Islamic Identity Online
The Discourse of Ummat and Jihad in Online News Services in Indonesia

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Abstract

This thesis aims to answer the question of how Islamic online news services in Indonesia interpret the concept of *ummat* and jihad and whether their interpretations reflect a more convivial construction of contemporary Islamic identity in Indonesia. The concept of *ummat* and jihad are chosen in this research because both concepts are essential in the construction of Islamic identity. This thesis demonstrates the dynamic use of the internet by Islamic online news services in Indonesia to articulate different imaginations of *ummat* as the ideal form of Muslim community and different interpretations of jihad as one of the core missions of Islam. Three Islamic online news services analysed in this research, namely *Republika Online*, *Arrahmah* and *Voice of Al-Islam (Voa-Islam)* have utilised the participatory tools available on the internet to construct their distinct identities based on different interpretations of the concept of *ummat* and jihad.

The thesis argues that the editorial position of *Republika Online* reflects the difficulties of defining mainstream Muslim identity in Indonesia by preserving the old ‘legitimising identity’ developed during Suharto’s authoritarian regime and contextualising this old identity with the new wave of ‘reformation’ during the democratic transition after the collapse of Suharto’s regime. In contrast, despite some differences in their editorial position, *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* show the use of the internet in the articulation of global jihad as a transnational ‘resistance identity’ in response to the perceived global conspiracy against Islam. This ‘resistance identity’ could not be expressed freely during the Suharto’s regime but then increasingly occupies the newly developed democratic Indonesian public sphere.

The utilisation of many current participatory features by these online news services facilitates new influences in the formation of new imagined communities. The participatory culture encouraged by such sites has facilitated a more interactive connection between the readers and the publishers and created a notion of social connection between the readers especially by the easier possibility of the readers in contributing to the publication. However, the operation of personalisation has posed the issue of the ‘filter bubble effect’ which filters information within the limited networks of the readers of particular online news services.
Statement of Candidate Contribution

This thesis contains only sole-authored work, some of which has been published and/or prepared for publication under sole authorship. The bibliographical details of the work and where it appears in the thesis are outlined below.


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CHAPTER 1
Introduction

This thesis investigates the description of ummat and jihad in Islamic online news services in Indonesia and the contribution of these media to the construction of contemporary Islamic identity in Indonesia. The analysis is focused on the ways in which the different interpretations of ummat and jihad are articulated and how these different articulations contribute to the imagination of the ideal form of Muslim community in Indonesia. Three Islamic online news services were chosen in this research, namely Republika Online which represents the mainstream moderate Muslim groups and Arrahmah and Voice of Al-Islam (Voa-Islam) which represent the transnational Salafi Jihadi groups in Indonesia. This research covered the period from the first Bali bombing in 2002 to the establishment of Islamic State in Iraq and the greater Syria (ISIS) in 2014.

This chapter provides background information about the research project. I start by discussing the role of mass media in the collective identity formation and how the arrival of the internet as a new medium has challenged the role of the more traditional mass media in the formation and contestation over collective identities. The discussion will be followed by reviewing the growth of the users of the internet globally and in Indonesia in particular. I also review previous studies on Islam and identity on the internet and outline the specific contribution of this study in an Indonesian context. I begin the review by looking at previous studies on the use of the internet in the Muslim world and the use of the internet as an instrument of resistance by local and global jihadi groups. I also further outline scholarship which suggests that the internet is operating as a new source of Islamic religious authority and highlight the implications of the multimodal and convivial characteristics of the internet as an instrument for Islamic identity formation and representation. In addition, I explore and examine the advantages and the drawbacks of each of the two chosen research methods, namely critical discourse analysis and online ethnography.

1 The term ummat or umat is an Indonesian word derived from the Arabic term ummah or umma in Islam which usually refers to the unity of Muslims all over the world within a single global community.
Background

This research draws on a basic assumption from the constructivist approach of identity formation that identity is constructed and contested. The construction and contestation of identities operates through the process of making meaning around ‘a cultural attribute or a related set of cultural attributes, that is given priority over other sources of meaning’ (Castells, 2010, p. 6). More specifically, this research focuses on the contestation of Islamic identity on the internet in Indonesia between the so called mainstream ‘moderate’ Muslim groups and the so called ‘radical’ Salafi Jihadi groups by focusing on their interpretation of the concept of jihad and their representation of the boundaries of Islamic community.

From a constructivist point of view, the media play a significant role in the construction and the contestation of identities. As Woodward (1997, p. 14) argues ‘the media can be seen as providing us with the information which tells us what it feels like to occupy a particular subject-position’. The term ‘media’ here refers to any instrument that is capable of communicating information, facts, opinion and ideas which can reach a wider audience than interpersonal communication. It includes a wide variety of platforms such as, but not limited to, newspapers, magazines, books, television, radio, videocassettes, DVDs, video games, cinema and the internet (Errington and Miragliotta, 2007). More practically, these media have been extensively used intentionally or unintentionally in the articulation and the reproduction of competing identities producing domination, conflict, competition, resistance and opposition (van Dijk, 1998a).

Mass media and collective identity formation

The distinct characteristics of mass media play an important role in the formation of collective identities. McQuail (1994, p. 37) argues that the relations between the content producers and the audience in mass communication is usually ‘one directional and impersonal’, and ‘the media receiver was often conceived as a passive spectator’ because of the limited opportunity of audience participation. McQuail (1994) further argues that the message producers in mass communication are mainly ‘professional communicators’ who have access to formal media corporations and the contents are produced ‘in standardized ways (mass production) rather than being unique, creative or unpredictable’ (p, 37). The nature of mass media which have been designed as a one to
many form of communication contributes to their potential to construct imagined communities which have specific boundaries between those in-group and those out-group. The boundaries of these collective identities have been developed by using ‘building materials’ from many sources including ‘collective memory’, ‘personal fantasies’, ‘power apparatuses’ and ‘religious revelations’ while their attributes have been rearranged ‘according to social determinations and cultural projects that are rooted in their social structure, and in their space/time framework’ (Castells, 2010, p. 7). Mass media play their role by selecting particular versions of materials or particular episodes of the collective memory and projecting them to their audience.

Each type of mass media has its distinct role in the process of collective identity construction. Print media have played an extensive role in the articulation of identities since the invention of printing technology by Johann Guttenberg in 1450. In his book *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, Anderson argues that the print media industry had played a significant role in the development of the concept of nation as an imagined political community. According to Anderson,

the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation (Anderson, 1983, p 46).

The nation is imagined as limited because it is bounded by a ‘limited spatial and demographic extent’ and the nation is imagined as sovereign because it has ‘societal structure’ which replaced the legitimacy of ‘previous monarchical or religious orders’ (Hageu, 2011, p. 19). According to Anderson (1983) the rise of the national consciousness was particularly possible because of the decline of religious solidarities empowered by sacred languages especially Latin and Arabic, which contributed to the imagination of global Christendom and Muslim *ummatt*. The decline of these languages coincided with the rise of national newspapers and other print publications which were published in national languages other than Latin and Arabic, facilitated by the development of print technology and capitalist industries. The establishment of these national newspapers has facilitated and strengthened the development of national languages as the linguistic basis for imagining national communities bounded by borders within which the language operated. Radio and television also have a distinct power in articulating identities by their audio and visual features. As an extension of his thesis of print capitalism, Anderson further argues that:

In conjunction with the spread of the political doctrines of republicanism, liberalism and popular democracy, print capitalism brought into being mass publics who began to imagine, through the media, a new type of community: the
nation. In the twentieth century, with the development of radio and television, these impulses have been enormously reinforced, and stretch still further, in that their messages are accessible to people who do not have to be very literate in the dominant vernacular—messages, furthermore, which have a colloquial, auditory and visual immediacy that print can scarcely match (Anderson, 1992, pp. 7-8).

The repeated and simultaneous consumption of newspaper, radio and television have developed into a ‘mass ceremony’ in Anderson’s term which is ‘replicated by thousands (or millions)’ of audiences and ‘continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life’ (Anderson, 1983, pp. 39-40). Although Anderson’s argument that the nation exists as an imagined community has been criticised as inadequate and too simplistic (See for instance Hageu, 2011; Castells, 2010), there is general agreement among constructivists that the mass media plays an important role in the construction of the imagined community that underlies modern nations.

The internet and new imagined communities

In the 21st century, the internet has become a new medium in addition to the more traditional mass media for facilitating the production and reproduction of collective identities. Castells identifies the internet as ‘mass-self communication’ to differentiate the characteristics of this new media from the more traditional mass media:

I call this historically new form of communication mass-self communication. It is mass communication because it can potentially reach a global audience, as in the posting of a video on Youtube, a blog with RSS links to a number of web sources, or a message to a massive e-mail list. At the same time, it is self-communication because the production of the message is self generated, the definition of the potential receivers(s) is self directed, and the retrieval of specific messages or content from the World Wide Web and electronic communication networks is self selected. The three forms of communication (interpersonal, mass communication, mass-self communication) coexist, interact, and complement each other rather than substituting one another (Castells, 2013, p. 54).

The internet also offers an opportunity to establish more interactive relations among the users. Unlike the traditional mass media, there is no clear border between the producers and the receivers in this virtual world (Slevin, 2000). The internet represents a circular model of communication, where the participants can be both senders and receivers of information. In a democratic society the development of ICTs (Information Communication Technologies) has contributed significantly to the emergence of ‘new practices of citizenship’ which can facilitate an intense exchange of information within small or large communities (Hermes, 2006, p. 306). This complex and intense exchange of information arguably contributes to the construction of imagined communities which
can unite a group of individuals who share a relatively similar image of a ‘communion’ (Anderson, 1983, p. 6). Although Anderson introduced the concept of imagined communities in the context of his study on the role of mass media, especially newspapers, in nation building processes, the convivial nature of the internet has also helped the establishment of new types of imagined communities through language use in online interaction.

The formation of imagined communities on the internet appears to have risen to prominence since the introduction of Web 2.0 technology. Web 2.0 technology offers a more user-centred design which allows more interaction and collaboration among the users and several researchers argue that the internet has become the most ‘convivial medium’ in facilitating collective action (Lim, 2005a; Ameripour, Nicholson & Newman, 2009). In thinking about the way the internet operates, in the Indonesian national context, I have drawn on the concept of ‘convivial medium’ adapted from Ivan Illich’s concept of ‘convivial tools’. Illich defines ‘convivial tools’ as the tools or social arrangements that are capable of facilitating ‘autonomous and creative intercourse among persons and the intercourse of persons with their environment’ (Illich, 1973, p. 26). The discussion of the notion of conviviality will focus on examining the extent to which the notion of conviviality is demonstrated by Islamic online news services in Indonesia as the subject of investigation in this research. A more detailed exploration of the internet as a convivial medium will be taken up in Chapter 2.

The development of internet users in Indonesia

The current spread of the internet has made this media more accessible and cost efficient than other media given the size of the audience that can be accessed simultaneously. Studies from the first decade of this century (For instance, Hill and Sen, 2005 and Hui, 2010) suggested that the access to this new media was still very limited especially in developing countries like Indonesia. However, recent statistics show that the use of the internet has developed rapidly in the last decade and it is predicted that it will grow more rapidly in the near future (International Telecommunication Union, 2014). Worldwide, the number of internet users has doubled between 2005 and 2010 from approximately one billion at the end of 2005 to almost two billion at the end of 2010 and the number is predicted to reach almost three billion by end of 2014 (International Telecommunication Union, 2014).
There has also been a significant increase in the usage of the internet in predominantly Muslim countries. For instance, in Iran, Syria and Pakistan the number of the internet users has grown more than 13,000% in ten years from approximately 250,000 users (in Iran) 30,000 users (in Syria) and 133,900 users (in Pakistan) in 2000 to 33,200,000, 3,935,000 and 18,500,000 respectively in 2010 (Internet World Stats, 2010a). The growth of internet users in Indonesia is also extraordinary. It has increased from approximately two million users in 2000 to thirty million users in 2010 (Internet World Stats, 2010b) and this number was expected to triple by 2015 (Jakarta Globe, 2010). Furthermore, statista.com predicted that the number of the internet users in Indonesia will increase approximately 10 million users every year from 2016 to 2019 (See Graph 1.1 below).

Graph 1.1: Number of internet users in Indonesia

![Graph 1.1: Number of internet users in Indonesia](http://www.statista.com/statistics/254456/number-of-internet-users-in-indonesia/)

Another intriguing figure shows that Indonesia was the second biggest Facebook user in the world after the US in September 2011 with more than 40 million users (Inside Network, 2011). In 2013, Indonesia was overtaken by India and Brazil and became the fourth biggest Facebook user in the world. The number of Facebook users in Indonesia has continued to significantly increase every year (Source: http://www.statista.com/statistics/268136/top-15-countries-based-on-number-of-facebook-users). The significant
growth in internet users is not unique to predominantly Muslim countries. Many predominantly non-Muslim countries such as The Philippines, South Africa, India and Russia have also recorded a very significant growth of internet users and became part the fastest growing internet populations from 2010--2014 (Mander, 2014). However, the significant growth of the use of the internet in predominantly Muslim countries arguably facilitates the increasing use of the internet in the expression of Islamic identities. More specifically, the extensive development of the use of this new media in Indonesia, as the most populous Muslim country in the world, is one of the main reasons why the internet is considered to be an important source of data for the study on the role of media in the construction of Islamic identity in Indonesia.

Previous studies on the internet and Islamic identities

In 1999, Eickelman and Anderson edited a compilation of the articles on the use of internet in the Muslim world. In the preface of the book, they argue that the internet has a significant role in expanding Muslim public spheres and has become a new marketplace for Islamic ideas, identities and discourses (Eickelman and Anderson, 1999). Eickelman and Anderson’s argument provides a basic premise for my research with regard to the increasing use of the internet in the articulation of religious ideas in predominantly Muslim countries including Indonesia. Several studies have also explored the construction of Islamic identity through the internet. For instance, Rogan (2006) investigates the use of the internet as an instrument for a global jihad movement by Islamist terrorist groups. Rogan contends that the internet has become an important medium for global jihadists to disseminate their propaganda by using the combination of written and audiovisual materials. Rogan’s work is particularly relevant to my study as it highlights the potential that the internet may be used by jihadi groups to radicalise Muslims in Indonesia. Turner (2007a) and Campbell (2007) investigate how the concept of authority is employed on the internet for religious purposes. Turner argues that the traditional authority of print-based Islam has been challenged by new media, especially in many diasporic Muslim communities, and Campbell asserts that although the internet has become a new source for religious authority in Islam, the conventional ‘offline’ religious authorities will remain influential in traditional hierarchical Muslim communities. Turner and Campbell’s studies both suggest that the internet may play an increasingly important role in the formation and contestation of Islamic religious authority in contemporary Muslim societies.
More recent discussions highlight the implication of the multimodal and convivial characteristics of the internet as an instrument for Islamic identity formation and representation. Lim (2005a) employed the idea of the internet as a convivial tool as a conceptual framework in her PhD project titled ‘Archipelago online: The internet and political activism in Indonesia’. She concludes that:

By being convivial, the most important functions of the internet in facilitating and supporting political activism have been the sharing of otherwise hard to find information and the self-organising of resistance that the information has made possible (p. 180).

Ameripour, Nicholson and Newman (2009) investigate the contribution of the convivial characteristics of the internet to societal conviviality in Iran by analysing blogs created by Muslim feminists and a campaign called ‘Stop Stoning Forever’. From this study, they conclude that the campaigns have attracted public interest in the virtual world but not in the actual public spaces of Iranian society. The research conducted by both Lim and Ameripour and colleagues support the value of the idea of conviviality in analysing different types of social activism in the cyberspace. In addition, Sands (2010) investigates the implication of the multimodal characteristic of the internet for Muslim identity formation and representation. Sands contends that the internet has facilitated the emergence of alternative representations of Muslim identity because of the capability of this new media to facilitate more active participation among more interconnected users. According to Sands, the expression of these alternative identities is supported by the availability of multiple linkages and a mix of written texts, images and sounds on the online spaces. Sands further argues that the multimodality of the internet has facilitated ‘alternative forms of engagements, and alternative social and political arrangements’ through the potential use of ‘multiple linkages’ and ‘the particular vernacular spoken in this medium’ (Sands, 2010, p. 154). Lim’s, Ameripour and colleagues’ and Sands’ studies provide important conceptual frameworks for my analysis of the role of the internet in the construction of identities in the era of Web 2.0.

