Chapter 5: Indonesian and Egyptian Brothers

In the early morning before dawn, a congregation of prayer gathered in the Mosque of Arif Rahman Hakim, on the campus of the University Indonesia in Central Jakarta. After the obligatory dawn prayers were done, the congregation started to recite *dhikr*, another collection of prayers - something that would never happen in a mosque associated with modernist Muslim groups. It was like the prayers regularly recited together by members of Nahdatul Ulama but it differed in its content. This particular collection is called *al-ma’thurat*, compiled by Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Society of Muslim Brothers in Egypt.\(^1\)

*Dhikr*, or *wadifah* is well-known among followers of the Sufi mystical orders, the *tariqah*, which are the preserve of traditionalist Muslims in Indonesia. In the Sufi tradition there are three central institutions: *murshid* (the teacher), *salik* (the student) and *suluk* (the ritual). A student of the *tariqah* has to follow his master and practise a specific ritual, or *dhikr*, and the student’s submission to his master is identified by his commitment to practice *dhikr*. Currently, the *suluk al-ma’thurat* of Hasan al-Banna has become popular; the members of an Islamic group called Darut Tauhid in Bandung, led by a young charismatic leader, Abdullah Gymnastiar, also practise *al-ma’thurat*.\(^2\) It is undeniable that the Muslim Brothers have had a significant influence in Indonesia. Uniquely, the respect given to the master and the adoption of his practice and ideas does not necessarily lead to organisational and hierarchical links within the Sufi tradition. Each new group may develop into an autonomous order and maintain its own agenda. This is the case of the Muslim Brothers in Indonesia.

The Society of the Muslim Brothers (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*) is the most phenomenal group among Islamic movements in the world because of the movement’s ability to expand its ideas and influence worldwide. Even though in its country of origin, Egypt, the Society has faced harsh political repression that limits its growth as a significant political force, it has, by contrast, grown quickly in other parts of the Muslim world. Indonesia, as the largest Muslim country, is not immune from this phenomenon. This chapter tries to analyse the relationship between the Egyptian Society of Muslim Brothers and Jemaah Tarbiyah in Indonesia. I will argue that ideologically and religiously both movements have an obvious connection. The influence of Sufism and political constraints encountered by the central movement in Egypt have shaped the nature of organisational interaction with its international offshoots. Indonesia provides a case study of this process.
This chapter also explores the local role of Indonesian Muslims in accommodating international influences and combining these to shape the face of Jemaah Tarbiyah. Rather than viewing the phenomenon of Jemaah Tarbiyah in Indonesia as a monolithic movement, it is better to focus on different religious orientations and social groups which make up its membership. In doing so, the heterogenous nature of the movement will become more evident. For the purpose of analysis, I categorise the membership of Jemaah Tarbiyah into three main variants: revivalist, modernist and traditionalist.3

A. Basic Organisational Principles of Jemaah Tarbiyah

*Tarbiyah* is an Arabic word and meaning “education.” In the present specific context, this term has been used to name a particular movement, *Harakah Islamiyah* (Islamic Movement) in Indonesia that has developed a process in understanding Islam called *Tarbiyah*. It is also known interchangeably as Jemaah Tarbiyah (the Society of Tarbiyah) or Gerakan Tarbiyah (the Tarbiyah Movement). Jemaah Tarbiyah developed its influence among students in the state secular universities, in campuses in Java and in various universities in the Outer Islands, such as Sumatra, Sulawesi, Maluku and Kalimantan.

The Jemaah Tarbiyah focuses its activities on Islamic predication through *tarbiyah* activities. *Tarbiyah* refers to a practice of spiritual supervision carried out by a spiritual leader of a Sufi group, the *murshid*. *Tarbiyah* aims to cultivate and enhance the spiritual quality of pupils under the guidance of their teacher. This term was adopted by Hasan al-Banna, not only for spiritual enhancement but it was also developed as way to transfer Islamic knowledge and other skills needed by his followers.4 *Tarbiyah* was manifested in small religious circles, or *usrah*, which al-Banna considered to be an essential tool in guiding Muslims to live better in accordance with the teachings of Islam.5 This is why, from the beginning, Jemaah Tarbiyah has focussed its programs on cultivating theology (*tawhid*), moral issues (*akhlaq*) and thought (*fikrah*) in the process of gaining popularity among students who have become disillusioned with the politics of their times.

According to this group, Indonesian Muslims in general are “ignorant” about Islam (*al-jahl ‘an al-islam*) and they need to be educated through specific *tarbiyah* training.6 In order to strengthen the relationships among its members, *tarbiyah* employs the following programs: *usrah* (family), *katibah* (gatherings of *usrah*), *rihlah* (recreation), *mukhayyam* (camping expeditions), *daurah* (intellectual training and Islamic workshops), *nadwah* (seminars) and *muktamar* (international seminars). These activities are held regularly and involve most of the members. Jemaah Tarbiyah developed since the mid-1980s through small study groups in campuses, called *halaqah*.7 *Halaqah* literally means “circle” or more specifically refers to a small religious gathering in which a teacher sits surrounded by 5-10
students. In practice, the term *halaqah* has the same meaning as *usrah*, “family.” However, for political reasons, *halaqah* is more widely known among the members of Jemaah Tarbiyah and is often distinguished from *usrah*. During the mid-1980s the Indonesian government often referred to certain radical movements in Indonesia that were associated with violent activities by the term *usrah*, therefore Jemaah Tarbiyah avoided its use,\(^8\) preferring instead terms like *halaqah* or *liqa*, “meeting”.\(^9\) As was explained by Hidayat Nurwahid, a former chairman of PKS and the Chairman of MPR RI, the term *usrah* had negative connotations since it was used to refer to subversive groups.\(^10\) Certain other figures of PKS have also distinguished themselves from the *usrah* groups of the 1980s.

The ones who name their groups “*usrah*” indeed were groups of the so-called Islamic State of Indonesia, Negara Islam Indonesia (NII) and the Indonesian Islamic Army, Tentara Islam Indonesia (TII). We have no association with them.\(^11\)

It is plausible that the *usrah* model was widely applied by a more radical Islam during the 1980s, since it was an effective method of disseminating ideas, establishing secret religious clubs, particularly during the years of political suppression of Islamic movements which posed an ideological challenge to the regime.\(^12\)

However, *usrah*, both in Muslim Brothers and the Jemaah Tarbiyah texts, is specifically considered to be the central means of conducting Islamic predication and education. In establishing a small “family” unit, solidarity and a sense of togetherness among members are developed. In addition, through this organised training, it is hoped that members will know (*ta’aruf*), understand (*tafahum*) and support (*tafa’ul*) one another.\(^13\) In a practical sense, the *tarbiyah* model was and is still regarded by proponents of the society of the Muslim Brothers as an ideal method to develop direct interaction among members that enables the process of changing individual thought and behaviour in keeping with the group’s ideals.\(^14\)

Through *tarbiyah*, it is believed that close and strong relations between members and leaders, as well as among members, grow. A senior member usually acts as mentor (*murabbi*) with the important duties of training and disciplining junior members. This kind of religious circle has proved itself to be a good medium for indoctrination and the dissemination of the group’s ideals to Islamise the individual, family, community and the state.\(^15\) Jemaah Tarbiyah focuses on establishing models of individual morality, of ideal family life, of strong community and of functional institutions, all of which should be in line with the teachings of Islam.
B. Intellectual and Religious Connections

The nature of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers as an international movement is apparent in its wide spread beyond Egypt. Research findings on the Society published in the early 1950s presented important analysis of the spread of Muslim Brothers-associated movements throughout the Middle East and wider Asia. Richard P. Mitchell indicated the existence of brothers in Syria, Palestine and other parts of the Middle East, while an Egyptian scholar, Ishak Musa Husaini also pointed out the tendency of the movement to organise international networks around the world. Today, the society of Muslim Brothers is among the most influential groups in the Arab world and other Muslim countries.

Many supporters of the Muslim Brothers themselves acknowledge the existence of their movement throughout the world, in more than seventy countries in the Middle East, Asia, Europe and the United States. Most local offshoots are committed to its central figures and doctrines but retain their own administrations and organizations. Therefore, the influence and existence of the Muslim Brothers in Indonesia is not an isolated phenomenon.

According to Hilmi Aminuddin, head of the Consultative Council of PKS (2004-2009) the adoption of a model with reference to the Muslim Brothers is an effort to institutionalise the unity of faith (aqidah) and thought (fikrah); in this, the name of the movement is not important. Some Muslim Brothers-associated movements take the form of legal political parties, such as in Jordan, Yemen and Indonesia, while many others have formed more social organizations. In the case of Indonesia, a Muslim Brothers scholar based in Qatar, Yusuf Qardawi has stated in one of its books that the Jemaah Tarbiyah-backed party is part of the Muslim Brothers mission in Egypt. However, the community of Jemaah Tarbiyah itself has never claimed organisational links with the Muslim Brothers. Hidayat Nurwahid, a former president of PKS said, “we don’t want to claim be identical to the Muslim Brothers because this movement is so great. We are afraid to claim it as it may jeopardise the image of the Muslim Brothers. We just work for the sake of Islam.”

