root causes of sporadic acts of intra- and interreligious clashes, religious intolerance, and anti-pluralist movements, as well as of the destruction of local traditions, symbols and cultures inherited by the country's *leluhur* (forbearers). They also accuse the Arabs and Indo-Arabs of being a threat to Indonesia's national ideology, Pancasila and motto, *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), which serve as the political, historical, and cultural foundations for Indonesia's integrity, heterogeneity, and tolerance-in-pluralism.

Another group of Muslims—particularly members of NU, Indonesia's largest Muslim social organisation, followers of *thariqah* (Sufi orders), and some urban piety Muslim groups—give their support to peaceful, tolerant Arab and Indo-Arab clerics while denouncing extremists. Famous Arab clerics and preachers, such as Habib Muhammad Lutfi bin Yahya, the supreme spiritual leader of Jam'iyah Ahl al-Thariqah al-Mu'tabarah al-Nahdliyyah (an association of Sufi groups linked to NU), and Habib Sjech bin Abdul Qadir Assegaf, a well-known charismatic preacher, are among figures who teach a peaceful, tolerant Islam that has won the hearts of many Muslims in the country. Urban middle class Muslims and academic circles have been drawn to Habib Muhammad Quraish Shihab, another leading contemporary Islamic scholar of Arab origins, a prolific writer on Islam, and an expert of *tafsir* al-Qur'an (Qur'anic exegesis, who advocates the idea of peace, tolerance and human brotherhood. His daughter, Najwa Shihab, a famous TV presenter, has also gained popularity from the Indonesian public due to her sharp criticism against corrupt members of the government, military, parliament and so forth. Another noted contemporary figure of Arab origins is Anies Baswedan, a former Minister of Culture and Education.

These various examples stand as evidence that there have been diverse responses from Indonesians towards Arab and Indo-Arab communities. As a result, social relations between Arabs and Indo-Arabs and other parts of Indonesian society have been unstable, dynamic and fluid. As long as the Indonesian government and society can manage differences, conflicts and tensions between these two groups wisely, democratically and productively, they will not result in communal violence. However, if both state and society fail to address this crucial issue, Indonesia's history of intergroup violence will recur in the future.

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NOTES

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[1] This is not only true of Islam. Contemporary Indonesia has also been marked by the growth of U.S.-linked evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity, as well as the appearance of the Syrian Orthodox Church.

[2] For example, Christian Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936), a noted Dutch scholar of oriental cultures and languages and advisor on native affairs to the colonial government of the Netherlands East Indies, even gave recommendations to the Dutch administration concerning the role of the Arabs in the colony.

[3] Ba 'Alawi means "descendants of 'Alawi." Ba is a Hadrami dialect from Arabic "bani," meaning "offspring." It is vital to notice that the 'Alawi family differs from the Alawiyyin, a term used to describe the progeny of Hasan and Husain, both sons of Ali bin Abi Thalib. All people of Ba 'Alawi are 'Alawiyyin, but not all people of 'Alawiyyin family are Ba 'Alawi (Al-Mansyur 2010).

[4] Ahmad bin Isa, whose tomb remains a popular pilgrimage site for Hadramis, first migrated from Basrah, Iraq, to Hadramaut in the southern part of present-day Yemen in the year 952, aiming at avoiding sectarian violence, including the invasion of the Qaramite forces into the Abbasid Caliphate.

[5] The naming of this mosque by local Muslims was in reference to Habib Ahmad bin Hamzah's habit of i'tikaf (sitting quietly in a mosque while reciting verses or any [Arabic] sentences aimed at remembering God and reflecting his creatures) in the corner of this mosque.

[6] In response to the anti-colonial Banten War of 1888, for instance, Sayyid Uthman declared that any call to jihad (Holy War) against the colonialists and non-Muslim rulers to be haram (forbidden by Islamic law) because it could be an aberration (ghurur) to the true Islamic teachings (Kartodirdjo 1966, 1973). Another reason for his refusal to sanction holy war against the Dutch was to maintain law and order, security, and socio-political stability.

[7] In the summer of 2016, I spent a few days visiting these areas and have conversations with the locals.

[8] See http://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/kawasan-puncak-manjakan-turis-arab.html. Accessed 20 February 2016.

[9] Interviews took place in Bogor, 1–2 June 2016.

[10] Online interviews with Maria Arga Nita, 22 February 2016. The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia. I translated the interviews into English.

[11] Quoted from Lesmana (2011: 232–234).

[12] Some Arabs whom I had conversations with said there are multiple opinions concerning the concepts of *nikah misyar* and *nikah mut'ah*. Some said that the ideas are religiously legal, and that therefore, such temporary marriages are halal (lawful); while others considered such types of marriage to be inappropriate (cf. Lesmana 2011: 232–244).

[13] Online interview with Maria Arga Nita, 22 February 2016.

[14] On the news of Salim Mubarak Attamimi see, among others, http://www.tribunnews.com/regional/2014/08/13/salim-panglima-isis-asli-arek-malang. Accessed 1 April 2015.

[15] According to Jajang Jahroni (2008), the FPI founders claimed that the desire to assist Muslim victims of human rights infringement was driven by the failure of the government and democracy activists in protecting their rights. Up to this day FPI has indeed accused prodemocracy elements, interfaith activists, progressive-minded scholars, and liberal Non-governmental organisations (including those run by Muslims), among others, as Christian-Western-biased and anti-Islam.

[16] Perda Syariat is Regional Law that is built based on the interpretations of particular Islamic texts in the Qur'an, Hadith, or aqwal (sayings or opinions) of classical ulama (Islamic scholars) and fuqaha (jurists).

[17] Concerning FPI's opinions on religious-social issues in Indonesia can be viewed at its website www.fpi.or.id.

[18] The Blasphemy Law or "Undang-Undang Penistaan Agama" describes the collective legislation, presidential decrees, or ministerial directives that prohibit blasphemy in Indonesia. One of the examples of the Blasphemy Law is the Presidential Decree No. 1/PNPS/1965 on the Prevention of Blasphemy and Abuse of Religion. The decree inserted Article 156 (a) into the nation's Criminal Code that targets those who deliberately, in public, express feelings of hostility, hatred, or contempt against religions with the purpose of preventing others from adhering to any religion, and targets those who disgrace religion.

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