The studies mentioned above demonstrate varying perspectives on the role of the internet in the construction of Islamic identities in contemporary Muslim societies depending on the local social and political condition. Several studies suggest that in many traditional hierarchical Muslim communities the role of the internet is limited (see Campbell, 2007; Ameripour, Nicholson and Newman, 2009). However, several other studies suggest that globally the internet is playing a significant role in the transformation of Islamic religious authority (see Eickelman and Anderson, 1999; Turner, 2007a). It certainly appears plausible that where the internet is available, the old
traditional authority of local imam or Islamic clerics is now being challenged by trans-
national authority with the availability of direct connection with Islamic clerics and the 
abundance of religious learning resources from the Middle East, the United States, the 
United Kingdom or anywhere else in the world (Mandaville, 2001). An internet survey 
of young Muslims in Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore shows that the 
majority of respondents use the internet to find alternative sources of information about 
Islam that they cannot find in other media (Bahfen, 2008). This transformation of 
authority is possible in Islam because the religious authority in contemporary Muslim 
societies is achieved more by popular recognition and support rather than a hierarchical 
system of authority (Turner, 2007b). The non-hierarchical nature of the internet goes 
hand in hand with the non-hierarchical nature of Islamic authority (within the majority 
of Muslim communities) in the construction of Islamic identity in contemporary Muslim 
societies including Indonesia as the biggest Muslim country in the world.

Indonesian context and specific contribution of the study

To date, there has been relatively little discussion about the use of the internet in the 
158) started the discussion by exploring the emergence of ‘violent jihadi’ voices on the 
internet which, according to him, has denied ‘civic pluralism’ in Indonesia. Several 
other studies of the presence of radical Islamic voices on the internet in Indonesia have 
also been conducted as part of bigger projects on the development of internet or Islamic 
militancy in Indonesia (Lim, 2004; Hill and Sen, 2005; Hasan, 2006). Specific studies 
of the use of the internet by an Indonesian Islamist group, Laskar Jihad during the 
Muslim-Christian conflict in Maluku have been conducted by Brauchler (2004) and Lim 
(2008). All of the studies mentioned above suggest the emergence of jihadi voices on 
the internet in Indonesia as an important element in the development of the Indonesian 
public sphere after the fall of Soeharto’s authoritarian regime. More recently, Australia 
Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) published a special report on the use of the internet to 
radicalise potential terrorist supporters in Southeast Asia (Bergin et al., 2009), and Hui 
(2010) analysed typical narratives and operations of radical Islamic websites in 
Indonesia. ASPI’s report and Hui’s study highlight the development of transnational 
Salafi Jihadi websites in Indonesia (such as Arrahmah.com) which will be further 
investigated in this research.
A more comprehensive study of the use of the internet in Islamic identity formation in Indonesia has been conducted by Lim (2005b). In a monograph published by the East-West Center titled *Islamic radicalism and anti-Americanism in Indonesia: the role of the internet*, Lim examines the role of the internet in Indonesia in disseminating radical Islamic ideology, especially the expression of anti-Americanism articulated by several Muslim groups. By using two case studies from *Laskar Jihad* and anti-America Muslims groups, the study shows that the internet has potential as a medium in articulating collective identities particularly a resistance identity against the perceived dominant global enemies of Islam namely non-believers and the United States. According to Lim, the internet has facilitated the articulation of multiple identities which ‘can strengthen national identity while also fostering a de-territorialized identity’ (2005b, p. 45). Lim also argues that radical Islamic groups have used the internet to ‘bypass local/national authorities’ and ‘establish a new de-territorialized pattern of hierarchy’ (2005b, p. 45). Although Lim’s study focuses solely on radical Muslim groups in Indonesia, it has provided several important conceptual frameworks for my study, especially related to the role of the internet in the construction of multiple identities and the use of Castells’ classification of identities, namely ‘resistance’ identity, ‘legitimizing’ identity and ‘project’ identity.

Apart from the studies mentioned above, more comprehensive analysis of how the discourse contained in the internet contributes to the polarisation of Islamic identity in Indonesia has not been found so far. In particular there is an absence of research which includes the study of counter-extremist discourse presented by moderate Muslim groups. The inclusion of moderate Muslim discourse is an added value of this research because far too little attention has been paid to the counter-extremist discourse presented by moderate Muslim groups in Indonesia.

This research aims to fill in this gap by investigating the contemporary use of the internet in the articulation of polarised Islamic identities, especially in representing the concept of jihad and *ummat* to the Indonesian population. In this research, three Islamic online news services, namely *Republika Online*, *Arrahmah* and *Voice of Al-Islam* and their corresponding pages on social networking sites are chosen as the primary sources of data. By investigating the use of the internet by Muslim news organisations in Indonesia, particularly in the war of ideas in articulating the interpretation of jihad and *ummat*, I hope this research can offer a significant contribution to the study of contemporary Islamic identity construction in Indonesia.
within the context of global changes to the construction of Islamic identity and authority following the rise of the internet.

**Research questions and key terminology**

This research aims at answering the question of how Islamic online news services in Indonesia interpret the concept of jihad and *ummat* and whether their interpretations reflect a more convivial construction of contemporary Islamic identity in Indonesia. More specifically, this project proposes to answer the following questions:

1. How is the concept of jihad being interpreted and presented by Muslim groups in Indonesia through the internet?
2. How have the different articulations of Islamic identities on the internet contributed to the different imaginations of Muslim *ummat* in contemporary Muslim communities in Indonesia?
3. How have the idea of participatory culture and the operation of personalised media on the internet contributed to the construction of the sense of community in the online news services investigated in this research?
4. Does the internet facilitate a convivial ‘project’ discourse for Islam in Indonesia, or is it tied to ‘legitimising’ or ‘resistance’ discourses?

The polarised discourse of jihad is chosen in this research because the term jihad is central in the development of Islamic identity over many centuries. The term is commonly translated as ‘to strive’ or ‘to struggle’ but then interpreted differently by Muslim scholars. According to Cook (2005, pp. 1-2), ‘the term’s complexity is not surprising given the centrality of the concept of jihad for Islam and the length of time—fourteen centuries— that Muslims have had to work with it’. Furthermore, the political usage of the term has created many competing identities within Islamic communities especially in Indonesia, the biggest Muslim country in the world. On the one hand, the term jihad has been used by violent extremist groups to justify their actions and on the other hand, many so called moderate Muslim groups have actively promoted the concept of contextual and non-violent jihad to counter the extremist discourse. Therefore, the study of the construction of Indonesian Islamic identity through the discourse of jihad is an important step to understanding the position of Muslim groups in Indonesia in counter radicalisation efforts.

The Indonesian term *ummat* which is derived from the Arabic word *umma* is also the most fundamental concept in the construction of collective Islamic identity. The
word *umma* and its derivative forms are mentioned more than sixty times in the Qur’an and the Qur’anic meaning of the term ‘develops from a general one, applying to non-Arab groups too, toward a more exclusive one which is limited to the Muslim community’ (Denny, 1975, p. 36). The interpretation of the term in contemporary Muslim societies has become more complex and the transnational connection of Muslim communities facilitated by the internet has generated a distinct imagination of Islamic *ummah* as an ‘ersatz nation’ (Saunders, 2008, p. 319). The way in which Islamic Indonesian news sources use and define the term *ummat* can therefore be understood to reflect their understanding of the boundaries of their imagined community.

In order to understand the attributes of the imagined communities that are constructed by various Islamic news services in Indonesia, I will focus on analysing group discourses surrounding these terms. There is no single agreed definition of discourse. This research uses understanding of discourse adapted from the work of Teun van Dijk and Norman Fairclough. Van Dijk (1998, p. 194) defines discourse as ‘a specific communicative event’, that is a complex social event, which involves a number of social actors, taking part in a communicative act, in a specific setting, and based on other contextual features. In addition to van Dijk’s concept of discourse, I will also use the concept of discourse introduced by Norman Fairclough who defines discourse as the semiotic dimension of social practices, which includes written and spoken language, nonverbal communication, and visual images (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 38).

According to van Dijk (1998, p. 125), discourse plays a significant role in articulating and reproducing identities. He further argues that ‘group discourse is a rich source for the analysis of ‘underlying’ social identities’ and these collective identities then being transformed into ideologies which can be expressed in any social practice within society. Van Dijk’s concept of discourse leading to the formation of ideology is particularly relevant to my research project because it can be used to explain how media discourses may change the formation of collective identities within Muslim communities in Indonesia.

With regard to the construction of competing identities, I specifically draw on a constructivist approach of identity formation process introduced by Manuel Castells. Castells (2010, p. 8) differentiates three types of identity which can be used to characterise any identity formation namely, ‘legitimizing identity’, ‘resistance identity’ and ‘project identity’. Legitimising identity is created by dominant institutions to justify their domination; resistance identity, on the other hand, is constructed by actors and institutions which are undermined and marginalized by dominant institutions; and
project identity is developed by social actors to build a new identity beyond resistance identity or legitimizing identity. Castells contends that ‘legitimizing’ identity is mainly exercised by the mainstream groups to maintain the domination over the non-mainstream groups. ‘Resistance identity’ and ‘project identity’ are mainly constructed by the less dominant groups to challenge the domination. The difference between ‘resistance identity’ and ‘project identity’ lies in the way the groups challenge the domination. Resistance groups tend to express oppositional voices as a survival tool, while groups which develop ‘project identity’ tend to move forward from merely resisting the domination to promoting the development of a new identity for the transformation of overall society. According to Castells, civil society tends to embody a ‘legitimizing identity’, because although civil society organisations are usually ‘rooted among people’ they also ‘prolong the dynamic of the state’ (Castells, 2010, p. 9). He further argues that the example of ‘resistance identities’ can be seen in various religious and ethnic based groups or social movements which are still trapped in the ‘trenches of resistance’ against the perceived dominant powers and the manifestation of ‘project identities’ can be seen in several new social movements such as feminism and environmentalism which have moved out from ‘the trenches of resistance’ to ‘redefine their position in society’ and ‘seek the transformation of overall society’ (Castells, 2010, p. 8). In the context of Indonesia, Castells’ classification of identities has been used particularly by Lim (2004; 2005a; 2005b) in her research of the student movement and Islamic radicalism in Indonesia. In these studies, Lim argues that the internet in Indonesia has played an important role in the construction of multiple identities in the form of ‘political legitimization’, ‘resistance’ and ‘anti-regime projects’ (Lim, 2004).

This research will specifically examine the contribution of the representation of the concept of jihad and ummat in Islamic online news services to the construction of contemporary Muslim identities in Indonesia. An in-depth investigation of the representation of jihad and ummat in online news media could contribute to the understanding of the construction of Islamic identities in contemporary Indonesian society through media discourse.

Methods

This research employs critical discourse analysis as the key research method. The socio-cognitive approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) developed by Teun van Dijk (2001) is utilised in this research. This approach focuses on the role of socio-cognitive
structures in mediating texts and society, and the complexities of the relationship between discourse structure and social structures. Several elements of discourse are analysed including semantic macrostructures and schematic structures of the text (topics, propositional structures), local meaning (choice of vocabulary, specific arguments), context and event models (the context and facts represented in the text) and the relationship between the text and its broader social context. In employing this approach, I analyse several features of the items published by online news services analysed in this research which include headlines, detailed argument in the body of articles and news items, supporting figures, and also the source of information quoted in the items. I often use headlines as shorthand for revealing the ideological position of particular news items, and occasionally support my analysis with some basic quantitative representations such as detailing the number of times particular issues are raised within publications.

Based on the purpose of the study, online ethnography is also used as a secondary research method in addition to critical discourse analysis. Hine (2000) recommends the combination of the use of online ethnography and discourse analysis in observing online interactions. Ethnography can be defined as a qualitative research method which intends to provide a detailed in-depth description of everyday life and practice. Ethnographic research is aimed at giving the researcher ‘access to the way that people’s lives are meaningful to them on their own terms’ (Machin, 2002). Online ethnography, sometimes called virtual ethnography (Hine, 2000), cyber-ethnography (Ward, 1999), netnography, webnography, digital ethnography or cyberanthropology (Kozinets, 2010) has emerged as new tool in analysing the dynamics of virtual communities. Kozinets (2010, p. 60) defines netnography as ‘participant-observational research based in online fieldwork’ which uses a ‘uniquely adapted set of practices and procedures that set it apart from the conduct of face-to-face ethnography’. Although criticised as incomplete ethnography in some ways, virtual ethnography is considered to be an appropriate tool in researching online mediated interaction (Hine, 2000).

The strengths of this method lie in its multidisciplinary perspective and the combination of the methods applied in this research. The multidisciplinary character of this study is demonstrated by the use of theoretical frameworks from many fields of study including media and communication studies, cultural studies, sociology, anthropology, political science and Islamic studies. The multidisciplinary perspective offers a rich analysis of the phenomenon being studied, and the combination of online ethnography and critical discourse analysis covers each significant weakness in the
singular methods. According to Hine, the combination of online ethnographic analysis and discourse analysis helps the researchers to observe web pages as a site of interaction as well as a repository of texts and this perspective ‘could help to maintain analytic ambivalence about what the phenomena being studied really are’ (Hine, 2000, p. 54).

The main criticism of the interpretive research approach including ethnography and discourse analysis is that the researchers can only offer an interpretation of what they read, see or hear. As a researcher, I am fully aware that my frames of reference can influence my interpretation of the data gathered from this study. Machin (2002) contends that ethnographers should be aware that their frames of reference may not be the same as the research participants. My background as a member of Muhammadiyah, a moderate Muslim organisation in Indonesia, means that it is a challenge for me to remain open to the views from other groups as well as to maintain my criticism of the group that I affiliate with. Being aware of this challenge, I have endeavoured to be sensitive to the diversity of the ideas in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Ethnographic research is also often criticised for not being representative. The data gathered in ethnographic studies usually only represents a small amount of samples. However, the small samples gathered in ethnographic research could provide more detailed investigation about ‘the nature of the way that people live more generally’ and ‘help us to understand real instances of social phenomenon’ (Machin, 2002, p. 85). A comprehensive understanding of the operation of identity in larger communities cannot be achieved without the understanding of the operation of identity in small communities.

Data collection techniques

Four types of data collection techniques were used in this research:

1. Interviews
   The interviews were conducted with the owners or the editors of the Islamic online news services analysed in this research. The interviews were conducted to obtain background information of the online news services and other information which is not available on the websites.

2. Participant observation
   The participant observation was conducted mainly by passive observation of the Islamic news websites analysed in this research and their corresponding official
pages on social networking sites, especially Facebook and Twitter. Limited active participation has also been conducted by following the twitter accounts and ‘liking’ the web pages of these online news services. This participant observation was carried out to obtain information about the development of the sites from time to time and to observe the operation of the idea of participatory culture and personalisation in these online news services.

3. Descriptive content analysis

The content analysis was conducted in two different forms. First, a comparative content analysis was conducted by analysing the news items published on the websites in three different time periods starting from the first year when the data were available online on each websites. Republika provides the archive of the items published online from 2009, while Arrahmah and Voa-Islam provide the archive from the first year of their establishment in 2006 and 2009 respectively. This type of content analysis was carried out to obtain information about the development of the content of the news items published on the websites and the difference over a period of time. Second, a purposive content analysis was conducted by searching the items which specifically contain the words jihad and ummat in the news websites analysed in this research. This type of content analysis was carried out to analyse the use of the term jihad and ummat presented on the websites.

4. Review and synthesis of literature

This technique was mainly conducted to examine the existing literature which is relevant to this research and to develop theoretical frameworks for this thesis.