Nevertheless, although the members of the Jemaah Tarbiyah do not explicitly claim to be a part of the Muslim Brothers, their way in conducting Islamic training and their religious orientation are similar. Nor do they try to deny their association with the Muslim Brothers. According to Rahmat Abdullah, not all organizations affiliated with Muslim Brothers use the formal name of al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun, for the name does not mean anything if they do not comply with the genuine character of the Muslim Brothers. On the other hand, there are many associations that prefer to name themselves something else, even while the essence of their struggle is the same. For Abdullah, the name is not important, what matter is the essence of the organization, which must be in accordance with the movement’s ideals.
As the Muslim Brothers are not recognized, indeed are repressed by the government of Egypt, the movement has turned to spreading its international network.\textsuperscript{24} In 1954, under the regime of Gamal Abd al-Nasir, hundreds of Muslim Brothers activists were jailed, its six leaders were executed and finally it was outlawed.\textsuperscript{25} Nasir continued to suppress Muslim Brothers activities, to arrest thousands of people and hundreds were sentenced and tortured. Three leading activists, including Sayyid Qutb, were hanged in Cairo in 1966. In 1971, when Anwar Sadat came to power he released the Brothers from jail. But fearing similar repression by the Sadat regime, many activists left Egypt. In fact, in 1982, Sadat repeated what his predecessor had done to the Muslim Brothers. He ordered the arrest of hundreds of its members and its leaders.\textsuperscript{26}

It was through certain activists of the Muslim Brothers who found asylum in Saudi Arabia and Western countries that an international organisation developed. Muhammad Qutb fled to Saudi Arabia while Sa’id Ramadhan went to Switzerland. Mustafa Masyhur, after his release in 1971, went to Germany and organised international representatives for the Muslim Brothers in exile.\textsuperscript{27} In 1996, Masyhur was elected as supreme leader of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt. All of the local offshoots, either in the Middle East, Europe, United States or Asia are theoretically under Egyptian leadership.\textsuperscript{28} However, in practice they develop autonomous agendas depending on their local social, political and cultural conditions.

Moreover, observing the models employed to spread their ideas, which are predominantly similar to those of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, it appears that Jemaah Tarbiyah has emphasised its international and global orientation rather than local interests. Its adoption of the Muslim Brothers ideas and religious practices make it distinct from existing Islamic organizations and groups in Indonesia. The frequent use of Arabic words, (instead of English or even local languages) in the fields of politics, economics and daily activities are some indication of its distinctiveness. These terms, such as siyasah (politics), musharakah (cooperation), hizb (party), iqtisad (economics), ma’ishah (income) and rabat (benefit) are common. The most popular term used by Jemaah Tarbiyah is ikhwan (brothers) which has two forms, ikhwan (brothers) and akhawat (sisters).\textsuperscript{29}

So international influences on Jemaah Tarbiyah have been evident, though they have not entirely overridden local dynamics. Of course, the international dimension is more apparent than the local when we consider the distinct ideas of the movement. A careful study of the intellectual formation of Jemaah Tarbiyah reveals a process of adoption of new ideas quite different from current trends in existing Islamic parties and organizations in Indonesia.

Nonetheless, the ability to accommodate an international idea and to combine it with its Indonesian context has made Jemaah Tarbiyah far from a totally foreign movement. It has not broken its connections with older traditions. Often
accommodation is made of some traditional religious practice in order to maintain links with mass organisations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. Muslikh Abdul Karim, an activist of Jemaah Tarbiyah who spent years attending religious trainings at the traditional NU Pesantren of Langitan, East Java and gained his doctoral degree in theology from the University of King Abdul Aziz, Saudi Arabia, described his attitude toward his previous association, NU

When we came to Saudi Arabia we were different from our fellow Indonesian Muslims. In Saudi Arabia, most students are either sponsored by M. Natsir of DDII or M. Syaikhu of NU. Such students keep their own religious identity. Those who were affiliated with NU stay with NU members. We did not do such thing. We were about fifteen students, and we had left our identities behind [NU or Muhammadiyah] because we took them off at the Jakarta airport. We were sponsored by the Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies of Ibnu Saud [LIPIA] in Jakarta. We decided not to identify ourselves either with NU or Muhammadiyah. But we still practised our traditions as NU members.30

However, it was not only Jemaah Tarbiyah that was influenced by the Muslim Brothers movement; other Islamic movements during 1980s also had connections either directly or indirectly with them. This influence was mostly received through printed media and organizational relations and there were also some individuals who built direct connections with the Muslim Brothers leaders. For example, the Malaysian Youth of Islam, Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) was the best channel in the dissemination of Muslim Brothers’ ideas through its relations with international Muslim youth organizations. Some Indonesian youth organizations, such as HMI and PII attended an international meeting organised by ABIM.31 Bruinessen has argued that ABIM served as a trans-national agent connecting HMI with the Muslim Brothers and the Pakistani Jamaat Islami; however, the role of Indonesian figures such as Imaduddin, a lecturer in the Institute of Technology, Bandung, in transmitting Muslim Brothers’ ideas to ABIM in the 1980s is another example. Imaduddin became the mentor of ABIM during his visit in Malaysia. Then, in 1983, the leader of PII, Mutammimul Ula, attended an international workshop held by IIFSO in Malaysia, where he was attracted to the usrah model and tried to apply it in Indonesia when he returned.32

The simplest way to see the connections between the Egyptian and Indonesian Brothers is by analysing the nature of the movement and the social and political circumstances in Egypt, from which the central movement grew. Our first analysis deals with the model of Sufi leadership which - albeit not totally - has been adopted by the society.33 The second focus is on the political constraints faced by the movement in its home country. We will then consider the question of how the relationship developed with Indonesia and ask: how independent are the offshoots?
We will see that although both the Egyptian and Indonesian Brothers are intellectually and ideologically connected, they have developed autonomous relations in which the branches are not tightly in step with the central movement’s agenda. Since the central movement does not operate directly through top-down or vertical relations on practical issues, and while local dynamics surrounding the movements play a significant role, new movements under international influence display a heterogeneity in nature.

The most appropriate way to describe these connections is by framing them within a theory of Sufi links and networks. This is because the founder of the Muslim Brothers himself, Hasan al-Banna, grew up within Sufi traditions. The common use of terms by members of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt and Jemaah Tarbiyah in Indonesia, such as murshid (guide), ikhwan, and wazifah (dhikr, the remembrance of God) are derived directly from Sufi traditions. Similarly, tarbiyah itself was deliberately applied by al-Banna out of admiration for the Sufi teaching model. Thus the nature of the Muslim Brothers leadership has reflected the very basic nature of Sufi organization, while the tenure of murshid is a lifetime appointment.

For centuries, the Sufi orders have proven their power, spreading far and wide from their original places of birth. The principles of Sufi organization, beyond the central leaders and their structural and intellectual connections, are maintained in order to preserve the originality of the teachings and genealogies; but they do not necessarily espouse a shared agenda. Therefore, the Muslim Brothers’ international offshoots are local expressions that rightly follow the socio-political and religious dynamics of their countries.

We tried to adopt the ideas of ikhwan, but not precisely as in Egypt or Syria. We saw that the ikhwan’s ideas on Islam were genuine and up to date that suited to a modern movement. But their application in Indonesia has conformed to Indonesian circumstances.

So as a Sufi-influenced movement, the Muslim Brothers enjoy spiritual and intellectual connections among their members that are not confined by territory. In the earlier stages of development, the embryos of the Muslim Brothers tended to carry out their activity following Sufi models. They avoided involvement in any political activites which might endanger or jeopardise the movement’s existence. The teacher-pupil learning model was applied to recruit members and to develop commitment. As the followers reached a certain level within the membership, they were requested to practise certain formulas of prayer and ritual. They were also required to attend regular weekly meetings in order to receive supervision and guidance in the rituals and codes of conduct. These meetings (halaqah) ensured the process of supervision between the teacher and his followers.
However, the mixture between spirituality and political activism developed by the Muslim Brothers has driven the branches to be involved in the political processes in their own countries. When the movement grows to a significant size, it may appear to be a political institution in struggling for its ideals, in turn reforming the government of the day in accordance with its Islamic principles.

In the case of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt and Indonesia, the latter are autonomous from the central leadership of the movement in Egypt. It is reasonable that the offshoots do not try to associate with the central movement in dealing with their domestic affairs, while still preserving the transmission of ideas.

It is not odd among the Sufi orders that branches outside the central order disassociate themselves from the patron merely for reasons of security. For instance, during the 19th century, the Sanusiyyah order in Indonesia changed its name to the Idrisiyyah order in order to avoid confrontation with the Dutch colonial government. The former order had been known for its fiercely anti-colonial attitude in Africa, its home territory, whilst in the case of Indonesia such an affiliation would have put its existence in jeopardy. The Indonesian form of the Sanusiyyah order became more cooperative with the colonial regime than its patron in the Africa. However, both orders still maintain their connections in terms of their spiritual network.

In addition, the political constraints experienced by the Muslim Brothers in Egypt have influenced the nature of its relations with the offshoots outside Egypt. The strict surveillance maintained over their veterans and leaders has meant that they are not able to set up proper communications with their offshoots. They struggle in facing government restrictions and experience great difficulty in maintaining their survival in Egypt. Whilst many young cadres have been sentenced to jail, the government has kept the older leaders under domestic surveillance and has restricted their contact with the outside. Therefore, rather than appearing as a political party, the Muslim Brothers in Egypt have worked intensively to provide social services, thus strengthening the role of the movement in society.

Undoubtedly, the limited access to leaders open to their followers, and particularly foreigners, has weakened the society of the Muslim Brothers. It has not been possible for them to think of spreading their influence outside Egypt, nor to structurally organise the branches according to central orders. Nonetheless, the position of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers vis-a-vis their fellow Muslims internationally is still very important. Their spiritual leadership is respected around the world. The General Guide in Egypt serves as a spiritual supervisor who no longer actively instructs his orders to broaden the membership. He plays the role of a wise consultant, the same role that is usually enjoyed by the murshid in almost all Sufi orders. The international assistance of a murshid ‘am, also
known as the *muraqib ‘am* (supervisor) functions to supervise members’ behaviour in accordance with the original teachings of the Muslim Brothers.

**C. Transmission**

How has the international movement of the Muslim Brothers penetrated Indonesia and how has it been manifested within Jemaah Tarbiyah? In order to gain a better understanding of the role of the central movement in the Middle East, and in turn how the local players regarded the Muslim Brothers and its ideas, and how they were influenced, we need to elaborate the process of transmission of Muslim Brothers’ ideas into Indonesia.

The development of the Muslim Brothers beyond home territory is clear evidence that the movement is a transnational phenomenon. Advances in communication technology have enabled the messages and ideas of the society to be easily received by other Muslims. This can happen through Internet facilities and other media. However, as a religious movement that still believes in the significance of conventional transmission through human encounter, all processes of transferring Islamic knowledge and religious authority still rely on direct interaction. Thus it is better to seek the personal framework of diffusion and processes of emulation in which religious movements and events of the Middle East may encourage similar processes in other countries.

A very general definition of diffusion is a communication process with a source that sends a message through a channel to a receiver.

In describing the process of transmission of the Egyptian Brothers’ influence on fellow Muslims in Indonesia we need to consider precisely the source of the message, the channels and the actors.

**1. Roots of the Jemaah Tarbiyah Movement**

The role of the reference country in transmitting religious and political influences is highly significant. The fact that the Middle East was the birthplace of Islam guarantees its central role as a source of religious authority. Moreover, the strategic position of the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, in providing services for the study of Islam and the yearly international religious pilgrimage of the Hajj strengthens its credentials as the safeguard and true example of Islamic practice and inspiration. Every religious manifestation from these regions is highly esteemed by fellow Muslims outside Arabia, particularly in our case, Indonesia. In fact, there has been close contact and a mutual relationship between Indonesia and the countries of the Middle East for centuries.

Historically, Mecca was the centre of Islamic religious education for Indonesian students. From the 17th through the 19th centuries, many prominent religious leaders and scholars in Indonesia studied under the supervision of the great *ulama* in Mecca. Large numbers of Indonesians, either formally or informally,
visited for the purpose of pursuing religious knowledge. In some cases, they went initially only to perform the pilgrimage, but afterwards stayed on for some period of time to learn from the great Meccan scholars. As the numbers of pilgrims to the holy city increased over the centuries, so the numbers of Indonesian students in Mecca grew.

In contrast, Cairo in those early centuries was not a place of interest for Indonesians. Most students coming to the Middle East were motivated by religious goal, and Egypt was less well known in that regard. It was after the emergence of the Reformist movement led by Muhammad Abduh in the early years of the 20th century that the role of Egypt as a source of religious learning and political ideas for Muslims increased. But still, in terms of numbers, Indonesian students in Egypt were never more than those in Saudi Arabia.

In 1902, a report from the Egyptian government revealed that among 645 foreign students at al-Azhar University, only about seven were Indonesians. Other information supplied by Abaza about Indonesian students in Cairo shows that in the middle of the 19th century, a Javanese dormitory (riwaq Jawi) in Cairo housed only 11 Javanese. However, in 1871 seven students from Indonesia were still in residence, briefly, and not long afterwards they moved out of the dormitory.

By the middle of the 1920s, as a result of the Modernist movement in Egypt, the motivation of Indonesian students shifted from the religious to the political and ideological, and the centre of Islamic education too shifted from Mecca to Cairo. Students in Mecca only attended classes in religious subjects; in contrast, in Cairo, according to the historian William Roff, they could benefit from the lively political and intellectual dynamics of Egyptian society of the time. After their study at Egyptian universities they were expected to return home to become political figures of influence. Thus Egypt subsequently served as the preferred destination in terms of acquiring educational and political experience for Indonesian Muslims. Because of the high reputation of Al-Azhar University and its scholars, many Indonesian Muslims received their degrees from universities in Egypt.

The fact that the influential modernist figure, Muhammad Abduh, was a prominent scholar who became Rector of al-Azhar, as well as Grand Mufti, meant that most Indonesian students who studied in Egypt took their inspiration from him. His modernist ideas spread rapidly throughout the Indonesian archipelago. In Java, in 1912, his pupils established the Islamic organization of Muhammadiyah. Although Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of the organization, did not himself graduate from Cairo, he studied modernist thought during his stay in Mecca under the supervision of a great Mecca scholar, Ahmad Khatib, a follower of Abduh. Khatib was of Indonesian descent, hailing from the Minangkabau region of Sumatra. Many other religious activists, particularly in
Java and Sumatra, received their religious training in Egypt. Accordingly, upon their arrival back home, they carried the modernist ideas of Abduh, and certain books on religion, to be taught in their schools.  

On the whole, however, relations between Egyptian and Indonesian Muslims were more noticeable after Indonesian political independence in 1945. Owing to the longstanding intellectual and religious connections between the two countries, the Egyptian government was the first to acknowledge the independence of Indonesia. During the national revolution to defend independence, in 1947 some Indonesian delegations including Syahrir and Agus Salim were assigned to meet the chairman of the Society of the Muslim Brothers, Hasan al-Banna on an Indonesian government mission to thank to him and the Egyptian people for their support. Alongside political developments, in this era, the impact of Egyptian modernist Islam upon Indonesian society was seen in the development of Islamic schools into fully modern educational institutions.

Furthermore, the numbers of Indonesians studying in Egypt fluctuated during the stage from immediately post-Indonesian independence until the late 1950s and was the result of domestic conflicts and civil strife in defending the nation from the aggression of the Dutch. In 1953 only about 80 students studied in Cairo. However, from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s when Indonesian political conditions had become more stable and economic progress had improved many Indonesians went to Egypt to further their studies.
H. Agus Salim, the chairman of Indonesian delegation and H.M. Rasyidi in discussion with Hasan al-Banna in Cairo in 1947. 48

Regarding the increase in Indonesian students in Egypt after the 1970s, Abaza saw this as an indirect result of an intensive process of Islamisation that prevailed in Indonesian society at the time. 49 She found that the process of Islamisation increased the ratio of devoted Muslims (santri) in the relevant levels of society and the administration who encouraged the Indonesian government to send its students to Egypt. Drawing on Hefner’s findings about the Islamisation process that took place in East Java since the 1970s, she argued that what happened in a particular region of the province of East Java was clear evidence to explain the trend of increased numbers of Indonesian students attending the Egyptian universities. 50

However, Abaza failed to explain the fact that most students who studied in Egypt were not newly devout santris, the product of the process of Islamisation and santrinization. Rather they came from families of a strong Islamic background and had already passed through the Islamic educational traditions of the pesantren, since it was only candidates who had strong basis in Islamic studies and had demonstrated an ability in memorizing the Qur’an who could be admitted to the Egyptian universities, particularly al-Azhar in Cairo. They studied there
on Egyptian scholarships or with private financial support from their parents. Even more frequent were students receiving financial support from mosques and charitable institutions in Egypt. It is highly unlikely such students were the product of any short-term Islamisation process; they must have gone through long training in Islamic institutions in Indonesia.

In fact, the Islamisation process in some areas of Indonesia was initiated by government agents, in particular the ruling party, Golongan Karya (Golkar). It was aimed to serve the government’s short-term political interests in controlling the Islamic community. The government support of Islamic activities attempted to attract Indonesian Muslims and in particularly to take over the role of Islamic predication from local and independent religious leaders who were mostly associated with opposition political parties. The government initiated many Islamic activities and construction projects, such as activating missionary programs (dakwah) and building mosques and Islamic institutions. However, during this era, rather than encouraging students of religion to study in the Middle Eastern countries, the government preferred to send its students to study in the West, such as in Canada or America. More than 200 graduate students, mainly from the State Islamic Religion Institute, Institute Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) were sent by the Department of Religion to prestigious universities in the West, while only 50 students were sent to al-Azhar or other institutions in the Middle East to pursue undergraduate degrees in Islamic studies.