Scope of the study

Since the 1990s, jihad has been associated with terrorism and Islamic radicalism especially because of the extensive use of the term by Al-Qaeda in its violent actions against the United States (Moniruzzaman, 2008). The Afghan jihad during the Soviet Union occupation is considered to be the source for global violent jihadi movements because Islamic activists from many countries gathered and became ‘the jihadi battlefield soldiers’ to end the communist invasion (Juergensmeyer, 2008, p. 197). More recently, the leader of Al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, explicitly used the term jihad in his appeal to all Muslims around the world to undertake a global attack against western imperialism and American hegemony (Swazo, 2008). This appeal has attracted many Muslims all over the world to participate in this global armed resistance including
Muslims in Indonesia. This research focuses on the development of the contemporary interpretation of jihad and the tendency to associate jihad with violence. The growing tendency of the use of jihad by radical Islamist groups to justify their violent actions and the counter-discourse presented by the more moderate Muslim groups arguably plays an important role in the formation of contemporary Islamic identity in Indonesia.

Indonesia has experienced many terrorist attacks since the fall of Soeharto’s regime. Several major bombing attacks which took place between 1998 and 2000 were believed to have links with Islamist radical groups. The International Crisis Group (ICG) classified these terrorist actions into three categories: 1) Bombing carried out by the supporters of the Independent Aceh movement in 2000 and 2001; 2) a bomb used in an attempt to murder the Philippine ambassador to Indonesia in 2002 and; 3) a series of church bombings in 2000–2001 (International Crisis Group, 2001, p. 3). Most of these bombings were driven by domestic causes, except the bomb in front of the home of the Philippine ambassador which was related to the Muslim rebellion in the southern Philippines. Some of the suspects of these bombings reportedly had contact with the Taliban in Afghanistan and some suspects had a plan to join the armed struggle jihad in Ambon and Poso, Central Sulawesi (International Crisis Group, 2001, p. 5). However, the strong international link to the terrorist groups in Indonesia emerged as an important issue after the Bali bombing in 2002. In this attack the bombers explicitly mentioned westerners and the supporters of the United States-led coalition on the war against terrorism as the target. For instance, several convicted actors in the Bali bombing have admitted that they hate America and they intentionally targeted Americans and Australians in their actions (Smith, 2005). Attacks on the Australian embassy in 2004 and two international hotels in 2009 (JW Marrriott and Ritz Carlton) in Jakarta have also clearly indicated that the perpetrators intentionally chose westerners, especially Christians and the supporters of the US government war on terror policy, as the target of the attacks. This international link has again confirmed the significant development of distinctly transnational Muslim identity in Indonesia in the last decade, which is investigated in this research.

More importantly, the debate about the interpretation of jihad started to proliferate in Indonesian public debate after the arrest of several actors behind the Bali bombing. During the trial they confidently argued that their action was part of jihad fi sabillah which literally meant the sacrifice of wealth and self-interest in every struggle for the sake of God, but is also commonly interpreted as engaging in a fight against non-believers who attack Islam and Muslims (MH Hassan, 2006). The glorification of armed
jihad by terrorist groups and their supporters and the counterbalancing activities conducted by the Indonesian government cooperating with moderate Muslim organisations have created a war of ideas in representing the meaning of jihad to the Indonesian population. Many radical Islamic websites in Indonesia which continuously promote the ‘armed struggle’ interpretation of jihad have been created since early 2000 (Hui, 2010). The development of these radical websites was then followed by the development of several moderate Islamic websites which were created as a counter movement against the radical discourse. Given that the debate on the interpretation of jihad in Indonesia has escalated after the bombing tragedies, this research initially covered the period from the first Bali bombing in 2002 to the bombing at a mosque in the police headquarters compound in Cirebon, West Java and a church in Surakarta, Central Java in 2011. During the process the period of the research was extended to 2014 in order to cover an important development in the contemporary discourse of jihad by the declaration of the Islamic State (IS) by a jihadi group in Iraq and Syria in 2014.

This study specifically examines the representation of different interpretations of jihad and different imaginations of ummat published in three Islamic online news services, namely Republika Online, Arrahmah and Voice of Al-Islam. The web pages used for specific analysis were purposefully selected by focusing on the pages which contain extensive discussion on the concept jihad and ummat. The web pages are not only regarded as a repository of texts but also a medium of interaction. Therefore, the principles of online ethnography as well as critical discourse analysis are utilised in this research in order to gain a better understanding of the representation of contemporary Islamic identity in Indonesia on the internet.

Structure of the thesis

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides a conceptual framework for understanding the role of the internet in contemporary identity formation. The chapter specifically answers the question of how the development of the internet technology in twenty-first century contributes to the formation of contemporary identity and community. The chapter argues that the convivial characteristics of the internet have transformed the concept of ‘borders’ in the formation of imagined communities. The chapter also explores the notion of conviviality on the internet by examining how the internet provides the space for more diverse expression of identities while also
providing the tools for exclusive information filtering by the users based on their predetermined interests.

Chapter 3 provides a review of the literature on the history of Islamic religious authority in Indonesia and the role of the media in the development of religious authority and the imagination of Islamic community. The chapter argues that the contestation of Islamic religious authority has contributed to the process of re-imagination and re-conceptualisation of the concept of global Muslim ummat by Muslim groups in Indonesia. The chapter also argues that the media play a significant role in the current understanding of ummat and Islamic religious authority in the global and local contexts. The old traditional authority of local imam or Islamic clerics is now being challenged by transnational interpreters of Islam with the availability of direct connection with Islamic clerics and religious learning resources from the Middle East, the United States, the United Kingdom or anywhere else in the world facilitated by the internet.

Chapter 4 provides a review of the literature on the discourse of jihad in Indonesia. This chapter looks at various interpretations of the concept of jihad in the global context and particularly in the Indonesian context, and how these global and local interpretations are interconnected. Various articles and books on jihad from prominent international and Indonesian authors are explored and analysed. This chapter argues that the doctrine of jihad in the history of Islam has developed into a contested doctrine over a long period of time. A similar pattern to the global trajectory of the interpretation of jihad can also be found in Indonesia. The analysis of the competing discourse of jihad can help in understanding the construction of contemporary Muslim identities in the global and local contexts.

Chapter 5 answers the questions of how the concept of jihad has been articulated by the mainstream ‘moderate’ Muslim groups in Indonesia in the virtual world. This chapter specifically investigates the discourse of jihad presented by Republika Online as the biggest ‘Islamic’ commercial online news service in Indonesia. The description of jihad in Republika represents the contextual interpretation of jihad which is commonly held by mainstream Muslim groups in Indonesia. This contextual interpretation suggests that the possibility of the interpretation of the doctrine of jihad as an armed struggle as well as other generalised struggles depends on the specific local conditions. This contextual interpretation also represents the construction of ‘legitimizing’ identity according to Castells’ identity formation theory.
Chapter 6 answers the questions of how the concept of jihad has been articulated by ‘radical’ jihadi groups in Indonesia on the internet. The chapter specifically investigates the discourse of jihad presented by Arrahmah and Voice of Al-Islam news websites representing Salafi Jihadi movement. The chapter argues that the internet has contributed to the development of a globally oriented Islamist resistance movement in Indonesia based on the interpretation of jihad as a continuous armed struggle between Muslims and their perceived enemies all over the world. This distinct interpretation of jihad and its representation by Salafi Jihadi groups on the internet has also facilitated the construction of a transnational resistance identity against the perceived global conspiracy against Islam.

Chapter 7 asks how the idea of participatory culture and the operation of personalised media have contributed to the construction of the sense of community in the online news services investigated in this research. The chapter argues that the participatory culture of the internet has played an important role in the process of reconstruction and re-imaginaion of the concept of ummat which has been discussed in chapters 5 and 6. The chapter also argues that the personalised tendency of the current internet news services and social network sites has contributed to the development of new imagined communities on the internet. While the boundary of nation state has been overcome, a new boundary has been created by the idea of personalised media. The users of the internet have become more and more connected with their in-group which they share many similarities and at the same time become more and more isolated from other groups which have a different point of view or who do not share similar identities.
CHAPTER 2
The Internet, conviviality and new imagined communities

This chapter provides a conceptual framework for understanding the role of the internet in contemporary identity formation. The chapter argues that the ‘convivial’ characteristics of the internet have contributed to the change of the concept of the border in the formation of imagined communities. The notion of conviviality has also created two different roles of the internet by providing the space for more diverse expression of identities and at the same time providing the tools for exclusive information filtering based on the users’ personal identities and predetermined interests. I start the chapter by outlining the idea of Web 2.0 and its social and cultural implications and then reviewing the idea of the conviviality of the internet and its potential contribution to the construction of new imagined communities. I then go on to outline the idea of personalised media and its different implications for the construction of new imagined communities.

The evolutionary development of the internet has been simplified by the introduction of the terms Web 1.0, Web 2.0 and Web 3.0. The initial development of the internet was known as Web 1.0 or the ‘static web’ which has allowed very limited interaction between sites and web users. The second phase or Web 2.0 was defined as the ‘collaborative web’ which has facilitated more interaction between sites and web users. The current and future development of internet technology is identified with Web 3.0 or the ‘semantic web’, a more ‘machine readable’ web which will allow more dynamic applications and machine to machine interaction (Ackland, 2013). This chapter focuses on the discourse of Web 2.0 technology or the participatory stage of the internet’s development which has become the foundation of the idea of the internet as a convivial medium. This discussion provides a conceptual framework for my thesis which specifically looks at the notion of the conviviality of the internet especially in the combination of the use of online news services and social networking sites in the construction of collective Muslim identities and different imaginations of the ideal Muslim ummat in Indonesia. Therefore, I will not discuss the technical aspects of Web 2.0 in this chapter; rather I will discuss the social and cultural implications of the discourse of Web 2.0 for the end users of the internet.
The discourse of Web 2.0

The term Web 2.0 was introduced in the beginning of the twenty-first century to identify the significant improvement in the utilisation of internet technology since its early establishment (O’Reilly, 2005). The term Web 1.0 was then retrospectively introduced as the name of the preceding stage. The distinction between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 is not clearly defined and it has triggered an academic debate since the introduction of the term in 2004 (see for instance Song, 2010 and Allen 2012). According Jurgenson and Ritzer (2012), the terms Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 can be used to identify the change in connectivity speed (from dial up to broadband) or change in the use of devices (from static computer screen to mobile platforms such as laptops, mobile phones and other devices). However, they further argue that, ‘it is the explosion of user-generated content that defines Web 2.0 and differentiates it from the provider-generated content of Web 1.0’ (Jurgenson and Ritzer, 2012, p. 627). Cormode and Krishnamurthy support this distinction by emphasising the main difference between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0:

content creators were few in Web 1.0 with the vast majority of users simply acting as consumers of content, while any participant can be a content creator in Web 2.0 and numerous technological aids have been created to maximize the potential for content creation (Cormode and Krishnamurthy, 2008).

The growing tendency of user-generated content in the era of Web 2.0 has reinforced the development of ‘prosumer’ identified by the blurring boundaries between ‘producer’ and ‘consumer’ which was introduced by Alvin Toffler in 1980 (Gerhardt, 2008). More specifically, Bruns (2007) introduces the term ‘produsage’ to identify the phenomenon of ‘simultaneous production and usage’ and ‘user-led content creation’ in Web 2.0 environment (p. 1).

Jurgenson and Ritzer (2012) also assert that Web 1.0 and 2.0 cannot be completely separated from one another. The existence of Web 1.0 was characterised by the availability of basic applications such as file and web servers, content and enterprise portals, search engines, and electronic mails. Several examples of key applications in Web 2.0 include web blogs, micro blogs, wikis, social and professional network sites, auction websites and also smart phone operating systems (Primetech Software, 2012; Ackland, 2013). Web 1.0 basic applications are still widely used today and these applications are sometimes combined with Web 2.0 applications to attract more attention from the visitors to the websites such as the availability of the information about the most popular (most ‘emailed’, most ‘blogged’, and most ‘searched’) items or
the possibility to publish reader comments in online news services (Jurgenson and Ritzer, 2012, p. 628). Jurgenson and Ritzer further argue that the difference between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 reflects the level of user participation in a specific website. They contend:

We should recognize that the degree to which users produce content on a site is not a dichotomous variable, but rather represents a continuum where some sites are further towards one end or the other of the 1.0–2.0 spectrum than other sites. At least some user-generation occurs on many Web 1.0 sites and some top-down structures exist on Web 2.0 (e.g., the format of articles on Wikipedia or the profile pages on Facebook). Thus, we define Web 1.0 by the high degree to which it is centrally conceived – a top down creation. Web 2.0 is defined by the great extent to which it is user-generated and bottom-up (Jurgenson and Ritzer, 2012, p. 628).

In addition, for the end users of the internet technology, the distinction between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 is not an important issue. Allen argues that:

Many internet users have engaged with so-called Web 2.0 applications without realizing they might be part of this new version of the web, while others have continued to use the internet as if this new version had never appeared. Just as there were users generating content in the 1990s, so too there were many people who only used the internet for the consumption of content in the 2000s. Thus, even if Web 2.0 does in some way speak to a qualitative change in the internet, this change did not occur at the same time for everyone (Allen, 2012, p. 263).

Therefore, the influence of the idea of Web 2.0 does not occur simultaneously and is still limited to the users who can really optimise the participatory potential of the internet.

Despite the ongoing debate about the precise idea of Web 2.0, the participatory culture facilitated by the massive development of user-generated content in the Web 2.0 era has become the key factor behind the emerging role of the internet in community formation. The internet is now understood as a convivial place to establish virtual communities; not merely as an information provider but a media that encourages a participatory culture. Jenkins and colleagues define participatory culture as:

A culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby experienced participants pass along knowledge to novices (Jenkins et al., 2009, p. xi).

This participatory culture has been imagined by the founder of the World Wide Web, Tim Berners Lee, since the early stage of the creation of the internet as ‘a space in which anything could be linked to anything’ in ‘a single, global information space’ (Lee, 2000, p. 4). The potential use of the internet as a participatory medium for educational exchange and community support emerges from the idea of ‘convivial tools’ introduced by Ivan Illich (1973), when the internet was still very much in its
infancy. Illich (1970) introduces the idea of ‘peer matching’ in the use of computers for educational partnership and Jenkins and colleagues (2009) identify ‘collaborative problem solving’ as one form of the participatory potential of the internet. However, participatory culture was still barely evident in the era of static web in early 1990s. For instance, Klotz (2004) compares the use of the internet for political campaigning in the United States in the 1990s and 2000s. He writes

In the early era of internet campaigning, the content of campaign sites was almost entirely one-directional information dissemination. The sites made little attempt to take advantage of the mobilization potential of the Internet …In the modern era, information dissemination remains the major function of campaign sites…While information dissemination continues to flourish, it is increasingly being accompanied by efforts to use the internet to mobilize (pp. 69, 76).

This example suggests that the participatory potential of the internet has been available since the early development of the World Wide Web. Nevertheless, in the early stage of the internet development the users were still accustomed to the passive reception of culture in the era of mass media and did not realise the potential to become active participants in the new media. The introduction of more user-friendly and user-generated content applications such as weblogs, micro blogs and social networking sites has facilitated the emergence of participatory culture in the use of the internet. As Green and Jenkins (2011) illustrate:

The consumer is an eyeball in front of the screen (in television terms), a butt in the seats (in film or sports terms), or whatever other body part media companies hope to grab next. Instead, we are concerned with a far more participatory and much messier understanding of circulation; what happens when a large number of people make active decisions, to pass along an image, song or bit of video that has taken their fancy to various friends, family members, or larger social networks? Increasingly, all of us—media “producers” and consumers alike—are also media appraisers and distributors (p. 111).

Therefore, the idea of Web 2.0 can be seen as the shift from the passive reception of culture in the era of mass media in the twentieth century to the active participatory culture in the era of new media in the twenty-first century (Flew, 2009).

The shift from passive to active audience has also attracted many studies on the development of online identities and communities from various perspectives (See for instance, Keren, 2006; Papacharissi, 2011; and Ackland, 2013). My thesis focuses on the utilisation of the internet technology by the end users in the era of Web 2.0 in articulating collective identities and constructing imagined and re-imagined virtual communities. The participatory culture marked by the introduction of the term Web 2.0 has contributed to the potential development of the internet as a convivial and
democratic medium for the dissemination of information and the construction of identities in the twenty-first century.

**Conviviality and collective identity construction on the internet**

As mentioned above, this thesis draws on the concept of ‘convivial medium’ introduced by Ivan Illich in his book *Tools for conviviality* published in 1973. Illich highlights the idea of user friendliness, user autonomy and equality in his description of convivial tools. According to Illich:

> Tools foster conviviality to the extent to which they can be easily used, by anybody, as often or as seldom as desired, for the accomplishment of a purpose chosen by the user. The use of such tools by one person does not restrain another from using them equally. They do not require previous certification of the user. Their existence does not impose any obligation to use them. They allow the user to express his meaning in action (Illich, 1973, p. 41).

Although Illich did not specifically mention the internet as one of the convivial tools, Slattery (2007) argues that Illich had actually predicted the development of the internet in his book *Deschooling society*, which was initially published in 1970, especially in the section titled ‘Learning webs’. In this book Illich proposes the concept of ‘peer matching’ as one approach in accessing educational resources in a convivial educational institution. He describes the idea of ‘peer matching’ as ‘a communication network which permits persons to describe the learning activity in which they wish to engage, in the hope of finding a partner for the inquiry’ (Illich, 1970, p. 105). He further explains that the operation of ‘peer matching’ can be performed easily with the following procedure:

> The user would identify himself by name and address and describe the activity for which he sought a peer. A computer would send him back the names and addresses of all those who had inserted the same description. It is amazing that such a simple utility has never been used on a broad scale for publicly valued activity (Illich, 1970, p. 123).

The idea of ‘peer matching’ has become a common practice in the internet today with the help of Web 2.0 applications such as blogs, chat rooms, citizen journalism and social networking sites. The ideas of user friendliness and user autonomy have become the key advantages of the internet over the conventional media. The user friendliness and the user’s autonomy have also contributed to the development of the internet as a convivial tool (Slattery, 2007). Any user of the internet can utilise many Web 2.0 applications without prior knowledge of computer programming or web design and the user also has the autonomy to modify and update their creation at any time. According
to Ameripour, Newman and Nicholson (2010) the internet in its current development can be regarded as a convivial medium because it has fulfilled several conditions of conviviality defined by Ivan Illich. First, the current face of the internet has been developed and shaped by the users and not necessarily by the interest of the owners or the controllers of the internet industry. Second, the internet has an open architecture in that the user’s experience of the internet is easily modified by the users. Third, with the new developed features, the internet has ‘fostered individual creativity and maximised users imagination and personal energy under personal control’ (p. 246). Fourth, the users of the internet are not merely the consumers, but they also actively produce and contribute to the development of its technology (Ameripour, Newman and Nicholson, 2010).

One of the promises of the internet is the capability to provide a democratic outlet in the expression of individual and collective identities. The notion of conviviality of the internet includes both the internet’s capacity to promote autonomous individual identities, as well as to identify oneself with various collective identities. This notion of conviviality has raised high expectations for the democratic potential of this new medium. The democratic potential of the internet can be observed from several distinct characteristics of the World Wide Web. For instance, Klotz (2004, p. 203) argues that the internet has become a threat for repressive governments because ‘the internet functions as a decentralised, anonymous, and resilient outlet’. Klotz argues further that in democratic countries the internet has played an important role in enhancing democracy by providing an efficient outlet in addition to other existing media. In authoritarian countries the internet has become an alternative medium to challenge the domination of public spheres by governments. Other scholars identify more detailed characteristics which have facilitated the operation of the internet as a new democratic public sphere. These characteristics include the possibility of more interactive exchange of information, co-presence of vertical and horizontal communication, disintermediation in the communication process, convenient costs, speed of communication, free association and the relative absence of boundaries and censorship (Hague and Loader, 1999; Bentivegna, 2006; Jenkins at al, 2009; Harper, 2011).

To date, there have been relatively few empirical studies to demonstrate the conviviality of the internet. Lim (2003) suggests the possibility of the use of the internet as a convivial medium for the development of civil society in her study on the use of the internet in Indonesia. In her study on the internet and political activism in Indonesia, Lim concludes that the convivial characteristics of the internet can be seen as a
‘technological affordance’ for political activism which has enabled ‘less dominant actors to make use of technology with relatively high autonomy and freedom’ and more specifically facilitated political activism in sharing restricted information and organising resistance (Lim, 2005a, pp. 179-180). Caire suggests the application of the notion of conviviality in the development of digital cities in Europe and proposes the use of the idea of conviviality in the development of digital cities ‘as a mechanism to reinforce social cohesion and a tool to reduce mis-coordination between individuals, groups and institutions’ (Caire, 2007, p. 1). More recently, Ameripour, Nicholson and Newman analyse the conviviality of social networks in their study about internet campaigns in Iran. They suggest that although the notion of conviviality can be observed in the internet campaigns analysed in the study, the conviviality of the internet ‘cannot be treated as an independent variable with deterministic outcomes on society’ but should be placed within the local economic and political conditions from which it emerges (Ameripour, Nicholson and Newman, 2010, p. 244). The finding of this Iran case study echoes the finding of Lim’s study on the internet in Indonesia that context is what matters in the study of the use of the internet in different places and times.

Many online news services have combined the use of news websites and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to reach a wider audience and maintain the loyalty of the readers. The massive use of social networking sites has created more complicated interactions among the members of the public, conceptualised as the rise of so called ‘networked publics’. According to danah boyd, the emergence of networked publics has been shaped by three phenomena evident in the interaction of users of social networking sites, namely the existence of ‘invisible audience’, the difficulty of maintaining ‘distinct social contexts’, and the blurring of the boundary between the public and the private domains (boyd, 2011, p. 49). The nature of these networked publics is different from the conventional mass media publics which are commonly bounded within a specific geographical area and also connected by a relatively similar social context. In the conventional notion of publics the communicators/performers can adjust their messages depending on the particular context of the audiences, while in networked publics ‘contexts often collide such that the performer is unaware of audiences from different contexts, magnifying the awkwardness and making adjustments impossible’ (boyd, 2011, p. 51). In the context of collective identity construction, the collapse of context in online interactions may arguably contribute to the spread and salience of trans-national identities.
The availability of more user-friendly applications in the era of Web 2.0 can potentially strengthen the construction of various collective identities in the virtual world. The idea of user friendliness helps many people who have inadequate technological capabilities to utilise the internet in articulating their identities. The availability of various Web 2.0 applications has also facilitated a more participative attitude of the users of the internet and has arguably provided the kind of ‘convivial’ medium that has no historical precedent. However, previous studies suggest that the power of this convivial medium is not a globally homogenous phenomenon, rather it is contextualised by local social and political conditions (Ameripour, Nicholson and Newman, 2010; Lim, 2012).

New imagined communities

The conviviality of the internet has challenged the concept of nation as an imagined community. Through the closing decades of the twentieth century, the idea of the nation as the imagined community proposed by Benedict Anderson was taken up enthusiastically by political scientists and cultural theorists in the era of mass media. More recent studies suggest that Anderson’s idea of imagined communities can be extended to analyse the phenomenon of online communities (See for instance Mandaville, 2001; Saunders, 2008; and Lim, 2012). While Anderson argues that the newspaper and print media in general have contributed to the construction of a sense of nation as an imagined communion, recent studies suggest that the internet has contributed to the crisis of national identity and facilitated the construction of transnational and trans-local imagined communities (Mandaville, 2001; Castells, 2004).

In recent years, Anderson’s concept of imagined community has been mobilised against his own argument that the nation is the necessary locus of the communal imaginings. The construction of collective identities in the so called network society, as Castells argues, has developed beyond the conventional boundaries of nations and states. According to Castells (2004),

specific societies, as defined by the current boundaries of nation-states, or by the cultural boundaries of their historical identities, are deeply fragmented by the double logic of inclusion and exclusion in the global networks that structure production, consumption, communication and power (p. 23).

Several empirical studies also suggest that transnational solidarities have re-emerged through the construction of new imagined communities facilitated by the internet. In his study on transnational Muslim politics, Mandaville (2001) writes:
More than anything else the Internet and other information technologies provide space where Muslims, who often find themselves to be a marginalised or extreme minority group in many Western communities, can go in order to find others ‘like them’. It is in this sense that we can speak of the internet as allowing Muslims to create a new form of imagined community, or a reimagined umma (p. 170).

In a different study related to protest against the Danish cartoon in 2005, Saunders argues that transnational Muslim elites have used the ummat consciousness to unite Muslims in many parts of the world to fight against the attack on Islam such as the insult of the prophet Muhammad in the cartoon published in a Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten. Saunders further contends that:

Through internet-enabled virtuality and diasporic marginalisation, the ummah – more so than at any time in the past – is functioning as an ersatz nation. This is the direct result of actions by transnational Muslim elites who are mobilising their constituencies on multiple levels: ethnic, national, and religious (Saunders, 2008, p. 319).

According to Saunders, several elements of globally practiced Islamic rituals such as the annual pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj) and the obligation to recite prayers in Arabic language can be seen as ‘mass ceremonies’ which was identified by Anderson as an important binding element of a modern nation (Saunders, 2008: 309). Mandaville’s and Saunders’ studies suggest that the convivial nature of the internet together with the increasing number of diasporic Muslim communities in Muslim minority countries have become important elements in the re-imagination of ummat as an ersatz nation. In another study on the blogosphere in Iran and Indonesia, Lim contends that the process of the re-imagination of ummat has been created through a complex relationship between transnational identities and local identities and has created a hybrid of transnational and local identities (Lim, 2009). In the case of the blogosphere in Indonesia, Lim demonstrates a different finding; that the role of the internet in the revitalisation of global Islamic ummat is still limited because the bloggers tend to pay more attention to the narratives which are closer to their everyday life. She argues that:

Micro narratives that are closer to the everyday life experience are embraced more openly, resulting in the plurality of voices, allowing for differences, nuances, and even counter-hegemonic voices. The closer to home the issue resonates, the more conversations take place. Life is local, even in the global blogosphere (Lim, 2012, p. 138).

Lim’s study suggests the formation of a ‘local’ version of imagined community despite the global connection of the bloggers community in Indonesia.

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2 The Danish cartoon affair was a widespread protest against the publication of several cartoons in a Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten in September 2005 depicting negative images of the prophet Muhammad.
The studies on the role of the internet in the re-imagination of Muslim *ummat* show an interesting development with regard to the concept of the border in the idea of imagined communities. Anderson’s idea of a nation as an imagined communion is limited by the boundary of a nation state as a geographical area and a political community. In contrast, current studies on the idea of Muslim *ummat* indicate the development of new identities constructed through the dynamic relationship between global identities and local identities. The development of information and communication technology has played a central role in the shift of boundaries from the national imagined communities in the era of mass media to the new imagined communities in the era of mass-self media.

**Limits on conviviality in the virtual world**

In addition to its participatory potential, the internet has also opened up the possibility of power centralisation and consolidation. This centralisation and consolidation can be seen in the form of control by governments in several countries and the domination of media ownership by several major players in the media industry. In countries which have limited political freedom such as China, Iran and Saudi Arabia, governments have implemented strong regulations to control the use of the internet by their citizens (Klotz, 2004; Morozov, 2012). Many Western democratic countries have also implemented various degrees of content blocking policies for child pornography and other types of perceived ‘inappropriate materials’ (Koumartzis & Veglis, 2011). In addition, key players in the printed media and the broadcasting industries still dominate online media outlets by expanding their businesses to the virtual world. Scott suggests a pessimistic view of the democratic potential of the internet in his study on the contemporary history of digital journalism in the United States. He writes:

The technology once deemed to be a possible savior has emerged as a tool of the very interests at the root of the crisis. The boom and bust cycle of the new economy did not produce a democratized media with decentralized news production and a more informed polity. Rather, it resulted in a hard-nosed set of business strategies that is rapidly handing even greater control over public information to an ever-decreasing number of media corporations. Concentration of ownership, consolidation of production, and homogenization of cross-media content has become the orders of the day (Scott, 2005, pp. 121-122).

According to this pessimistic view, the internet has become another form of industrial production and therefore cannot be considered as a convivial medium anymore. More importantly, the tendency of the re-emergence of centralised and hierarchical
communication and power has also hindered the participatory potential of the internet. If the internet users have surrendered their autonomy to the excessive control of the government or to the dominant companies in the internet industry, the notion of conviviality will no longer become a distinct advantage of this new medium.

Another form of power consolidation can be seen in the phenomenon of ‘the filter bubble’ where people tend to be trapped in a specific frame of information reinforced by their preconceived belief systems and interests. The term ‘filter bubble’ is coined by an internet activist Eli Pariser in his book titled *The filter bubble: What the internet is hiding from you*. According to Pariser:

> Filter bubble is a term I came up with to describe the effects of these personalized filters that are increasingly editing the Web for us. When you go online, whether it's Netflix, Amazon, Pandora, Google, Facebook, or now even the Washington Post and the New York Times, what you're really seeing is the world the Internet thinks you want to see, not the view you might expect to see or need to see. So the term filter bubble serves as a metaphor for this personalized universe of information we live in (Albanese, 2011).

Pariser (2011: 9) contends that ‘the algorithms that orchestrate our ads are starting to orchestrate our life’. Pariser particularly relates the idea of ‘the filter bubble’ with the idea of personalised media introduced by major internet companies in the end of 2000s. Thurman and Schifferes (2012b) define personalisation as:

> A form of user-to-system interactivity that uses a set of technological features to adapt the content, delivery, and arrangement of a communication to individual users’ explicitly registered and/or implicitly determined preferences (p. 376).

The era of personalised media has allowed automated information filtering facilitated by global internet companies based on the data about the personal identities and the interests of each customer which have been collected by recording uses, activities and inputs on the internet.

Although the mechanism of information filtering is a common psychological mechanism, this automated filtering has been created beyond the control of the internet users by relying on software algorithms. According to Thurman and Schifferes (2012a), there are two different types of personalisation, namely explicit personalisation and implicit personalisation. Explicit personalisation ‘uses direct users inputs’ when the user of the internet explicitly subscribe specific content preferences, while implicit personalisation ‘infers preference from data collected’ from each user based on information such as geographical location or the behaviour of the user in social networks (Thurman and Schifferes, 2012a, pp. 777-778). The explicit personalisation of news websites includes various types of registration processes such as the registration of individual users to ‘email newsletters’, ‘RSS feeds’, ‘Twitter feeds’ and ‘specific
content and lay out preferences on the home page’. The implicit personalisation can be seen in forms such as ‘the content adaptations’ based on the geographical location or other online activities of the user and also ‘content recommendations based on the behaviour of a user’s social network’ (Thurman and Schifferes, 2012a, pp. 777-778). While the users are mostly aware of the consequences of explicit personalisation, the implicit personalisation works beyond the users’ decision. Big companies such as Google, Yahoo and Facebook are constantly monitoring our activities on the internet and they use these activities to make further assumptions about our informational needs. Therefore the consumers will receive more information which confirms their existing understanding of the world and receive less information which contradicts their interests. As Pariser (2011) argues:

Democracy requires citizens to see things from one another’s point of view, but instead we’re more and more enclosed in our own bubbles. Democracy requires a reliance on shared facts; instead we’re being offered parallel but separate universes (p. 5).

In the era of personalised media, the autonomy of the users of the internet is undermined by automatic algorithm that seek to categorise who we are and what content we would be interested in. Major internet companies tend to dictate the boundary of the information which should be received by their consumers. Pariser argues this will consequently tend to broaden the gap between our existing point of view and other different points of view (Pariser, 2011).