It appears that the increase in Indonesian students in Cairo during the 1980s was more the result of economic progress in the Middle East, the so-called the rise of “Petro-Islam” that made possible a rise in the numbers of scholarships provided by the Egyptian government. In addition, there were political changes in Indonesia, in which the New Order regime attempted to push aside politically oriented Muslims. A feeling of disillusionment towards the government inclined many young Muslims to study in Egypt in order to avoid further repression. The influence of M. Natsir in building contact with Middle Eastern leaders and organizations also succeeded in bringing more Indonesians to study in the Middle East. In 1982-1983 there were 415 students and in 1993 this increased significantly to 1000. The current figure of Indonesian students in Egypt in 2005 is 2,700.

In short, Indonesia-Middle East relations have had an impact on religious and intellectual developments. In general, we can say that the influence of the Middle East mediated by Indonesian students graduating from Middle Eastern universities stimulated the dynamics of Islam in Indonesia. This influence is best described in terms of three different generations. The first generation of Middle East-graduates were students during the late Dutch colonial era. They were divided into two further groups: the Mecca network, associated with the traditionalists and the Cairo network favoured by the modernists. Both the Mecca
and Cairo groups then established two outstanding but different Islamic organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, each with its own distinctive membership in Indonesia. The second generation was the post-Independence generation, identical in their orientation to Islamic liberal and rational thought. The rationalist movement, initiated by Harun Nasution and followed by other liberal figures such as Abdurrahman Wahid, signified a different phase in Indonesian Islam. The third generation was that of the 1970s and 1980s, who were attracted to fundamentalist ideas. The ideas of Sayyid Qutb and the society of the Muslim Brothers influenced them most.

An interesting observation reported by Dawam Rahardjo during two short visits to Egypt confirmed this changing orientation in different generations of Indonesian students there. In the 1970s he visited Cairo and witnessed that the renewal ideas of Nurcholish Madjid were not accepted and rather harshly criticised by students. On his second visit in November 1999 he observed a different phenomenon, when students were more open towards the ideas of renewal Islam and less attracted to fundamentalist dogma. Interestingly, he also predicted the emergence of political representation by various Indonesian Muslim groups. He was so impressed with what he perceived as the wide acceptance by students towards the establishment of the National Mandate Party, Partai Amanat National (PAN) initiated by the modernists and then followed by other Muslim-represented parties. He further elaborated

What attracted my mind was the establishment of political parties. The National Mandate Party (PAN) in fact gained much support because of the existence of Muhammadiyah members among students. The National Awakening Party (PKB) also existed. It meant that students from NU started to study in Cairo and al-Azhar. Usually, students who had graduated from NU’s pesantren prefer to study at the University of Medina, even though Saudi Arabia is the stronghold of the Wahabi movement. What was most interesting was the strong support of students for the Justice Party (PK) which indicated that the influence of Salafiyah and fundamentalism was still strong enough.

However, Rahardjo’s favourable impression of the remarkable presence of modernist students in Cairo did not last long. In fact, the composition of Indonesian students in Egypt has changed since the 1980s. It was understandable that during the 1970s and 1980s resistance to the ideas of renewal Islam represented the dominant face of Indonesian students in Egypt. This was because modernist groups, mainly students sent by DDII, were attracted to the ideas of Sayyid Qutb. However, since the 1990s, as was witnessed by Rahardjo, students were more receptive toward the renewal movement, but still Islamist views gained popularity. Polls for the 1999 and 2004 general elections held in the Indonesian Embassy in Egypt showed the interesting phenomenon that the PKS
Party won a majority, followed by PKB, whilst PAN performed poorly. Therefore, the generation of Islamist-oriented groups, mainly represented by PKS, had strong roots among students in Egypt since the late 1990s.\(^{60}\)

The dynamics of the socio-cultural milieu of Egypt is a major factor in generating influential students who have contributed to religious and political discourse after their return home to Indonesia. Egypt, and in particular, Cairo is one of the central Islamic civilisations, where the struggle between traditionalism and modernism has taken place more dynamically than in other parts of the Islamic world, including Saudi Arabia.\(^{61}\) The dominant role of the Wahabi doctrine formally adopted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has not allowed space for religious or political disagreement.

However, since the mid-1990s, religious and socio-political movements imported from the Saudi patrons have tremendously influenced Indonesian Islamic discourses. How has the shift of influence from Egypt to Saudi occurred? Despite the fact that the numbers of Indonesian students in Egypt have continuously increased, contemporary Islam in Indonesia is characterised predominantly by the emergence of movements built on strong relations with Saudi patrons. The mushrooming of radical groups in Indonesia, such as FPI, Laskar Jihad and MMI are evidence of connections with Saudi Arabia networks. It should also be noted that the initial contact between Indonesian students and Egyptian Muslim Brothers occurred in Arabia - not in Egypt, where the movement was born. The role of Mecca and Medina, called the *Haramayn* (the Two Holy Cities) as sites for the transmission of new religious ideas to Indonesia has increased once more. The main reason for this shift in the source of religious influence lies in efforts conducted by the Saudi government to become an influential leader among Muslim countries.

The emergence of Saudi Arabia as a petrol-dollar power in the 1970s and the success of the Iranian revolution were key points in this development. Supported by economic progress, the Saudis tried to establish influence in Muslim countries, among them the Muslims of Southeast Asia, while at the same time making efforts to halt any spread of the Iranian Shi’ite ideology to other Muslim areas. The Iranian Revolution contested the fundamental issue of the legitimacy of the Saud monarchy. The long historical theological dispute between Shiite and Sunnite doctrines is another reason why Saudi Arabia wanted to eliminate the threat of the Iranian Shi’ism.\(^{62}\)

Since the 1980s, the Saudi government has expanded its role in sponsoring religious activities by establishing and building Islamic centres and educational institutions. It established the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) that has made efforts to spread the message of Islam in the Islamic world. What is more, the cachet of Saudi Arabia as the guardian of the Two Holy Cities has not been confined to the non-Arab Muslim countries but has also expanded into
Egypt itself, though renowned for the religious prestige of al-Azhar. Thus, when the Egyptian government suppressed many veterans of the Muslim Brothers, the Saudi government provided them with refuge. In the 1980s, for instance, the Saudis and Arab Muslim Brothers established a cooperation in which the Muslim Brothers agreed not to operate in Saudi Arabia but to serve as Saudi agents in determining organizations and individuals fit to receive Saudi financial assistance. However, this was broken off during the Gulf War in the 1990s, when most activists of the Muslim Brothers criticised the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for requesting military assistance from Western countries. Since that date, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia has limited the access of the Muslim Brothers, which also has had a great impact on their activities in the Holy Cities of Arabia, including efforts to develop cadres among Indonesian students.

The following sub-sections will discuss how Indonesian Muslims have played a role in transmitting Muslim Brothers principles to Indonesia, initially mediated through educational institutions in Saudi Arabia and through other means.

2. Channels

The era of 1980s and 1990s signified the encounter of Indonesian Muslims with new transnational movements. Contemporary Islamic movements in this period have been generally identified by their connections with movements in the Middle East. For instance, in the mid-1980s the Muslim Brothers influenced Indonesian Islam through printed media and through personal interaction. At the same time, another Middle East based organization, Hizbut Tahrir, also began to expand its influence and attracted many young Muslims. The Salafi group that developed since the 1990s represents a still later wave of international movement. Salafism was brought home by Indonesian students from Saudi Arabia and was also mediated through the encounter of Indonesian students with Salafi lecturers in a Saudi-sponsored institution in Jakarta, the Arabic and Islamic Education Institute of Ibnu Saud, Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Arab dan Islam (LIPIA) in Jakarta. This institution was built around the end of 1980 and became the main source of Salafi leaders in Indonesia.

It was not only the Salafi group that benefited from the establishment of LIPIA, since Jemaah Tarbiyah was also able to recruit cadres from this institution, many of its students coming from both traditionalist and modernist pesantren in Java and the Outer Islands. In the early 1990s, a split developed among lecturers who belonged to the purist Salafi movement and those who were influenced by the Muslim Brothers. The competition between the two groups also occurred among students. It seemed that the influence of the Muslim Brothers increasingly developed so much as to move the Salafi rivals to discourage their followers from attending the institution, to avoiding the political dominance of the Muslim Brothers-influenced Jemaah Tarbiyah movement.
What make the ideas of the Muslim Brothers so readily accepted by the generation of Muslims of the 1980s in Indonesia are their practical ideas and their moderation. The practical character of the society lies in its gradual reform of Muslim society by promoting economic, social and political solutions for Muslim disadvantage. The moderation of the movement can be seen in its attitudes towards “re-Islamising” society.

The modern and scientific approach of the Muslim Brothers scholars in Saudi attracted us, particular in organising a movement. Currently we can see that most literature about Islamic *dakwah* and movements has been dominated by the writings of the *ikhwa>n*.71

Furthermore, there is a deeply spiritual dimension within the Muslim Brothers movement that has enabled it to integrate with Indonesian Muslims since, for many centuries, Indonesia has been renowned as a centre of Islamic spirituality.72 The richness of the Muslim Brothers in dealing with the inner dimension of Islamic teachings, in particular the issue of purifying the soul and the heart, has attracted Indonesian Muslims who are familiar with Sufi principles. For instance, activists of the Muslim Brothers emphasise the significance of a purified heart and a total submission to God in order to revive Islamic civilisation.73 Further details about the place of the Sufi aspects of the Muslim Brothers’ teachings will be discussed in chapter VI.

So how precisely did the initial contact between the Egyptian Muslim Brothers and Indonesian Muslims take place? Generally speaking, two channels mediate the process of religious transmission: contact through direct or indirect interaction that involves two parties (the parent movement and its offshoots). There are two kinds of channels: media (one-way communication) which tends to be imitative, and interpersonal contact (two-way communication) which is of an interactive nature. The interactive form means that both the sender and receiver assume an active role, so that the spread of ideas takes place through interpersonal relations, whilst the imitative form means that the source of the idea takes no active part, but rather the receiver imitates the idea through indirect contact.74

The theory of interpersonal contact is the best tool to demonstrate the relationship between the Egyptian and Indonesian Muslim Brothers. This is because the transmission of knowledge and the adoption of religious practices in Islamic history stress the significance of direct contact. It is also understandable that the Sufi nature of the Muslim Brothers would develop this kind of interaction. However, we cannot deny the role of current more advanced information systems in transmitting ideas. In the case of the transfer of the religious authority of the Muslim Brothers, however direct contact has been considered the only authoritative way of passing on the chain of religious legitimacy.
The transmission of the Muslim Brothers’ influence into Indonesia took place in two stages. First, it was absorbed by Indonesian Muslims through the print media, mainly Arabic books translated into Indonesian since the mid-1970s. Second, the Middle East graduates who had had direct contact with the source of ideas returned to their home country to disseminate them further to their fellow Muslims. Those Indonesians already familiar with the Muslim Brothers’ ideas at home easily welcomed the calls of the Middle Eastern graduates. Furthermore, the graduates supplemented the new ideas with the mode of establishment of the movement itself, borrowing the Muslim Brothers’ training and organisational hardware as well.

**a) Direct Contact**

My analysis will focus on the process of interaction between Indonesian students abroad, as well as Indonesian Muslims at home, and the senders of ideas. Direct contact between the Muslim Brothers activists and Indonesian students takes two different forms: personal and formal communication. However, we stress that it is only through personal and intensive contact between the receiver and sender of the ideas can the transfer of religious knowledge and practice be spiritually valid.

The structure of *halaqah* permits an intensive and deep contact between the teacher (*murabbi*) and the students (*mutarabbi*), usually in the form of an informal meeting between the *murabbi* and 5-10 pupils. Of course, the teacher takes the role of the transmitter of ideas and the pupils are the receivers. In initial contact, the role of Indonesian students was crucial as actors (*murabbi*) in the transmission process to Indonesia. As the first generation of Indonesian students abroad, it was they who would select, interpret and disseminate the ideas.

In Saudi Arabia during the 1980s, the establishment of initial *halaqah* outstripped those of Egypt. The strict surveillance of the Egyptian government limited the possibility for Indonesian students in Egypt to participate in Muslim Brothers’ *usrah* meetings. Moreover, the very functioning of *usrah* was unlikely to continue in Egypt whilst in Saudi, the establishment of *halaqah* enabling a direct transmission of ideas did not face any significant challenges from the government.75

In Egypt, however, it is unlikely that members of the Muslim Brothers conducted *halaqah* to any great extent. In the absence of personal interaction between the Egyptian Brothers and Indonesian students, transmission of the movement could not occur. The students succeeded in importing ideas from abroad but failed to set up any movement. Regarding this fact, Rahmat Abdullah described his teacher’s experience in Egypt during the 1970s. When his teacher returned from Egypt he brought more interesting ideas for carrying out *dakwah* but he did not initiate a Muslim Brothers movement.
In 1973, my teacher, Kyai Baqir Said, went to Egypt to study at al-Azhar University. He was an active and enthusiastic figure, particularly in the struggle for the sake of Islam. Nonetheless, he could not answer when he was asked how he would formulise his struggle in a productive way. Yet his interaction with the leaders of the *ikhwan* for about 5 years during his study at al-Azhar changed his thoughts about Islam. He returned to Indonesia with a new orientation influenced by the Muslim Brothers ideas.\(^7^6\)

It is for this reason that the Indonesian graduates of Egyptian universities did not have a significant influence on the establishment of and the early development of the Jemaah Tarbiyah movement in Indonesia. Most Jemaah Tarbiyah cadres graduated from Egyptian universities after they had interacted with Muslim Brothers ideas in Indonesia beforehand.\(^7^7\)

During the 1950s, at M. Natsir’s request, the Egyptian government gave 90 scholarships to Indonesian students.\(^7^8\) They were more attracted to the Muslim Brothers’ ideas than the movement per se; moreover, Egyptian politics did not allow for explicit campaigning by the Brothers as a movement. As was told by Surahman Hidayat, a PhD graduate from al-Azhar University and the chairman of the *Shariah* Council of the central board of PKS, “most veterans of the Muslim Brothers were not allowed to publicly deliver their message and it was very difficult to make sure that a preacher actually was an activist of the Muslim Brothers.”\(^7^9\)

Another and less important contact was through formal interaction within academic encounters. Some Indonesian students attended religious public gatherings led by Muslim Brothers activists but these were not specifically designated as Brothers activities. They were set up for a general audience, and it was only incidental that the speakers came under the Brothers’ organization. While close intellectual contact with the Egyptian Brothers was not developed within a framework of strong and intimate relations between students and the mentor, yet face to face contact remained one of the important channels in transferring ideas. In fact, the early ideologues of the Jemaah Tarbiyah, such as Hilmi Aminuddin and Abu Ridha, who were well versed in Muslim Brothers’ teachings and who developed intellectual and spiritual relations with them have not come through the Egyptian connections but from the Saudi channels.

Since many veterans of the Muslim Brothers were involved in academic activities and education in Saudi Arabia and the regime before the 1990s was favourable to them, they were likely to convey the *ikhwan’s* ideas to the students in their classes. They also received more respect for their academic writings, particularly on subjects of religious studies. Muhammad Qutb\(^8^0\) himself had been among the prominent leaders of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt who fled to Saudi and taught in a Saudi university. He was also responsible for preparing the contents
of the Saudi elementary schools curriculum. Only students who were personally
attracted to these teachers would seek closer contact. Afterwards, informal
meetings would be set up. And so the process of initiation to the Muslim Brothers
movement would begin to take place.\(^{81}\)

The interaction of Indonesian students with ideas of the Muslim Brothers in
Saudi Arabia persuaded them of the importance of a multi-dimensional struggle
for Islam. Islam was not confined within a practice nor narrowed into political
activism. It encompasses all political, economic, social and cultural dimensions
of the human being. As Abu Ridha said

When I first arrived in Riyadh I had no idea about Islamic thought. I
read an Arabic newspaper called \textit{al-Mujtama'} that elaborated the
significance of Islamic ideas in daily life. In addition, I attended many
seminars delivered by prominent scholars of the Muslim Brothers, such
as Yusuf Qaradawi, Said Hawwa and Fathi Yakan. I became aware about
Islam and its relation to the political, social and economic aspects of life.
I felt compelled to translate articles and books from Arabic to Indonesian.
I developed my new profession by transferring these new ideas to
Indonesia.\(^{82}\)

b) Media

Since the 1980s many books from the Middle East have been translated into
Indonesian, among them works written by Muslim Brotherhood scholars of
Egypt, such as Sayyid Qutb and Hassan al-Banna, and Jamaat-I Islami scholars
of Pakistan such as Mawdudi.\(^{83}\) For example, the article \textit{Diskusi Buku Agama}
\(^{84}\) (A Discussion of Religious Books) (Tempo, 1987) noticed that 12 books by
Qutb and 3 books by al-Banna were translated to Indonesian during the four
years between 1982-1986, while \textit{Buku Islam Sejak 1945}\(^{85}\) (Islamic Books Since
1945) counted 14 books by Maududi and 8 books by al-Banna.\(^{86}\) Surprisingly,
in more recent times many new publishers have been established and among
the new books released since 1980-1996, according to my survey, there were
about 130 titles written by Muslim Brothers’ scholars, which were translated
into Indonesian. Since 1998, the beginning of the post-Soeharto or Reformation
era, it is no exaggeration to say that hundreds of books about the Muslim
Brothers’ thought and history have been printed and have enjoyed popular
acclaim.

It is interesting that there has been a significant shift in terms of topics between
books published in the 1970s-1980s and those of the 1990s and after. Before the
1990s most of the Muslim Brothers books translated into Indonesian dealt with
the question of confronting Islamic ideals with non-Islamic ways of life but since
then, they typically consist of more structured fundamental ideas of Hasan
al-Banna, the socio-political history of his movement, and the messages of its leaders.87

These changes of topic in the translated books from the 1970s to the 1990s indicate the desire of Jemaah Tarbiyah to comprehensively adopt the ideas of the Muslim Brothers in all their aspects. The increasing appearance of manuals and training books related to the Muslim Brothers also helps Jemaah Tarbiyah to tighten its ideological and doctrinal links to the Brothers.