The idea of ‘the filter bubble’ also influences contemporary information filtering in online news services. In the era of mass media, the professional editors play a significant role in determining the main issues which should be delivered to a broad audience to develop a common consciousness toward many important issues around the world and push the audience to look at general news, including a more moderate perspective. In contrast, the peer matching encouraged by web 2.0 allows the audience to only access information that they specifically looked for. The tendency toward personalisation of the current internet news services and social network sites has increased the role of our friends in social network sites to filter our exposure to information in the virtual world. The increasing power of social network sites in the automated implicit personalisation has contributed to the development of new imagined communities on the internet. In a longitudinal study on personalisation at news websites, Thurman and Schifferes (2012b, p. 386) conclude that ‘it is likely that recommendation by ‘friends’ will become a more powerful tool of implicit personalisation in the future.’ The result of this study echoes Pariser’s argument that our
‘friends’ on social networking sites are increasingly replacing the role of professional editors in determining which news items are more important and relevant to us. In Pariser’s word the filter bubble ‘creates the impression that our narrow self-interest is all that exists’ (Pariser, 2011, p. 164). The emergence of isolated social networks created by the filter bubble effect arguably changes the contexts of media and thereby facilitates the construction of different types of new imagined communities on the cyberspace.

**Conclusion**

The participatory culture associated with the introduction of the Web 2.0 era has brought a promise for the existence of a new tool for conviviality as imagined by Ivan Illich in the early 1970s. As a promising tool in the development of a convivial and a democratic society, the internet has contributed to the establishment of networked publics which have challenged the conventional boundary of producers and consumers of the media and has also challenged the boundary of nation state as an imagined political community. As established by Anderson, imagined communities are developed from shared media use. However, in the era of internet shared media use is no longer necessarily constrained by geography. In addition, while local does matter to making meaning and identity construction as established by Lim and Ameripour and colleagues, the coherence of local and moderated voices are somewhat undermined by the proliferation of digital media.

Convivial characteristics of the internet have also facilitated a more complex role of the cyberspace. It is like a double-edged sword which on one hand can be used as a potential tool to develop a convivial society but on the other hand can be manipulated to limit the flow of information. The development of convivial society can be achieved by maximising the use of the participatory tools offered by the internet for educational exchange and expression of identities. In contrast, limits of the flow of information can be accomplished by government regulations, concentration of ownership and information-filtering mechanisms offered by internet companies.

The issue of filtering mechanisms is particularly essential in the construction of new imagined communities. While one of the most convivial aspects of digital media is peer matching, it can, to some extent foster the creation of ‘filter bubbles’, where communities become segmented because of their different interests or opinions. This automated mechanism potentially creates gaps between various social networks on the
internet because the members of each network are unconsciously trapped in a narrow in-group perspective in looking at many issues in the society. Having established the potential role of the internet in the creation of new imagined communities, I will now go on to examine the role of the internet in the development of Islamic religious authority and the imagination of ummat globally and more specifically in Indonesia in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3
Media, Islamic religious authority and the imagination of ummat in Indonesia

The term ummat is central in the imagination of the ideal form of Islamic community. The chapter argues that the media play a significant role in the current understanding of ummat and Islamic religious authority in the global and local context. This chapter also argues that the contestation of Islamic religious authority has contributed to the process of re-imagination and re-conceptualisation of the idea of global Muslim ummat by Muslim groups in Indonesia. The old traditional authority of local imam or Islamic clerics is now being challenged by transnational interpreters of Islam with the availability of direct connection with Islamic clerics and religious learning resources from the Middle East, the United States, the United Kingdom or anywhere else in the world facilitated by the internet. I start the chapter by outlining specific contribution of the media in the transformation of religious authority in Islam globally and more specifically in Indonesia. I then go on to outline two important implications of the transformation of Islamic religious authority in Indonesia, namely the proliferation of the centres of authority and the change in the holders of authority and how these changes have contributed to different imaginations of the Islamic ummat in Indonesia.

Media and religious authority in Islam

The term religious authority has various meanings. Gaborieau (2010) offers a general definition of religious authority as ‘the right to impose rules which are deemed to be in consonance with the will of God’ (p. 1). Furthermore, Kramer and Schmidtke (2006) argue that religious authority can be implemented in many forms and functions which include:

the ability (chance, power, or right) to define correct belief and practice, or orthodoxy and orthopraxy, respectively; to shape and influence the views and conduct of others accordingly; to identify, marginalize, punish or exclude deviance, heresy and apostasy and their agents and advocates (p. 1).

The ultimate source of authority in Islam is the revelation received by the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, ‘any claim on religious authority in the following periods had to prove its link with this source’ (Mir-Kasimov, 2013, p. 2). Mir-Kasinov further argues that despite this single source of authority, various approaches have been used by scholars in Islam to preserve or interpret ‘the original impulse of the prophetic revelation’ (Mir-Kasimov, 2013, p 2).
The competition for creating Muslim identities goes hand in hand with the competition of Islamic religious authority. Several studies suggest that media play an important role in the construction of the competing authorities, because religious authority in contemporary Muslim society is achieved more by popular recognition rather than a hierarchical system of authority (see for instance Anderson, 1999; Mandaville, 2001; and Turner, 2007a). The important role of media can be seen in the way the source of Islamic authority has shifted from oral sources to print sources and then to the internet. Therefore, different media can be understood to endow the possibility of a different conception of Islamic authority and also facilitate various conceptualisations of Islamic community.

During the early years of Islamic propagation, the sources of Islamic teaching came from the prophet Muhammad and his companions mainly in the form of oral authority (see for instance Nasr, 1992 and Robinson 1993). Therefore, the authority to interpret the teaching of Islam was limited in the hand of the prophet Muhammad and scholars who had direct contact with him or his companions. In Indonesia, this Middle Eastern style of authority was mainly introduced by Arab traders from the Hadhramaut region, many of whom were believed to be the descendants of the prophet Muhammad, who finally settled in some parts of the archipelago and also by returning Indonesian pilgrims who spent their time in the holy city Mecca to learn Islam (van Bruinessen, 1999). This Middle Eastern style of Islam was an exception to the dominant ‘syncretistic’ type of Islam which represents ‘the early wave of Islamisation’ in Indonesia in the 13th century to the 15th century (van Bruinessen, 1999, p. 3). Therefore, the tension between the perceived ‘global’ version of Islam and the culturally adaptable ‘local’ version of Islam in Indonesia has existed long before the arrival of print Islam. The oral tradition in Islamic teaching was still very dominant until the adoption of printing technology in the Muslim world in the nineteenth century (Robinson, 1993).

In the era of print technology, written authority replaced the oral authority of Muslim scholars. The printing press started to be used widely in the Muslim world in the beginning of nineteenth century. Muslim reformist leaders in the Indian sub-continents started to establish printing presses in 1820s and Muslim rulers in the Ottoman empire started to print Islamic books in 1870s (Robinson, 1993). By the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of twentieth century several global figures of Islamic reform such as Muhammed Abduh (1849-1905) and Mowlana Mawdudi (1903-1979) were journalists (Anderson, 1999). In Indonesia, the first printed Islamic
publication was a 1853 printing of a text recited to celebrate the birth of the prophet Muhammad (Proudfoot, 1995).

This print based authority was then rapidly reproduced in the era of tape and digital recording technology by the massive reproduction of Islamic speeches and books into audio and video cassettes and also compact discs, especially after the introduction of optical media in 1980s (Mandaville, 2001). Audio and video recording technology might have facilitated the partial return of the power of oral authority. However, this recording technology can not resemble the intimate connection which can be established between the teacher and the students in the era of oral authority.

The use of printing technology and digital recording technology in the global Muslim world had reduced the dominant role of oral authority of Muslim scholars and made Islamic books and other references more accessible to ordinary Muslims. Although a printing press has been established by Jewish refugee in Istanbul to print Bibles and secular books since 1493, the Muslim rulers were initially reluctant to adopt printing technology for the purpose of Islamic teaching (Robinson, 1993). According to Robinson, the reason behind this rejection was mainly because rulers feared that printing technology would threatens the oral tradition which had become ‘the very heart of Islamic systems for the transmission of knowledge’ (Robinson, 1993, p. 234). Robinson further argues that:

By printing the Islamic classics, and the print run for a major text could be as many as ten thousand copies, and by translating them into the vernaculars they undermined their authority; they [Islamic clerics] were no longer necessarily around when the book was read to make up for the absence of the author in the text; their precious ijazas (certificates), which brought the authority of the past to their learning in the present, were made less significant; their monopoly of the transmission of knowledge was broken (Robinson, 1993, p. 245).

Robinson’s statement about the absence of author in the era of print industry echoes McLuhan’s idea in his book ‘The Gutenberg Galaxy’ that the arrival of print technology has created the ‘autonomous survival of knowledge’. In a review of ‘The Gutenberg Galaxy’ Mizrach argues that:

The spoken word is intimate, tied to the very breath and health of the speaker. The written word makes possible the autonomous survival of knowledge - with an oral tradition, it disappears when the oralists have all been killed; but, as people have noted for a long time, writing is impersonal, does not carry emotional intonations as well as speech, and lacks the identifying characteristics (pitch, tone, timbre, rate, etc.) that links speech to a speaker (Mizrach, n.d.).

Proudfoot further argues that the use of printing technology in the dissemination of Islamic teaching has democratised the access to Islamic texts but at the same time has also facilitated the rise of standardised ‘orthodox Muslim learning’. The rise of this
‘orthodox understanding’ was mainly influenced by the easier access of ordinary Muslims to many classic ‘authoritative texts’, they were ‘less reliant on mediation by ulama’ (Proudfoot, 1995, p. 220).

The internet has enabled further proliferation of sources of authority. The convivial characteristics, especially the user friendliness and the power of multimodality offered by the internet have facilitated the existence of new interpreters of Islam and new ways of imagining the concept of ummat (see for instance Eickelman and Anderson, 1999; Saunders, 2008; Sands, 2010). These new interpreters come from diasporic Muslim communities which geographically reside in many different parts of the world with various social and political situations. As Turner argues:

For Islam and many other cultures, globalization has meant migration followed by the creation of diasporic communities. The internet provides an obvious method for dialogue within and between such diasporic groups, but the unintended consequence is often that diasporic politics and their intellectual elites come to depart radically from tradition, building up their own internal notions of authority, authenticity and continuity. The Internet holds the diasporic community together across space and then challenges traditional authority, which is characteristically an oral and print authority (Turner, 2007a, p. 127).

The transmission of Islamic teaching which initially relied on the oral and personal authority of Muslim scholars who have direct contact with the prophet Muhammad and his companions has been challenged by the impersonal authority of print media and has also been increasingly disjointed from the traditional authorities by the global use of the internet by Muslim communities all over the world (Mandaville, 2001; Turner, 2007a).

Local implications in Indonesia

As discussed above, the nature of Islamic religious authority has changed over time, in part corresponding to the changing media technologies. Here I turn specifically to analysing two aspects of Islamic authority in Indonesia, namely geopolitical spaces from which authority emanates and persons in whom authority is vested.

Proliferation of centres of authority

The development of Muslim religious authority can particularly be seen in the tradition of fatwa.\(^3\) Since the introduction of Islam in Indonesia until the end of nineteenth century, Indonesian Muslims relied on the religious opinion of the Muslim scholars in

\(^3\) Fatwa is the delivery religious opinion on specific issues related to everyday life of Muslim. The authoritative person in giving the fatwa is called a Mufti.
the holy city Mecca such as the great Meccan mufti Ahmad Dahlan (d. 1886) (Kaptein, 2004). Until the beginning of the twentieth century, the holy cities Mecca and also Medina were still regarded as the centre for the development of Islam by Indonesian (Bruinessen, 1999). Bruinessen further argues that the connection to the holy cities Mecca and Medina was mainly introduced by many Arab traders and the returning Indonesian pilgrims (hajj) and students from the holy cities Mecca and Medina back to the Islamic ‘periphery’ of Indonesia (1999, p. 6).

Since the end of the nineteenth century, the central position of Mecca has been challenged by the rise of several modernist Muslim scholars from Cairo followed by the expansion of the brotherhood movement from Egypt. Several other centres also started to bring their influence to Indonesia such as the Ahmadiyya movement from Pakistan and also significant influence from Iran after the Islamic revolution (van Bruinessen, 1999). The emergence of the Salafi Jihadi movement in Afghanistan since the early 1980s introduced jihad battlefields in many countries as a new centre of influence (see chapter 4). Van Bruinessen further argues that the centre-periphery model was no longer adequate to describe the development of Islam in Indonesia at the end of twentieth century. He instead describes the new formation as a network model.

By the 1970s, however, there were not only more centres, but the influences had also become more diffuse, and a network model represents the flow of influences more adequately. One did not have to go to Mecca or Cairo to find stimulating Islamic ideas. Students of medicine or political science at an American university were as likely to emphasise their Muslim identities and to encounter fascinating new Islamic thought. Journals and books, in such international languages as English and Arabic or in Indonesian translations, became the major vehicles of Islamic dissemination (van Bruinessen, 1999, p. 11).

The use of the internet in the representation of Islam and Islamic teaching propagation in Indonesia has clearly made the flow of influences even more complex. Many independent interpreters of Islam have started to emerge and these new interpreters have contributed to the change of the way Islamic religious authority operates.

**Holders of religious authority**

Traditionally, a fatwa is given by an individual mufti. However, since the beginning of twentieth century, Muslim organisations in Indonesia have started to introduce ‘collective religious opinions’ in response to the particular problems of Indonesian Muslims (Hosen, 2008; Kaptein 2004). Many Islamic print media with various forms such as newspapers, bulletins and magazines have also provided a special section to
answer the questions about any religious issues from the readers in the Indonesian context. Within this framework, the authoritative power of an individual mufti is usually achieved more by the charismatic authority of the individual mufti based on the description of the three types of authority introduced by Max Weber. On the other hand, the collective authority of Muslim groups and organisations has been developed mainly in the form of traditional and legal-rational types of authority. The significant role of charismatic authority was threatened by the impersonal authority of print media but potentially re-emerged in the competition of Islamic religious authority in various audio-visual media outlets, especially the internet, because the internet provides the possibility of the use of multimodal communication by combining written, audio and visual messages in one place. In her research on the use of multimodal communication by Muslims on the internet, Sands argues,

…although some Muslims speak the “language” of older forms of media, transferred to the Web, many are “linguistically” adept in exploiting the multiple linkages of online spaces and the particular vernacular spoken in this new medium, a mix of written text, imagery and sound (Sands, 2010, p. 154).

There has been also a change in the background of the holders of religious authority. Until the first half of twentieth century, Muslim religious authority in Indonesia was mainly in the hands of traditional clerical scholars who graduated from the Middle East or their students in local traditional Islamic schools in Indonesia. These Middle Eastern graduate scholars tended to promote a more literal approach to the study of Islamic law in Indonesia (Bowen, 2011). Since the late 1960s many Indonesian Muslim intellectuals have been sent to pursue their studies in western countries especially the United States and Canada. This different route of ‘intellectual pilgrimage’ has contributed to the development of an alternative approach to the study of Islamic law in Indonesia by introducing ‘a social-contextual approach to Islamic history’ and ‘a more universalistic liberal approach grounded in human rights norms’ (Bowen, 2011: 49). These Muslim intellectuals with western educational backgrounds started to bring an influence after the arrival of several influential Muslim scholars from their study in 1980s. One of the most prominent was Nurcholish Madjid (1939-2005) who holds a PhD degree from the University of Chicago. He promoted the idea of so called ‘Islamic Indonesian-ness’, a genuine identity of Islam in Indonesia which is in harmony with Pancasila as the basis of the Indonesian nation state (van Bruinessen, 1999).

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4 Max Weber introduces three different types of authority; namely traditional authority, charismatic authority and legal-rational authority. Traditional authority is maintained by constant reference to customs, traditions and conventions; Charismatic authority is maintained by strong personality of the leaders; And legal-rational authority is empowered by a formalistic belief in the content of the law or rationality (see for instance Best, 2002 and Williams, 2003).
The idea of Islam and Indonesian-ness (Islam dan keindonesiaan) brought by Nurcholis Madjid and his renewal (pembaruan) group is in line with the idea of ‘indigenisation of Islam’ (pribumisasi Islam) introduced by another influential Muslim scholar from the traditionalist background, Abdurrahman Wahid (Burhani, 2013, p. 27). According to Burhani (2013), this integrated description of Islamic identity and national identity has become a central issue in the mainstream Muslim groups in Indonesia since the middle of the New Order era. Azra identifies these mainstream groups as ‘non political, operating not only as religious organisations but also as social, cultural and educational organisations’ (Azra, 2013, p. 70). Furthermore, Bruinessen (2008) differentiates mainstream Muslim groups in Indonesia into two categories, namely the traditionalists who maintain syncretistic practices found in early Islamisation in Indonesia (such as Nahdhatul Ulama) and the reformists (other scholars use the term modernists) who criticise those practices based on the argument that there is no justification of those practices in the Qur’an and the prophetic traditions (such as Al-Irsyad, Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam). Burhani (2013) further argues that although the concept of Indonesian Islam has been intrepreted differently by the traditionalist and the modernist/reformist Muslim groups, the concept has been used by both of the mainstream Muslim groups in Indonesia to define their distinct identities. He contends:

For traditionalist Muslims, the concept (Indonesian Islam) reflects the efforts to define what is authentic in Indonesian Islam and to avoid a blind imitation of foreign influences…In modernist circles, Indonesian Islam is mainly used to solve the problems surrounding the relation between religion and state (Burhani, 2013, p. 27).

The effort of these mainstream groups to develop an authentic Indonesian Islam identity is parallel with the centralistic policy of the New Order regime which had already established a media system that allowed it to define and control a range of national discourses and to make itself the source of all authority in and about Indonesia (See for instance McDaniel, 2002; Sen and Hill, 2007). Media regulation during the Soeharto era was very tight. All media which expressed oppositional voices towards Soeharto were banned. Bourchier (2015) argues that ‘in Soeharto’s ‘Pancasila Democracy’, opposition and conflict were condemned as alien notions, deriving from individualistic western culture’ (p. 2). The idea of Indonesian Islam was supported by the New Order regime arguably because it was considered to be more relevant in the context of Indonesian nation building and it did not contradict the interests of Soeharto’s authoritarian regime. After the fall of Soeharto’s regime, the idea of
indigenous Indonesian Islam which is compatible with democracy and Pancasila still remains a dominant understanding of Islam in Indonesia. This idea has also influenced mainstream Muslim media such as Republika which will be discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

However, as a result of the freedom of information policy put in place after the fall of Soeharto, transnational Islamist elements have had far greater access to Indonesia’s public spheres. Several Muslim clerics who were previously marginalised by Soeharto’s regime such as Jafar Umar Thalib and Abu Bakar Ba’asyir and the proponents of the establishment of Islamic state in Indonesia are currently enjoying the freedom of expression in Indonesian public spheres and developed a counter-discourse against the mainstream understanding of indigenous Indonesian Islam (Hefner, 1999). The free and open media policy after the New Order era has strengthened the network model of the development of Islamic authority in Indonesia introduced by van Bruinessen (1999) and has also facilitated more diverse global influences to Indonesian Islam. These new global influences were mainly introduced by transnational and political Islamic movement such as Hizbut Tahrir and Salafi Jihadi movement which will be discussed later in this thesis (see for instance Platzdasch, 2009; Solahudin 2011).

**Different imaginations of ummat in Indonesia**

Previous studies suggest that the establishment of diasporic Muslim communities in many parts of the world and the proliferation of different Islamic religious authorities contribute to the polarisation of Muslim communities across the globe. This polarisation has also contributed to various imaginations of the ideal form of Muslim ummat (See for instance Mandaville, 2001; Roy, 2004; Turner, 2007a). In his book titled *Transnational Muslim Politics*, Mandaville argues:

> When I speak of reimagining the umma, I am talking about more than Muslims simply stressing their similarities, de-emphasising their differences and living together in a single global community. Rather, I am speaking about Muslims reconceptualising the umma; that is revising their idea about who, what and where political community can be (Mandaville, 2001, p. 187).

Roy echoes Mandaville’s argument that the contemporary ummat can be imagined in many different ways. He argues that in the context of Islamic neo-fundamentalist movement:

> This imagined ummah can be expressed in historical paradigms (the Ottoman Empire), in political myth (the Caliphate), in legal Muslim categories (Dar-ul-
Although all Muslims talk about *ummat* as the symbol of global Muslim solidarity, it is clear that many Muslims have different ideas about who can be regarded as a member of the *ummat* and how this *ummat* should be organised.

Despite the fact that *Pancasila* as the foundation of the state only mentions belief in one god in general and does not indicate Islam as the official religion of the state, Islam has been regarded by scholars and political leaders as one of the strongest bonding elements of Indonesian nationalism. As Vandenbosch argues:

For a country like Indonesia, divided over a large number of widely separated islands, and with its peoples strongly attached to their ethnological and *adat* communities, a unifying and integrating force was desperately needed. The one common factor of Indonesian life was Islam. Here was a force that could be used to break down local patriotisms and help create national unity (1952, p. 182).

However, there are many different ways in which Muslim groups in Indonesian define the position of *ummat* within the discourse of national unity. Muhammad Ali (2011) identifies four different views with regard the relationship between Islam and national identity in Indonesia. First, those who declare ‘Islamization yes, Indonesianization no’; Second, those who declare ‘Islam first, Indonesia second’; Third, those who declare ‘Formalistic Islam no, substantive Islam and Indonesia, yes’; and fourth, those who declare ‘Islamization yes, Indonesianization yes’ (pp. 2-8). The first category represents the view of transnational Islamic organisations such as *Hizbut Tahrir*, which consistently promote the re-establishment of global Islamic caliphate. The second category represents the view of Islamist political parties such as *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS)*, which prefer to participate in a democratic political process to promote the formalisation of Islamic law in Indonesia. The third category represents the view of the so called ‘progressive’ Muslim groups such as *Jaringan Islam Liberal (JIL)*, which promote the adoption of substantive Islamic values as part of the nation identity and reject the formalisation of Islamic law in Indonesia. The fourth category represents the view of ‘mainstream’ Islamic organisations in Indonesia such as *Muhammadiyah* and *Nahdhatul Ulama*, which promote an integrated construction of Islamic identity and national identity as discussed earlier in this chapter (Ali, 2011). According to Pringle, the identification of *Muhammadiyah* (founded in 1912) and *Nahdhatul Ulama* (founded in 1926) as the representation of mainstream Islam in Indonesia is based on two notions:

First, that the two organizations, although far from homogeneous themselves, represent collectively the view of most Indonesian Muslims, and second, that their views are predominantly middle-of-the road in both religious doctrine and politics (Pringle, 2010, p. 115).
As a result of this understanding, these mainstream groups are usually associated with their ‘moderate’ approach of religious thinking and practice.

There is no single description about the term moderate Muslims. It is an ambiguous term which is ‘understood differently by different people’ (Fueller, 2007, p. 34). Therefore the description of moderate Muslims will depend on ‘the politics or religious positions of the individual making the judgements’ (Esposito, 2007, p. 26). For instance, Bokhari and Senzai identify at least four different groups of Muslims who claimed themselves as moderate Muslims, namely ‘moderate Islamists’, ‘traditional Muslims’, ‘liberal Muslims’ and certain regimes in the Muslim World. They further explain that:

moderate Islamists claim the mantle of moderate Islam in a bid to distinguish themselves from the radical and militant types. Traditional Muslims who are different from the moderate Islamists in that they do not advance a particular political ideology based on Islam are quick to point out that they have always constituted the majority of Muslims historically. They emphasize that they gained their status as the historical mainstream of Islam by refraining from adopting any immoderate tendencies to advance their cause. Most practicing Muslims (a great many of whom perhaps identify with the Sufi strand of Islam) fall in this category. Liberal Muslims represent the third group: those who might adhere to a certain minimalist degree of personal religious commitment but for the most part have embraced secularism in the public realm (Bokhari and Senzai, 2007, p. 143).

Esposito argues that the basic characters of moderate Muslims are ‘those who live and work ‘within’ societies, seek change from below, reject religious extremism, and consider violence and terrorism to be illegitimate’ (Esposito, 2007, p. 26). A prominent scholar of Muhammadiyah, Syafiq A. Mughni, contends that there are several characteristics of moderate Muslims. Firstly, they consistently take the middle path in interpreting and implementing the teaching of Islam. Secondly, they are more concerned with the implementation of the justice system rather than the form of the state. Therefore any form of state is acceptable as long as it does not contradict Islamic principles of human rights. Thirdly, moderate Muslims acknowledge contextual understanding of Islamic law in connecting Islamic values with modernity. Fourthly, they believe in peaceful and gradual change in establishing a better Islamic society (Mughni, 2009). These basic characteristics of Moderate Muslims offered by Esposito and Mughni will be used for the purpose of analysis in this research.

As the representation of mainstream and moderate Muslim groups in Indonesia, both Muhammadiyah and Nahdhatul Ulama established branches from the provincial level to the sub-district level in almost all parts of Indonesia. The precise numbers of the followers of Muhammadiyah and Nahdhatul Ulama are not available, but their
combined following is estimated around a quarter of the Indonesian population (Pringle, 2010). A nation-wide survey conducted by The Research Center for the Study of Islam and Society in 2002 showed that 75% of Muslims in Indonesia indicated a connection with either Muhammadiyah or Nahdhatul Ulama (Mujani and Liddle, 2004). 

Muhammadiyah’s view of national identity can be observed in the official statement declared in its 46th national congress in 2010 to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the organisation as follows:

In the context of nationality, Muhammadiyah has sought to integrate Islam and ‘Indonesianess’ from the beginning. Muhammadiyah and the Muslim ummat are the integral parts of the nation and they have participated in the development of Indonesia since the national awakening movement to the independence. Muhammadiyah has actively participated in the establishment of the foundation of a nation-state based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. [Dalam kehidupan kebangsaan Muhammadiyah sejak awal berjuang untuk pengintegrasian keislaman dan keindonesiaan. Bahwa Muhammadiyah dan umat Islam merupakan bagian integral dari bangsa dan telah berkiprah dalam membangun Indonesia sejak pergerakan kebangkitan nasional hingga era kemerdekaan. Muhammadiyah terlibat aktif dalam peletakan dan penentuan fondasi negara-bangsa yang berdasar Pancasila dan Undang-Undang Dasar 1945] (Muhammadiyah, 2010, p. 17).

Nahdhatul Ulama’s view can be observed in a statement published on its official website as follows:

The ideas of Islamic-ness and archipelagic-ness have fused tightly. Islam has become the primary binding agent when the archipelagic-ness transformed into Indonesianess as a nation-state, because Islam since that time has had an Indonesian face which has developed together with Indonesian culture. NU and the traditional boarding schools have played an important role in the creation of Indonesia as an Islamic nation. Prior to independence, NU has embraced the concept of nationality. Although at that time it was called the Dutch Indies, in the national congress in Banjarmasin, NU declared that defending the sovereignty of the nation in the Dutch Indies is compulsory, because it did not mean defending the Dutch but defending the existence of the nation within the Dutch colonial rule. [Keislaman dengan kenusantaraan telah melebur sebegitu erat, sehingga ketika kenusantaraan menjadi keindonesiaan sebagai sebuah negara bangsa, maka keislaman menjadi perekat utamanya, karena Islam pada waktu itu sudah berwajah Indonesia, tumbuh dan berkembang bersama kebudayaan Indonesia. Penciptaan Indonesia sebagai sebuah bangsa Islam dan khususnya Islam NU dan pesantren memiliki andil besar. Sejak sebelum kemerdekaan NU telah berpegang pada konsep kebangsaan. Walau pun pada waktu itu namanya masih Hindia Belanda, tetapi NU dalam Muktamar Banjarmasin telah mengeluarkan sikap, bahwa mempertahankan kedaulatan bangsa yang ada di Hindia belanda itu merupakan kewajiban. Sebab yang hendak dipertahankan bukan pemerintahan Belanda, melainkan eksistensi bangsa yang ada di dalamnya] (NU Online, 2004).

5 Unless otherwise indicated, translations from Indonesian primary and secondary sources are mine.
In these statements, both *Muhammadiyah* and *Nahdhatul Ulama* clearly indicate an imagination of an integrated construction of *ummat* in Indonesia as a combination of Islamic and national awareness.

In the aftermath of the September 11 tragedy, the description of moderate Muslims is increasingly used in contradiction to the term radical Muslims. The polarisation between the ‘moderate’ and the ‘radical’ is problematic because not all Muslims in the radical category support terrorism and the use of violence to achieve their goals (Barton, 2004). The term ‘radical Muslim’ is also interpreted differently by many scholars in Islamic studies. Fealy proposes a general description of radical Muslim as follows:

Radical Islam seeks dramatic change in society and the state by the unstinting implementation of shari’ā (Islamic law) and the upholding of Islamic principles. Radical Muslims tend to have a strictly literal interpretation of the Qur’ān, especially those sections relating to social relations, religious behaviour and the punishment of crimes, and also seek to adhere closely to the normative model based on the example of the Prophet Muhammad (known as the Sunnah) (Fealy, 2005, p. 12).

Based on this description, Fealy identifies four categories of radical Muslim groups, in Indonesia. First, non-violent political, educational and intellectual groups which include non-violent political groups such as *Hizbut Tahrir* and non-political *Salafi* study groups; Second, vigilante groups which have main agenda to stop prostitution, gambling and other ‘sinful activities’ such as The Islamic Defenders’ Front (Front Pembela Islam—FPI); Third, paramilitary groups such as *Laskar Jihad* and other ‘fighting units’ created by radical Muslim groups; Fourth, terrorist groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). (Fealy, 2005, p. 13).

Another important term which can be used to describe ‘radical’ Islamic groups which have political orientation to achieve formalisation of Islamic law is Islamism. According to Barton ‘Islamism is a response to modernity that ha
s transformed the religion of Islam into political ideology’ (Barton, 2004, p. 29). Current studies on Islamism generally define Islamists as Muslim groups or organisations which promote the idea of the formalisation of Islamic law. This formalisation may be variously pursued with strategies ranging from the partial inclusion of Islamic law in the constitutions or regulations of governments in the local and national level, to the establishment of Islamic states or the establishment of a global Islamic caliphate (See for instance, Platzdasch, 2009 and Hilmy, 2010).

The term ‘salafi’ is also highly contested. The term is commonly used to claim the ‘ambition’ to return to the so called ‘pure Islam’ as ‘practiced by the *Salaf al-Shalih*
(pious ancestors)’, namely the first three generations of the followers of the prophet Muhammad. The dominant Salafi movement tends to adopt ‘a stance of political quietism’ with the main concern to purify Islam ‘for a revival of strict religious practice that would develop and guard the moral integrity of individuals’ (Hasan, 2006: 31). They focus their activities on peaceful Islamic propagation through the mosques, Islamic schools and other types of educational institutions. In Indonesia, the idea of salafism is mainly introduced in various educational institutions such as Islamic schools and Arabic learning centres which receive funding from the government of Saudi Arabia or private institutions in Saudi Arabia (Chaplin, 2014). The Salafi Jihadi category is a small faction of global and transnational Salafi movement which has a political orientation to restore the existence of transnational Islamic caliphate by promoting militaristic Jihad as the instrument to achieve the power. A more detailed description of Salafi Jihadi movement in Indonesia will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Conclusion

The media with their distinct characteristics have specifically played an important role in the shift from the personal oral authority to the impersonal print authority and finally to the multimodal authority in the era of the internet. Islamic religious authority in Indonesia has transformed from the traditional ‘centre-periphery’ model to the more complex ‘network’ model. The old centre-periphery relations model between the holy city Mecca as the centre and Indonesia as one of the peripheries has been challenged by the proliferation of various centres of Islamic religious authority. This proliferation is mainly facilitated by the collapsed of the New Order authoritarian regime, higher mobility of Muslim scholars and the development of information and communication technology. This proliferation of religious authority has facilitated many different ways of imagining or re-imagining the ummat as the vision of Muslims. The following chapter will specifically discuss different interpretations of jihad over a long period of the history of Indonesia as another important aspect in the process of re-imagination of ummat.
CHAPTER 4
The discourse of jihad in Indonesia

This chapter looks at various interpretations of jihad, globally and in Indonesia, through a range of historic periods. The discussion is focused on the question of how the global discourse of jihad has developed historically and the implications of this development in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The chapter specifically discusses how this trajectory has influenced the Indonesian interpretations of the doctrine of jihad. I start the chapter by outlining interpretations of the Qur'anic meaning of jihad, then review several works on the politicisation of jihad in the global context, followed by investigating the historical trajectory of the discourse of jihad in Indonesia. The chapter argues that (a) the meaning of jihad in the history of Islam is highly contested depending on the surrounding social and political context and (b) the contemporary Indonesian discourse of jihad is not autonomous, but rather that it is best understood in the global contest over the meaning of jihad.