In the post Soeharto era a great deal of Islamic publishing has focussed on Muslim Brothers material. Thousands of copies have been printed and have become best-sellers. For example, Era Intermedia Publishers, established in 1998, has published al-Ma’thurat (al-Banna’s collection of daily prayers) and Risalah Pergerakan (a collection of al-Banna’s sermons and lectures) and sold more than 60,000 and 30,000 copies respectively.88 Its success in publishing the Muslim Brothers’ books has expanded Era Intermedia’s business. In 2002 it was able to build a permanent office in Surakarta, Central Java, and started to publish more general books, though still related to Islamic topics. It seems that the Jemaah Tarbiyah networks throughout the outer regions of Indonesia have contributed a great deal in distributing books and have become its important trusted agents.

In addition, there is a wide availability of sources about the Muslim Brothers’ ideas and their model in carrying out dakwah in contemporary times which is easily accessed through the Internet. In fact, the advanced technology of the Internet has provided most access for “beginners” to understand more about the Muslim Brothers. One well known website is www.ummah.org.uk/ikhwan/. However, this indirect contact is not regarded by the ikhwan as a reliable tool to transfer the ideas of the movement; direct contact in transferring the knowledge and religious practices, such prayer recitations of Hasan al-Banna and so on, is crucial. We should stress that the persons who transmit and introduce the movement to Indonesian Muslims are indeed important figures in the process of adoption and adaptation of the new movement. Direct oral transmission remains the preferred mode of disseminating religious knowledge, so that each murabbi grants his mutarabbi a kind of ijazah, or licence, as in the Sufi tradition which then permits him to set up another circle.

3. Actors and Ideologues

Another of the crucial elements in the process of diffusion is the actor who “selects, interprets and in turn disseminates.”89 In terms of channelling transnational ideas and movements, the figures who have extensive overseas contacts and who participate in building the network of co-operation are important. They serve as intermediaries and as receivers in the diffusion process as well.90 When we study the religious and educational backgrounds of its pioneers, it is obvious that the members of the Jemaah Tarbiyah not only take
the activists of the society the Muslim Brothers as their inspiration but also consider them as their mentors, through whom direct contact with the central movement in the Middle East takes place.

Strictly speaking, there are at least three important ideologues who have played a significant role in transferring and disseminating the ideas among young Muslims in Indonesia. They are Hilmi Aminuddin, Abu Ridha and Rahmat Abdullah. Hilmi Aminuddin is an influential figure in Jemaah Tarbiyah and currently chairman of the Consultative Assembly of PKS, who in the mid 1980s established initial contact with the Muslim Brothers during his study in Saudi Arabia. Hilmi himself was raised within a traditionalist background. He graduated from the NU Pesantren of Tebuireng in Jombang, East Java in 1958 and had close relations with “stakeholders” of the pesantren, in particular Abdul Kholiq Hasyim, son of the great NU leader, Hasyim Asyari (1875-1947). In the late 1970s he went to Saudi Arabia to study.  

Another among Jemaah Tarbiyah activists is Abu Ridha (nickname of Abdi Sumaiti). He is a former activist of the Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia (DDII) (Committee for Islamic Missions in Indonesia) who graduated from Madinah University. His father owned a traditionalist pesantren in Banten that was affiliated with Masyumi. He followed Islamic education from the elementary level into university. In 1978 he went to Saudi Arabia to study at the University Imam Ibn Saud of Riyadh. In the early 1980s he returned to Indonesia and became a lecturer at the Agriculture Institute of Bogor, Institute Pertanian Bogor (IPB) and often gave Islamic lectures at the Institute of Technology Bandung, Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB). He is the first figure to introduce Muslim Brother’s ideas to both of these prestigious universities.

In addition, Rahmat Abdullah is also a leading figure in Jemaah Tarbiyah. His reputation is widely acknowledged and has even been considered to be Shaikh al-Tarbiyyah (the Grand Teacher of Jemaah Tarbiyah). Abdullah’s parents were from a NU family but he preferred to join Masyumi. Abdullah himself was actively involved in PII. He did not graduate from the Middle East, his formal education was mainly in a traditional pesantren affiliated to Masyumi, Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Asy-Syafi’iyah in Jakarta. He was introduced to the Muslim Brothers’ ideas through his teacher, Kyai Bagir Said, who belonged to a prominent NU family in South Jakarta. Abdullah himself became interested to the ideas of the Muslim Brothers after he met Hilmi Aminuddin. In order to spread his ideas among students he established a boarding school called Rumah Pendidikan Islam Darut Tarbiyah (the Islamic Educational House of Darut Tarbiyah) in Jakarta. Through this institution many students from the University of Indonesia (UI) were drawn to attend his lectures and Islamic training sessions.

If before the 1980s Indonesian Muslims, students in particular, only read the literature of the Muslim Brothers, after the arrival home of the Middle East
graduates they were able to interact directly with its activists. One of the discussion groups in the universities consulted by van Bruinessen in his research labelled itself “Muslim Brothers, and claimed to be the Indonesian branch of the Brothers in Egypt”. After the 1980s and 1990s more Middle East graduates returned to Indonesia to strengthen the life of Jemaah Tarbiyah. Among these were Salim Segaf Aljufri, Abdul Hasib and Abdul Raqib.

One of the distinct characteristics of the Indonesian Brothers in contrast to the “old” brothers in Egypt is apparent in the composition of the membership. Despite sharing common ideas developed by the founder, Hasan al-Banna, the Indonesian Brothers are distinct in terms of their religious and social backgrounds. Given the fact that the encounter between both parties takes place chiefly through academic and intellectual relations, the nature of the Jemaah Tarbiyah in Indonesia is also characterised by intellectual and academic inclinations. This trend is also supported by the fact that the transmission of the Muslim Brothers, both as a collection of particular ideas and as a movement, has been channelled by a mainstream and moderate type of activist.

An examination of the backgrounds of Jemaah Tarbiyah activists, particularly the elite and key figures, reveals an obvious connection of the individuals with wider existing Islamic groups. Many key ideologues of Jemaah Tarbiyah are from NU families which have had some form of association with Masyumi and DDII. Since Masyumi, and particularly DDII is considered as a modernist group, it is understandable that the emergence of Jemaah Tarbiyah and Justice Party has been seen as part of modernist history. It is also due to early students in state universities who responded to the Muslim Brothers’ ideas were largely from the modernist activist associations HMI and PII. They are not merely lay members but are active in the formal structural organization.

Despite the predominant traditionalist and modernist composition of the membership of Jemaah Tarbiyah, few hardliners coming from Islamic dissent groups have also entered the movement. Many of the young generation of Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia and Darul Islam-oriented groups have attended Jemaah Tarbiyah training, and have since changed their orientation to follow the ideas of the Muslim Brothers.

For the Jemaah Tarbiyah activists, such fellow Muslims who have transcended their old connections and have come to hold a new understanding about Islam in Indonesia (as conveyed in the training) are called “already educated Muslims” (Muslim tertarbiyah). While they still interact with their old associations, they display no fanatical stand toward their parents’ organisational associations and are keen to undermine the old religious doctrines only if the latter are in contradiction with Jemaah Tarbiyah ideas. Their continuing interaction with their old organizations has the aim of influencing these in order to support their new ideas and in particular to support the idea of political Islam.
The important role of actors in transmitting religious ideas is characterised by their movement from their original place to a foreign one, from Indonesia to Saudi Arabia, and their return to Indonesia to disseminate the new ideas they have gained from abroad. This process Peter Mandaville has called “travelling theory”, in which not only human beings but also ideas travel from place to another. Through extensive travel, however, an idea will lose its radical edge. Or an idea can take on a new critical consciousness, both in itself and in influencing other ideas after undergoing travel. The case of the transmission of Muslim Brothers’ ideas to Indonesian Muslims channelled through Saudi Arabia as the meeting point has also brought about change and revision. Traditionalist Indonesian students have received the Muslim Brothers’ ideas mixed with the revivalist doctrine of Saudi Arabia. They disseminated this new religious synthesis to Indonesian students in the state universities which had been in the first stage dominated by modernist activists.

Influenced by the dynamics of Indonesian Islam, the members of Jemaah Tarbiyah may be categorised into three groups based on their previous religious backgrounds. Thus the face of Jemaah Tarbiyah, including its political party, the PKS, is distinguished by the religious background of its members - revivalist, modernist and traditionalist. In fact, PKS is neither a traditionalist nor a modernist movement but it might resemble Muhammadiyah, NU, or even Persis.

a) Revivalist Brothers
The Indonesian ikhwan of a revivalist background are in general more enthusiastic in conducting religious “purification” and more rigid in interpreting religious doctrines. Because of previous religious affiliations, they stem predominantly from the Indonesian rigid purification-oriented movement, Persatuan Islam (Persis) and the hardline branch of DDII. Some of them have also gone through lengthy training in Salafi doctrines either in the Saudi universities or their associates. The activists associated with this sub-group are keen to single out their movement from other existing Islamic organizations in Indonesia. Their involvement within the formation of the initial Jemaah Tarbiyah has led the movement towards more restricted and exclusive operations. They prefer to develop militant cadres over spreading their influence into the broader society. Organisationally, though they share the ideal of religious “purification” with DDII, they have less commitment to its agenda. They may interact intensively with the DDII activists and support their programs. However, they have not been reluctant to withdraw their support when they have found that they have been used for the political interests of a certain figure or another of DDII. In the 1990s, for example, Jemaah Tarbiyah followers broke off their cooperation with the DDII-established movement, the Islamic Committee for Islamic World Solidarity, Komite Solidaritas Dunia Islam (KISDI) led by Ahmad Soemargono.
The committee had become a political vehicle for Soemargono in developing ties with certain military figures.