The meaning of jihad in the Qur’an

Jihad is an important part of Islamic teaching. The word jihad is derived from the Arabic word *jahada* which literally meant to struggle, to strive or to put effort into achieving an objective and it did not have any direct relationship to war or violence (M.H. Hassan, 2006). According to Al-Qaradhawi (2011), the word jihad (noun) and its derivative forms are mentioned 34 times in the Qur’an and the words are derived from the singular verb *jahada*. According to Lane (1863, p. 473), in his work *An Arabic-English lexicon*, the verb *jahada* can be translated as ‘He strove, laboured or toiled; exerted himself or his power or efforts or endeavours or ability; employed himself vigorously, strenuously, laboriously, diligently, studiously, sedulously, earnestly, or with energy; was diligent or studious; took pains or extraordinary pains’. In the English version of the Qur’an the word *jahada* is commonly translated as ‘to strive’. One example of a verse which contains the word jihad is the Qur’an chapter 9: 20. In three examples of the most popular English translations of this verse, the word *Jahadu* in this verse is translated as strive (Abdullah Yusuf Ali), striven (Muhammad MW Pickthall), and strove hard (Mohammed H Syakir). The complete translations of the verse from these three different translators can be observed in the table below.
Table 4.1: Translations of the Qur’an Chapter 9: 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>English translation of the Qur’an chapter 9: 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abdullah Yusuf Ali</td>
<td>Those who believe, and suffer exile and <strong>strive</strong> with might and main, in Allah’s cause, with their goods and their persons, have the highest rank in the sight of Allah: they are the people who will achieve (salvation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhammad Marmaduke William Pickthall</td>
<td>Those who believe, and have left their homes and <strong>striven</strong> with their wealth and their lives in Allah’s way are of much greater worth in Allah’s sight. These are they who are triumphant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammed Habib Shakir</td>
<td>Those who believed and fled (their homes), and <strong>strove hard</strong> in Allah’s way with their property and their souls, are much higher in rank with Allah; and those are they who are the achievers (of their objects).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.alquran-english.com/9-at-taubah/

There is no connection found, in the abovementioned verse, between the word *jahadu* as the verb form of the noun jihad (translated in the texts above as strive, striven or strove hard) and war or violent action. Further, the verse mentioned above indicates two different types of jihad; namely jihad through the use of wealth and jihad through the use of life force. The description of jihad in a more general meaning as the use of one’s utmost power in any endeavour is also supported by the history or the revelation of the Qur’an. According to Al-Qaradhawi (2011), some of the verses in the Qur’an which mention jihad have been revealed during the peaceful period in Mecca several years before the prophet Muhammad immigrated to Medina and started to wage the war against non-believers (Al-Qaradhawi, 2011). This historical analysis supports the opinion that jihad meant struggle before it became associated with war or violence (Romli & Sjadzili, 2004).

In Islamic scholarship, the doctrine of jihad can be implemented in many forms of actions. Ar-Raghib Al-Ashfahani (died 1108/1109), an early twelfth century classic Islamic scholar, classified three different forms of jihad, namely the struggle to fight against enemies, the struggle to fight against the devil and the struggle to fight against inappropriate desire. Another Islamic scholar, Ibnul Qayyim (1292-1350), classified the

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6 Muslims believe that the Qur’an was verbally revealed by God to Muhammad gradually over period of approximately 23 years.
application of jihad into thirteen stages which includes different types of struggle such as the struggle against lust and devils, the struggle against destruction, wrong-doing and hypocrisy, the struggle in Islamic preaching and also physical struggle with weapons (Al-Qaradhawi, 2011). In addition, Moniruzzaman argues that

The main objective of Islam is to eradicate anti-social elements that are harmful to human society. Such elements could be of various natures such as political oppression or injustice, economic exploitation, moral decadence, social crimes, administrative discrimination and corruption, environmental degradation and threats, and military brutality and oppression. Islam uses the concept of jihad as a value-based “ultimate effort” (the literal meaning of jihad) to eliminate these harmful elements in order to make human society safer and more peaceful. Jihad provides moral sanction to fight against anything unjust and threatening for human society. This is the fundamental philosophical objective of the concept of jihad. However, during the early period of Islamic expansion (622–750 CE), the term gained extensive legitimacy in military use, which remains prevalent until today (Moniruzzaman, 2008, p. 2).

These various historical and etymological interpretations of jihad indicate that its contemporary use referring to religious violence and war reflects a partial reinterpretation of the meaning of jihad.

**Various interpretations of jihad in the global context**

In the history of Islam, the interpretation of the Arabic word jihad has been politicised by many states and Muslim communities for many reasons. Esposito supports the opinion that the interpretation of jihad is highly politicised, he argues:

The doctrine of jihad is not the product of a single authoritative individual or organization’s interpretation. It is rather the product of diverse individuals and authorities interpreting and applying the principles of sacred texts in specific historical and political contexts. (Esposito, 2002, p. 64)

Although the Qur’anic origins of the term jihad are not specifically related to war, classical Islamic legal texts developed by Muslim jurists in the post-prophetic period (especially in the seventh and eight centuries) played an important role in the association of the term jihad with war (Saeed, 2002). Saeed further argues that the ‘classical doctrine of jihad thus became closely associated with the Islamic doctrine of war and peace’ which is ‘largely equivalent to the modern doctrine of defence of the homeland’ (Saeed, 2002: 74, 79). In addition, jihad was also used for many reasons including the justification of early Arab conquests of non-Muslim lands and also the justification of Muslims’ struggle against colonialism and communism in many parts of the world (R. Hassan, 2006).
More systematically, R. Hassan (2008) classifies the articulation of the term jihad as an armed struggle into several stages from the formative stage of jihad to the jihad in contemporary Muslim world. He argues that in the formative stage (7th century), the doctrine of jihad was constructed as an individual’s duty to establish an Islamic identity, while in the empire stage (8th-16th centuries), it was employed to motivate and mobilise Muslim communities to establish Islamic hegemony. During the colonization of Muslim countries (17th-19th centuries), the doctrine of jihad was mainly used as an ideology of resistance against the colonialists and in the post-colonial and cold war period (mid to late 20th century), this doctrine was used to mobilise many different actions including the struggle for Islamic states in many parts of the world and the fight against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The uses of jihad since the post-cold war period (1990 to the present) in the context of military and political struggles have become far more diverse and include describing the struggle for Islamic states, offensive jihad against the west/US and current martyrdom operations in several predominantly Muslim countries (R. Hassan, 2008). The continuous use of the doctrine of jihad to justify armed struggle in the post- cold war period is mainly promoted by the contemporary global and transnational Salafi Jihadi group group, an armed movement which started in Afghanistan during the fight against the Soviet Union and has since developed in many parts of the world.

During the colonial period, many Muslim scholars started to restrict the use of jihad as a militaristic struggle. According to them, jihad as an armed struggle could only be undertaken to liberate Muslims from religious oppression (Peters, 1979). Peters further argues that this restricted interpretation in the colonial period was first introduced in India in the 1870s by leaders who wanted to contain the conflict between Indian Muslims and the British colonialists. A prominent representative of Indian Muslims during this period, Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), promoted this interpretation:

by restricting the scope of jihad-obligation to wars for religious reasons, i.e. armed struggle in order to defend Moslems (sic) against religious oppression, and excluding from it wars for temporal reasons like e.g. (sic) wars for territorial conquest or armed resistance against civil oppression (Peters, 1979, p. 160).

Indian Muslim scholar Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (born 1925) argues that the ‘armed struggle’ perspective of jihad was historically used to defend the freedom of belief and worship. Khan (as cited in Omar, 2008) specifically argues that in the situation when Muslims are free to practice their religion, there is no Qur’anic justification for the use of violence or waging a war to defend this freedom. More recently, this pacifist
interpretation of jihad is also found in a textbook of the Al-Azhar University Cairo published in 1984, written by a later sheikh Jadul Haq Ali Jadulhaq (1917-1996). He writes:

In earlier ages the sword was necessary for securing the path of the da’wa [propagation]. In our age, however, the sword has lost its importance, although the resort to it is still important for the case of defense against those who wish to do evil to Islam and its people. However, for the dissemination of the da’wa there are now a variety of ways...Those who focus on arms in our times are preoccupied with weak instruments (Jadulhaq as cited in Tibi, 2007, p. 57).

Many other Muslims believe that jihad as an internal struggle is more important than armed struggle. This perspective is mainly promoted by the ascetic movement in Islam which started in first half of the ninth century (Cook, 2001). The promoters of this perspective usually refer to a popular hadith (prophetic tradition) which distinguishes the greater jihad (spiritual struggle) and the smaller jihad (physical struggle). However, the justification for the distinction between the greater and the smaller jihad is weak because the quoted hadith is not included in one of the authoritative compilations of the prophetic traditions (Peters, 1979).

There has been no empirical research conducted about the number of Muslims who hold each different perspective of jihad. Several studies show partial information related to this issue. Sofjan (2006) conducted a survey about the attitude towards armed jihad in Indonesia and Iran in the early 2000s. The research shows that 46.7% of the Muslim respondents in Indonesia stated their willingness to participate in armed jihad and 61.2% of the Muslim respondents in Iran said yes when they asked about the willingness to participate in armed jihad. Although the willingness to participate in armed jihad does not necessarily lead to actual participation, these numbers show a relatively high support for the implementation of armed jihad in response to the current world political order. Another survey conducted by R. Hassan shows a range of different attitudes of Muslims in predominantly Muslim countries towards the place of war in conflict resolution. In this survey more than 6300 Muslim respondents were asked the question: is war justified when other ways of settling international disputes fail? The agreement rates in response to this question in the Middle East and South Asian countries were higher (ranging from 58% in Iran, 63% in Egypt, to 66% in Turkey and Pakistan) than the rates for the respondents in Southeast Asian Muslim countries and Kazakhstan (ranging from 11% in Kazakhstan, 33% in Indonesia, to 37% in Malaysia) (R. Hassan, 2008). Both surveys indicate Muslims in different parts of the world express different attitudes towards armed jihad and war in contemporary world
order. Based on his study on the historical trajectory of the doctrine of jihad, Hassan concludes that

the nature of the jihad doctrine and its expression have been profoundly shaped by historical and material conditions prevailing in Muslim societies (R. Hassan, 2008, p. 126).

**Jihad in Indonesia**

Historically, Islam in Indonesia has been widely regarded as a variant of moderate and tolerant Islam (See for instance Pringle, 2010; Feillard and Madinier, 2011). The arrival of Islam in Indonesia was generally described as a peaceful process through many generations of trade and the dissemination of Islamic mysticism by foreign Sufi leaders. However, the spread of Islam across the archipelago was not entirely a peaceful process, especially after the establishment of Islamic states in several parts of Indonesia. The wars between states in the early history of Indonesia were often influenced by religious causes apart from dynastic, strategic or economic causes (Ricklefs, 2008).

**Armed jihad in nineteenth century Indonesia**

In the early history of Indonesia, the interpretation of jihad as a defensive armed struggle was promoted by resistance movements against the colonial occupation. Many Muslim fighters who have participated in the war against the colonial occupation, including the leaders of Islamic kingdoms in Aceh, Java, Sulawesi and Moluccas, used the doctrine of jihad to mobilise people to fight against the colonialists. For instance, in the early 1820s the leaders of Padri movement in West Sumatra declared ‘jihad’ to mobilise their followers in the fight against the Dutch (Anwar, 2011). In research on *Babad Diponegoro*, a book written by Diponegoro, Anwar (2011) argues that:

The Padri war illustrates how a religious impulse from the outside-reform Islam—was able to radicalize existing *tarekat* (sufi order or brotherhood) and *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school), thus transforming groups of teachers and pupils into insurgent armies that fought the ‘corrupt’ Islam of the villages as well as the expanding colonial state (pp. 210-211).

During the Java war against the Dutch in 1825-1830, Diponegoro, a Javanese Muslim hero and an iconic figure of Indonesian nationhood, used the term *sabil* as an abbreviation of the term *jihad fi sabillah* (struggling in the way of God) to motivate his followers to fight against the Dutch (Anwar, 2011). In research on *Babad Diponegoro*, a book written by Diponegoro, Anwar (2011) argues:
In *Babad Diponegoro* jihad is interpreted as war against non-believers who have attacked, displaced and robbed Muslims. Jihad is also interpreted as war against the apostates or Muslims who have helped the non-believers in the aggression against Muslims. [Di dalam Babad Diponegoro, jihad dimaknai dengan perang melawan orang kafir yang telah melakukan penyerangan, pengusiran dan perampasan terhadap umat Islam. Jihad juga diartikan berperang melawan orang-orang Islam yang membantu orang kafir dalam memusuhi dan melakukan agresi terhadap umat Islam yang dianggap sebagai orang-orang yang telah keluar dari agama (murtad)]. (p. 127).

The doctrine of ‘*Perang Sabil* (holy war)’ was also found in the Aceh war (1873-1912). This doctrine was written in a literary work titled *Hikayat Perang Sabil/Prang Sabi* (Epic of the Holy War) which has been used to motivate the Acehnese fighters in the war against the Dutch (Ahmad, 2006). These historical studies suggest that in the early colonial occupation of Indonesia, the doctrine of jihad has been used by Muslim leaders as a justification to motivate and mobilise their followers in the fight against the colonial rulers and their supporters.

**A turn towards peaceful jihad**

During the twentieth century Dutch colonial rule, Islamic movements in Indonesia generally held accommodating attitudes towards the colonial authorities. This attitude was particularly shown by the traditionalist *Nahdhatul Ulama* (established in 1926) and the reformist counterparts such as *Al-Irsyad* (established in 1913), *Muhammadiyah* (established in 1912) and *Persatuan Islam* (established in 1923) (van Bruinessen, 2008). These organisations have focused on the dissemination of Islamic teaching through the establishment of various educational institutions and charitable activities. The Dutch agricultural policy during this period also played a significant role in the growth of Islamic culture, especially in East Java. The sugar cultivation areas developed by the Dutch colonial government gave rise to many *pesantren* (traditional Islamic boarding schools) which eventually became the institutional basis of traditionalist Islam (Pringle, 2010). The teaching of Islam in various Islamic educational institutions in this period was primarily focused on the understanding and the implementation of Islamic law and traditions in day-to-day life; as opposed to the political orientation of emerging contemporary Islamist groups in Indonesia. Arguably, as a consequence of this pacifist and accommodating attitude towards the Dutch, the discourse of armed jihad was not commonly found and employed in this period.

The emphasis on the pacifist interpretation of jihad can be found in the publication of an Indonesian Islamic party before Indonesian independence, *Sarekat*
Islam Party (Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia--PSII). In a pamphlet signed by Kartosuwiry in 1936, the author explained that ‘the “positive” struggle is the jihad of the tongue and the heart (the jihad al-akbar led by imam), and not that of sword—the jihad al-asghar, defined instead as negative and destructive’ (Formichi, 2012, p. 63).

The thinking of Kartosuwiry was dramatically changed in 1947, triggered by Indonesian politics after the Independence in 1945, when he called the ummat to undertake armed jihad against the colonialists and subsequently established the Darul Islam or the Indonesian Islamic State in 1949 (Formichi, 2012). The adoption of the pacifist interpretation of the doctrine of jihad during twentieth century Dutch colonial rule in Indonesia shows a pragmatic approach of Muslim groups in Indonesia in response to colonial occupation and echoes the attitude of Muslims in India during British colonial rule in the nineteenth century as discussed earlier in this chapter.