A subsequent event in 1998 triggered the movement to publicly break relations with DDII. The claim of the Moon and Star Party, Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB) to be the only recognised party for the “family” of Masyumi led directly to Jemaah Tarbiyah establishing its own political party, the Justice Party. Actually, the revivalist *ikhwan* wanted to maintain the relationship with DDII, but again political events cut the links. Rather than advancing such relations, political issues during the 1999 general elections campaign sharpened the conflict between the two camps. Uniquely, the Jemaah Tarbiyah members appointed their cadre from a NU background, Nurmahmudi Ismail, as first party president.

Finally, the acquaintance of the revivalist *ikhwan* with ideas of purification made them promote the agenda of preserving a “purer” Islam rather than expanding the movement. The creation of more solid and dedicated cadres became more important than drawing loose popular support. In the case of East Java, Jemaah Tarbiyah’s failure to gain support among the people has been mainly due to a lack of involvement by traditionalist figures and leaders. Most PKS leading figures in this province have been dominated by activists of a revivalist group, in particular Persis. The former chairman of the East Java Provincial Board of PKS, Rofiq Munawwar is a committee member of DDII and Muhammadiyah in East Java. Similarly, the vice chairman of the Provincial *Shariah* Board was Hud Abdullah Musa (d. 2001) the head of a prominent pesantren in Persis. 102 Musa finished studies at the University of Baghdad, Irak in 1976 and continued at Karachi University in Pakistan. During his stay in Pakistan he developed close contact with Dr. Ramadhan al-Buti, a son in law of Hasan al-Banna.103 In addition, despite his popularity among Persis followers, he also delivered regular lectures for Muslim students of state universities in Surabaya. In fact, many of Jemaah Tarbiyah’s training programs to provide an adequate knowledge of Islam for its cadres in East Java are conducted in the Pesantren Bangil.

b) Modernist Brothers

Even though modernist *ikhwan* have not dominated the membership of Jemaah Tarbiyah (since the more active and vocal pioneers of modernism have been mostly attached to modernist groups), members of Jemaah Tarbiyah are also renowned as heirs of modernism. In addition, many activists are former leaders of modernist student associations, such as the Muslim Students’ Association, Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI) and the Indonesian Muslim Students, Pelajar Islam Indonesia (PII).

Undoubtedly, before the establishment of its political party in 1998, Jemaah Tarbiyah had developed close contact with modernist figures, so that the activists have been more familiar with modernist elites than with traditionalist leaders.
They were able to communicate more easily with M. Natsir, Anwar Haryono, Hussein Umar, Amien Rais and other figures from modernist organizations. They regularly attended religious gatherings in DDII or Muhammadiyah offices rather than meetings with Abdurahman Wahid or NU gatherings.

At the national congress of Lembaga Dakwah Kampus (LDK) the Campus Predication Association, held in 2000 and attended by almost all Muslim student representatives throughout Indonesia, Amien Rais was invited to be a keynote speaker. In order to capture his audience’s attention he told about his acquaintance with the Muslim Brothers in Egypt

I stayed in Egypt and learned many things from activists of the Muslim Brothers. I am very familiar with the society of the Muslim Brothers, from A to Z. I met with its murshid am (General Guide), Umar Tilimsani. I also met other prominent leaders of ikhwan in Cairo, such as Mustafa Masyhur, Abbas as-Sisi and Jamal Yusuf. They were known for their devotion, knowledge and humility.

However, the relationship of Indonesian ikhwan with modernist figures does not automatically guarantee their support of modernist organizations in political games. Even though the second president of PKS, Hidayat Nurwahid was a committee member of Muhammadiyah and his General Secretary, Anis Matta was also raised in the Muhammadiyah tradition, the party backed Amien Rais - in the event, too late in the 2004 Indonesia presidential elections. Rais’ electoral failure was due to the reluctance of some members of the Majelis Syura to support him, even though after long debate in the Majelis Syura meeting on 1 July 2004 the decision to support of Rais had come out. However, this did not help him, since such “political support” contained no obligation that the members should give him their vote. In fact, the recommendation to support Rais was ambiguous in real political terms because the activists of PKS were not allowed to be members of presidential campaign teams for any candidate. Instead, some of PKS leaders preferred Wiranto, a retired general, and his running mate, Shalahuddin Wahid, a member of the NU committee.

c) Traditionalist Brothers

In terms of cultural and religious orientation, it is the activists of the Jemaah Tarbiyah from a traditionalist background that predominate in the movement. Yet this does not necessarily mean that they have been associated with traditionalist organizations, such as NU. Most of the influential figures of the movement, such as Rahmat Abdullah, Hilmi Aminuddin, and Abu Ridha indeed have a traditionalist background - but they stem from the traditionalist wing of the modernist political party, Masyumi. They are not well connected with the mainstream leaders within NU and may even tend to be critical of the proponents of traditionalism. However, they also do not conceive the existence of the
modernist organization as more significant than any others. These traditionalist ikhwan may well out number the modernists but they are less politically active. This group is more interested in the spiritual aspects of Jemaah Tarbiyah and less in political and organisational issues. They are very much involved in expanding the membership of the movement (albeit with little public recognition) and represent the largest group within the movement. The current expansion of PKS in the 2004 general elections in regions once the strongholds of traditionalist organizations indicates their considerable contribution to the party, and this can only be expected to increase in the future. In fact, many of the younger generation of NU who have studied in both secular and Islamic universities in the Middle East countries such Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Sudan have given their support to PKS. Voting in these countries, Indonesian students gave the Party their absentee votes, this political event indicating significant support from traditionalist brothers within the Jemaah Tarbiyah. Indeed, it may be predicted that for the next decades, the modernist face of PKS will no longer be dominant and is likely to be replaced by the traditionalists.

However, the relationship between PKS and NU is not close as it is with Muhammadiyah. This is because traditionalist ikhwan have not maintained their connections with NU leaders after joining Jemaah Tarbiyah. The case of Nurmahmudi Ismail is an example of tension between Jemaah Tarbiyah and the traditionalist group. From 1998 to 2002, under the leadership of Nurmahmudi Ismail, an activist of the Jemaah Tarbiyah with an NU background, the Justice Party enjoyed good rapport with the president of Indonesia, Abdurahman Wahid, who is also of NU. Nurmahmudi was appointed Minister of Forestry and Plantation in 1999. On many occasions, Wahid introduced him as a NU cadre to a number of pesantren, which they visited together. However, the relationship with Wahid was not to last for long. Nurmahmudi was fired from office because Wahid did not find in him a required degree of loyalty when thousands of Justice Party members launched demonstrations demanding Wahid’s resignation. However, he was able to develop good relations with the local branch of NU in Depok, East Java. In June 2005, he ran for election to mayor in the district of Depok. He took a NU committee member of the local branch, Yuyun Wirasaputra as his running mate as vice mayor. Wirasaputra was formally supported by the NU committees of Depok,107 while the reason for support for Nurmahmudi was the fact that many NU cadres were active in PKS.108 Other influential figures of Jemaah Tarbiyah of NU background are Abdur Raqib (a former member of national parliament for PK), Surahman Hidayat (head of the Syariah Council of PKS), Abdul Aziz Arbi (member of the national parliament of PKS), Agus Purnomo (member of the national parliament of PKS), Zulkieflimansyah (member of the national parliament of PKS) and Seniman Latif (member of the national parliament of PKS).
To conclude, even though Jemaah Tarbiyah has been greatly influenced by the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, it has developed into an autonomous movement different from the central movement. The adoption of Muslim Brothers’ ideas by Indonesian students who studied in Saudi Arabia in the 1980s has produced the interesting phenomenon of a new movement which is a combination of international and local experience. Indonesian Muslims from various backgrounds (revivalist, modernist and traditionalist) have contributed to domesticating the international face of the Muslim Brothers into the more Indonesian Jemaah Tarbiyah. Jemaah Tarbiyah has not tried to remove the influence of the Muslim Brothers; instead, its activists have sought to return to the original ideas of Hasan al-Banna as for guidance in their involvement in politics.

ENDNOTES

1 I joined the dawn prayers and enjoyed the recitation afterwards, on 14 May 2003.
2 See Tempo, 3 April 1993.
3 Ikhwan (‘brothers’ in Arabic) is simply used to identify the members of the Society of Muslim Brothers. In daily social interaction, since they refer to themselves and their fellow members as ikhwan.
5 See “Profesional dari Mujahid Kampus” Hidayatullah, April 2000.
6 The term “jahl” (al-jahl) produces the further term jahiliyah (al-jahiliyyah) which was used by Sayyid Qutb, but here it has different emphasis, for the Jemaah Tabiyah it elicits the response to “educate or preach” while for Qutb it meant to judge other Muslims as infidels.
7 A leader or mentor of an usrah is called a murabbi (trainer) and members of the usrah are called mutarabbi (pupil). A murabbi has to set a good example for the members while mutarabbi has to follow what murabbi orders.
8 Activists of the Jemaah Tarbiyah always emphasise that their groups differ from other usrah groups of the 1980s. Interview with Mahfudz Sidiq, Sydney, 13 August 2002.
9 Islamic student associations such as HMI MPO (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam – Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi) and PII (Pelajar Islam Indonesia) began to implement usrah as part of their dakwah strategy in opposing the Asas Tunggal. Some more radical groups, including NII also used usrah. These groups were often mixed and it was not easy to distinguish between them. Interview with Mustafa Kamal, Jakarta, 11 Juni 2003.
10 Srijawaya Post, 9 November 2002.
11 Interview with Aus Hidayat, Depok, 15 May 2003.
12 Azymardi Azra distinguishes between usrah, which has developed international networks such as Jemaah Tarbiyah, Hizbut Tahrir and the Salafiyah and those usrah which were influenced by local elements, such as Negara Islam Indonesia. See his article “Kelompok Sempalan di Kalangan Mahasiswa PTU:Anatomi Sosio Historis” in Dinamika Pemikiran Islam di Perguruan Tinggi (Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 1999), 226.
14 Ali Abdul Halim Mahmud, Perangkat-Perangkat Tarbiyah Ikhwanul Muslimin, trans. Wahid Ahmadi, et.al. (Solo: Era Intermedia, 1999), 21. The same explanation regarding “tarbiyah” has been presented by Irwan Prayitno, a parliament member of PKS, in his book, Tarbiyah Islamiyah Harakiyah (Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiatuna, 2001).
18 See Hilmi Aminuddin, Strategi Dakwah Gerakan Islam (Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiatuna, 2003), 149.
19 His statement in Indonesian is the following, “di samping itu juga berdiri Partai Keadilan yang merupakan perpanjangan tangan dari gerakan Ikhwanul Muslimin Mesir…” For further details see Yusuf Qardhawi, Umat Islam Menyongsong Abad 21, trans. Yogi Prana Izza and Ahsan Takwim (Solo: Era Intermedia, 2001), 92.
20 Republika, 3 September 2000.
22 As stated by Rahmat Abdullah, a senior member of Jemaah Tarbiyah in his interview in Hidayatullah, August 2001.
23 Ibid. In his statement in Hidayatullah, Rahmat emphasized the important of Islamic conduct and deeds in accord with the essence of the Muslim Brothers, rather than any similarity in name. He implicitly stated that although PK did not use the Moslem Brotherhood name, it did not mean that PK did not share the same vision and agenda with them.
24 Aminuddin, Strategi Dakwah Gerakan Islam, 149.
26 Ibid., 21.
27 See “Catatan Wafatnya Mustafa Masyhur,” EraMuslim.com, 15 November 2002
29 The term ikhwan, is not new but Jemaah Tarbiyah has made efforts to promote its use among Indonesian Muslims who are more familiar with the term “sahabat.” According to Mustafa Kamal, a member of Indonesian national parliament from PKS (2004-2009), adopting ikhwan initially was aimed to strengthen the solidarity and brotherhood, while subsequently it developed a more specific meaning, referring to members of Jemaah Tarbiyah. Interview with Mustafa Kamal, Depok, 11 June 2003.
30 Interview with Muslikh Abdul Karim, Depok, 9 September 2003.
31 See Bruinessen, “Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism,” 133.
32 Interview with Mutammimul Ula, Jakarta, 16 June 2003.
33 Further details on how the Muslim Brothers adopted the model of Sufi leadership and Sufi terminology will be elaborated in chapter VI.
36 This Sufi order now has developed its influence among Indonesian Muslims in Sukabumi, West Java.
38 Further detailed information about the Indonesian Islamic scholars during the 17th until the 19th century, see Azyumardi Azra, Jaringan Global dan Lokal Islam Nusantara (Bandung: Mizan, 2002), 102.
39 Bayard Dodge, Al-Azhar: A Millenium of Muslim Learning (Washington DC: the Middle East Institute, 1961), 177.
40 She quotes from Ali Mubarak, an historian from Egypt see Mona Abaza, Islamic Education: Perception and Exchanges Indonesian Students in Cairo (Paris: Cahier Archipel, 1994), 99.
41 See Azyumardi Azra, ”Melacak Pengaruh dan Pergeseran Orientasi Tamatan Cairo,” Studia Islamika 2 no. 3 (1995), 207.
42 It was in Cairo that Malay students (from both Indonesia and Malaysia) were exposed into overt political discussion on the concepts of Pan-Islamism, Pan-Malayanism and anti-colonial nationalism. See William R. Roff, The Origins of Malay Nationalism (Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya, 1980), 89.
43 Dodge, Al-Azhar: A Millenium of Muslim Learning, 177.
45 According to some information the society of the Muslim Brothers played a significant role in lobbying the government in favour of Indonesian independence. See M. Zein Hassan, Diplomasi Revolusi Indonesia
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di Luar Negeri: Perjuangan Pemuda/Mahasiswa Indonesia di Timur Tengah. (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1980), 220.
46 Ibid., 227
48 Ibid., 220.
49 Ibid.
52 Azra, “Melacak Pengaruh dan Pergeseran,” 200.
53 Ibid., 227.
54 Abaza, Islamic Education, 99.
56 Abaza, Islamic Education, 99.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 In the 1999 general elections the total votes for PK, PKB, PAN, PBB and PPP were 566, 289, 286, 176 and 127 respectively. In the 2004 general elections PKS gained 1,126 voters whilst PKB and PAN gained 278 and 175. Interestingly, the cadres of PKS itself only reached 500 students and many students coming from NU and Muhammadiyah background in fact chose PKS. Other polling held at the embassies of Indonesia in the Middle East showed the same phenomenon, see article “Nomor Wahid di Negeri Orang,” Gatra, 10 April 2004
61 Rahardjo, foreword to Islam Garda Depan, 27.
63 Interview with Ahmad Mudzafar Jufri, Surabaya, 17 March 2003.
64 Roy, The Failure of Political Islam, 117.
65 Interview with Ahmad Mudzafar Jufri, Surabaya, 17 March 2003.
70 Ibid.
71 Interview with Ahmad Mudzafar Jufri, Surabaya, 17 March 2003.
72 Hasan Al-Banna embraced the Sufi orders in Egypt. It is likely that the influences of Sufism also contributed to shape the character of the movement, such as the rituals and models of dakwah. But if Sufi movements usually do not pay much concern to political issues, the Muslim Brothers regard political struggle as one of their ways of re-islamising society.
73 For further material on the Muslim Brothers curriculum that have been adopted by Jemaah Tarbiyah, see Ummu Yasmin, Materi Tarbiyah: Panduan Kurikulum bagi Da’i dan Murabbi (Solo: Media Insani, 2002).
74 Uhlin, “Indonesian Democracy Discourses,” 8.
75 Interview with Ahmad Mudzafar Jufri, Surabaya, 17 March 2003.
76 Interview with Rahmat Abdullah, Jakarta, 11 May 2003.
The scholarship program provided by the Nasser regime was given via Masyumi, under the leadership of M. Natsir. This program aimed to calm the anger of Muslim activists in Indonesia after the capture of many Muslim Brothers in the 1950s. Masyumi had been renowned for its criticism of the bad treatment of many Brothers members by Egypt. See Ibid.

Muhammad Qutb was a prominent leader of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt. He was more moderate than his brother, Sayyid Qutb.

Interview with Abu Ridha, Jakarta, 11 October 2003.

The 1980s also witnessed a growth in the publishing of Islamic books on Shi’ism, Sufism and certain Western books. For further details on this, see Azyumardi Azra, Islam Reformis: Dinamika Intelektual dan Gerakan (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo, 1999), 215.

To mention publications in different eras, the books Keadilan dalam Islam (Justice in Islam) and Petunjuk Jalan (A Guide Along the Path) by Sayyid Qutb were published during the 1970s and 1980s while Risalah Pegerakan Ikhwanul Muslimin (Collection of Messages) by Hasan al-Banna, Perangkat Tarbiyah Ikhwanul Muslimin (Elements of Tarbiyah for the Muslim Brothers), 100 Pelajaran dari Para Pemimpin Ikhwanul Muslimin (One Hundred Lessons from Leaders of The Muslim Brothers) are best examples of translated books during the 1990s and afterwards.

For more details on publishing, see www.eraintermedia.com.

Interview with Hilmi Aminuddin, Jakarta, 23 December 2003.


Interview with Rahmat Abdullah, Jakarta, 11 May 2003.

Bruiinessen, “Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism,” 133.

Interview with Sholeh Drehem, Surabaya, 13 March 2003.

However, the generation Indonesian students at universities who have joined since 1990s and afterward mostly came from traditionalist backgrounds.


Ibid.


Ibid.

See “PCNU Depok Deklarasikan Dukung Nurmahmudi,” PKS Online, 10 June 2005.

Ibid.