**National armed jihad after Indonesian independence (1945-2000)**

In the early years after Indonesian independence, mainstream Indonesian Muslims justified the fight against foreign troops as a defensive armed jihad to defend independence. In October 1945, hundreds of respected Muslim scholars from Nahdlatul Ulama declared the so called Resolusi Jihad (Jihad Resolution) to motivate their followers to defend Indonesian independence (Solahudin, 2011). This resolution was strengthened in the National Congress of Nahdlatul Ulama in March 1946 by the statement that participating in armed jihad against colonialists and their allies is fardhu‘ain (an individual obligation) for all Muslims, especially for those who live within 94 km of the enemy’s location.7

Waging war to reject and to fight against the colonialist is an individual obligation (Which has to be undertaken by every Muslim, man, woman, children, armed or unarmed) for those who live within 94 km of the enemy’s position [Berperang menolak dan melawan pendjadjah itoe fardloe ‘ain (jang harus dikerdjakan oleh tiap-tiap orang Islam, laki-laki, perempoean, anak-anak, bersendjata atau tidak) bagi orang jang berada dalam djarak lingkungan 94 km. dari tempat masoek dan kedoeoekan moeseoh] (El-Guyanie, 2010, p. 79-80).

The discourse of armed jihad during the struggle to defend Indonesian independence was also supported by the publication of several books on jihad in Indonesian language. For instance, two books titled Penuntun perang sabil (A guide for a holy war) written

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7 The distance of 94 km is derived from the minimum distance by wich a traveller may shorten his prayer or combine two prayers into one prayer. There are many different opinions of Muslim scholars concerning the distance that constitute ‘travel’, some of them consider one, two or three days travel on a camel on average speed as the minimum distance and some of them argue that the travel is not defined by ‘how much one has travelled but by what one does and how one prepares for it’ (Qadhi, 2011).
by M Arsjad Th Lubis and *Ilmu pertahanan negara dan kemiliteran dalam Islam* (A study of national defence and military in Islam) written by Muhammad Hasbi Ash Shiddiqiy were published in early 1946 and these books had been used as a guide by Islamic troops such as *Hizbullah* [the party of Allah] and *Sabilillah* [the way of Allah] (Solahudin, 2011). During this struggle, the term *perang sabil* which had been used during the Java war (1825-1830) and the Aceh war (1873-1912) was also contextualised in the fight against colonialists. For instance, in a study of the role of Kartosuwiryo, the founder of the *Darul Islam* (Indonesian Islamic State--NII), in the development of political Islam in Indonesia, Chiara Formichi quoted a statement of Kartosuwiryo’s that the term *perang sabil* can be interpreted as ‘a war for the defence of the sovereignty of the state, and the purity of religion, a war to fight any attempt to colonization from any nation in any way’ (Kartosuwiryo as cited in Formichi, 2012, p. 104).

In Indonesian history, Local armed jihad was not only directed at the colonialists but also against the perceived un-Islamic government established after Indonesian independence. In August 1949, Kartosuwiryo proclaimed the *Darul Islam*, the first rebellion after Indonesian became independent. Before establishing the *Darul Islam* movement, Kartosuwiryo was a prominent member of the anti-colonial *Sarekat Islam* party (Formichi, 2012). Kartosuwiryo cited his disappointment with the early form of the Indonesian secular government and the result of the so called Roem-van Royen Agreement between Indonesian government and the Dutch as justifications for starting the rebellion by proclaiming an Indonesian Islamic state (*Darul Islam*) (van Dijk, 1981). The *Darul Islam* rebellion started in West Java and then spread to parts of Central Java, South Kalimantan, South Sulawesi and Aceh. Van Dijk argues that the *Darul Islam* movement was ‘the result of a combination of conflicts of interests and outlooks within the Armed Forces, resistance to an increasingly pervasive central authority, gradual changes in the agrarian structure, and Islamic views and ideals’ (van Dijk, 1981, p. 9). The Islamic views of Kartosuwiryo were particularly influential in the establishment of the *Darul Islam* in East Java. While van Dijk mainly frames the *Darul Islam* as a rebellion using Islam as the justification, Formichi argues that in the establishment of the *Darul Islam*, Islam was not ‘just a means for rallying popular support or as a rhetorical exercise for gaining legitimacy, but rather as the ideological foundation of Kartosuwiryo’s activities’ (Formichi, 2012, p. 6). In addition to the basic

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8 Roem-van Royen agreement was an agreement between the Indonesian government and the Dutch to cease the war. The agreement was signed on May 7 1949. Many educated Indonesians at that time criticised that ‘the terms of the agreement called for a surrender of Indonesian interests’ (Kahin, 2003, p. 426).
constitution, the *Darul Islam* established a criminal law which contained the justification for an armed jihad against anyone who disobeyed the Islamic state’s government. Kartosuwiryo’s rebellion was ended after his arrest and the defeat of his troops in 1962. He was sentenced to death and executed by the Indonesian military on one of the islands in the Thousand Islands (*Pulau Seribu*) off the coast of Jakarta in September 1962. Kartosuwiryo’s idea of armed jihad or *perang sabil* through the establishment of *Darul Islam* was sustained by a small number of his followers in Tasikmalaya, West Java, but *Darul Islam* never again became a serious threat to the Indonesian government (Solahudin, 2011). Nevertheless, during the first years of the Indonesian republic, *Darul Islam* propagated an interpretation of jihad as armed struggle for the political consolidation of Islam.

During the transition from the Old Order to the New Order, the doctrine of armed jihad was used to mobilise the fight against Indonesian communists. The clash between the Indonesian Communist Party and Muslim groups in Indonesia started in 1948 after the growing influence of the communist party with its ‘secularist doctrine’ and its strong link with the Eastern block in the Cold War. The first violent confrontation erupted in September 1948 when a communist-led uprising erupted in the city of Madiun East Java (Feillard and Madinier, 2011, p. 19). Then, the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) was blamed for the attempted military coup of 30 September/1 October 1965 after Soeharto took power defeating the coup. At least half a million so-called Communist Party members were killed by the military, supported by Muslim and nationalist militias (Ricklefs, 2008). The former members of *Darul Islam*, who had surrendered and pledged loyalty to the Indonesian government, were mobilised by the Indonesian Intelligence Agency to support the fight against the members of Indonesian Communist Party (Solahudin, 2011). *Nahdhatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah*, the two biggest Muslim organisations in Indonesia, supported this fight by declaring a *fatwa* that the fight against communists was a legitimate jihad. *Nahdlatul Ulama* declared the jihad *fatwa* in its publication *Duta Masyarakat* and *Muhammadiyah* published the *fatwa* in its weekly magazine *Suara Muhammadiyah* no. 9 November 1965 (see Boland: 1982; Hefner, 2000). For instance, *Muhammadiyah*’s statement clearly mentioned that

the extermination of the GESTAPU/PKI [30 September affair/Indonesian Communist Party] and the NEKOLIM [abbreviation for ‘neo-colonialist imperialists’] is a religious duty…And because this action and this struggle must be carried out by consolidating all our strength—mental, physical and material—therefore this action and this struggle are nothing less than a Holy War (*Djihad*) (Boland, 1982, p. 146).
In addition, Hefner (2000) argues that the dispute over the land reform policy had strengthened the conflict between Indonesian Communist Party members and Muslim leaders in rural areas of Central and East Java. However, according to Boland, the group’s attitude toward religion was the main reason behind the conflict between Indonesian Muslims and the members of Indonesian Communist Party. He argues:

Whatever the proper explanation may be of the events of September 30th, 1965 and thereafter, to the Muslim way of thinking it was a “holy war” against atheistic Communism, the archenemy of religion (Boland, 1982, p. 147).

Therefore, during the fight against communism, the doctrine of jihad was politicised by the Indonesian government and mainstream Muslim organisations to justify the eradication of communism and the killing of Indonesian Communist Party members.

After Kartosuwiryo was sentenced to death in 1962, his idea was sustained by his followers in 1970’s clandestine armed jihad’s organisations commonly known as the Komando Jihad (the command of jihad) in Java and Sumatra and transformed into the Aceh Independent Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka-GAM) in Aceh. The Komando Jihad organisation was responsible for several armed robberies and several bombing actions mainly targeting Christian facilities in Sumatra (Solahudin, 2011). Many prominent members of the Komando Jihad were arrested and taken into custody in 1977. Several other prominent members continued to operate the Darul Islam as a clandestine organisation and recruited new followers. In the early 1980s the Darul Islam members strengthened their opposition to Soeharto and planned a revolution against the New Order government inspired by the revolution in Iran. The New Order government was seen by the remaining followers of Darul Islam as increasingly developing anti-Islamic policies especially by the declaration of Pancasila as the sole organising principle (asas tunggal) for the states, political parties and mass organisations. The Islamic revolutionary plan which included the plan to assassinate Soeharto and bombing plans targeting Borobudur temple in Central Java and a temple in Bali, ended in failure (Solahudin, 2011). In the case of GAM, Islam was seen as an element of Aceh’s national identity. Therefore, the doctrine of jihad was used mainly to motivate individual fighters and not a central ideology of the organisation. According to Aspinall (2009),

Acehnese nationalism built on a substratum of religion. Islamic vocabulary provided nationalist discourse with much of its affective power, conferring a transcendent quality on the nation and on those who sacrificed themselves for it. But Islam was not central to GAM’s political program. Instead it had become a source of individual moral motivation for those who fought in the nation’s name, and a feature of the Acehnese identity the sought to defend (p. 216).
These clandestine organisations were almost eradicated by the New Order regime and several prominent members of the Darul Islam went into exile in Malaysia or joined military training in Afghanistan to avoid prosecution from the Indonesian government (Solahudin, 2011). After the fall of Soeharto, these jihadi groups which previously promoted local struggles then become a ‘major recruiting ground’ for the contemporary transnational jihadi movement in Indonesia (Bubalo and Fealy, 2005, p. 16).  

The idea of armed jihad re-emerged after the collapse of the New Order. Another local armed jihad movement emerged through the establishment of the Laskar Jihad (the soldiers of jihad) in response to the conflict between Muslims and Christians in the Moluccas archipelago in eastern Indonesia. Laskar Jihad was created in 2000 as a military wing of FKA JW (Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah wal Jama’ah) which was established by a Salafi Muslim leader, Ja’far Umar Thalib, in 1998. Thalib framed the conflict as the fight of Indonesian Muslims against the perceived Christian rebellion. He argued that:

The Moluccan conflict is a rebellion launched by Christians in the Moluccas under the operation code “Troops of Christ, God of Love and Affection.” It is a Crusade whose aim is to expel all Muslims from the islands, on which a Christian State of Alifuru (which includes Papua, the Moluccas, Eastern Nusa Tenggara, and East Timor) will be established, separated from the Republic of Indonesia (Thalib in Hasan 2006, p. 115).

The existence of Laskar Jihad generated special attention from many people worldwide because of the movement’s use of the internet to disseminate the information about the conflict from FKA JW’s perspective. FKA JW maintained a website www.Laskarjihad.or.id which provided daily updates from the conflict site (Brauchler, 2004).

As these examples show, the doctrine of jihad has been used by various Muslim groups in Indonesia from the early years of Indonesian independence to the early 2000s to justify fights against different types of perceived enemies. These perceived enemies include colonial troops, un-Islamic Indonesian government, the followers of the Indonesian Communist Party and also the perceived Christian rebellion in the Molluccas. These struggles were generally situated in the context of national struggles, where the grievances to be addressed were specifically Indonesian issues. This changed under the influence of the transnational Salafi Jihadi movement in early 2000s.

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9 More detailed information about the transformation from the Darul Islam to Jemaah Islamiyah can be found in a book written by Solahudin titled NII sampai JI: Salafi Jihadisme di Indonesia published by Komunitas Bambu in 2011. This book was translated in English by Dave McRave under the title The root of terrorism in Indonesia: From Darul Islam to Jema’ah Islamiyah and published by NewSouth Publishing with a support from Lowy Institute for International Policy in 2013.
From the start of this century, a more transnational outlook has been imported into Indonesia. The Salafi Jihadi movement gained momentum in Afghanistan from the early 1980s. This ideology developed as a combination of the ideology of Ikhwanul Muslimin (Islamic Brotherhood) introduced by Sayyid Qutb in Egypt and Abul A’la Al-Maududi in Pakistan, and the Salafi ideology that drew upon the ideas presented by Ibn Taimiyya and Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab (As-Suri, 2009). The development and the expansion of Salafi Jihadism was supported by the arrival of mujahid (holy fighters) from many parts of the world in Pakistan and Afghanistan to fight against the invasion of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The ideology of Salafi Jihadism was brought to Indonesia by some prominent members of Darul Islam who went to Afghanistan during their exile in Malaysia, such as Abdullah Sungkar, Abu Bakar Ba’syir and Abu Rusdan. After returning from Malaysia they rebelled from Darul Islam and established a new organisation known as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) (Solahudin, 2011). Salafi Jihadi groups are regarded as a rebel group or Kharijite10 by the dominant Salafi movement in Indonesia, because the mainstream Salafi movement focuses on moral and ritual issues rather than political issues. The mainstream Salafi movement also disagrees with jihadis’ tendency to delegitimise the governments which are regarded as un-Islamic, including the Indonesian government (International Crisis Group, 2004).

Several studies suggest that the Salafi Jihadi interpretation of jihad entered the Indonesian public sphere in the early 2000s, partly through the publication of numerous books written by the Salafi Jihadis from Indonesia and overseas, in addition to the outbreak of terrorist actions in New York in September 2001 and the massive media coverage following the actions (See for instance International Crisis Group, 2008; Zada et al., 2010). Many books written by prominent global Salafi Jihadi such as Abdullah Azzam, Usamah bin Ladin and Aiman Azh-Zhawahiri have been translated into the Indonesian language and many of the publishers have a connection with Jemaah Islamiyah (International Crisis Group, 2008). In addition, Bali bombing detainees known as the ‘Bali bombers’, Imam Samudra, Ali Ghufron and Amrozi, wrote and published several books to justify their action during their imprisonment. Imam Samudra wrote three books titled Aku melawan teroris [I fight the terrorists] (Solo:

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10 The Kharijites (Arabic, Khawarij) is the earliest Islamic sect known for their puritanism and fanaticism. This group rebelled against the fourth caliph, Ali bin Abi Thalib, and openly disobeyed and conspired against him.
Jazera, 2004), Sekuntum rosela pelipur lara: Catatan dan renungan dari penjara [A solace rosella: A note and reflection from the prison] (Jakarta: Arrahmah, 2009), and Jika masih ada yang mempertanyakakan jihadku: Sebuah catatan terakhir dari Nusakambangan [If anyone is still questioning my jihad: A final note from Nusakambangan] (Surabaya: Kafilah Syuhada Media Center, 2009). Ali Ghufron wrote two books titled Mimpi suci dari balik jeruji besi: Hikmah mimpi yang benar dan baik [A holy dream behind the bars: Wisdom of the true and good dream] (Jakarta: Arrahmah, 2009), and Risalah iman dari balik terali: Sebuah rahasia keteguhan hati seorang mukmin dan wasiat untuk kaum Muslimin [A faith treatise behind the bars: A secret of the determination of a believer and a testament for Muslims]. Amrozi wrote a book titled Senyum terakhir sang mujahid: Catatan kehidupan seorang Amrozi [The last smile of a fighter: A life record of Amrozi] (Jakarta: Ar Rahmah, 2009). Ali Ghufron stated explicitly in one of his books that the only jama'ah (Islamic group) which has been guaranteed freedom from hell is Al-jama’ah Al-jihadiyah As-salafiyah (the Salafi Jihadi group). The publication of these books and other books with similar themes indicates a trend toward radical jihad becoming increasingly acceptable as part of public discourse and in quantitative terms more prominent in Indonesian Islamic publications in the period of 1999-2009 (Zada, 2011).

The ideological position of these books is further supported by the establishment of many websites which are dedicated to promote the perspective of jihad as fundamentally an armed struggle. Many of these websites are anonymous but some have clear ownership and authorship such as Arrahmah (arrahmah.com) and Voice of Al-Islam (voa-islam.com). As will be illustrated in Chapter 6, both of these websites identify themselves as Islamic online news services and have created a special section on jihad and promote jihad as primarily an armed struggle. A more detailed description of the content of these websites is taken up in that chapter.

Indonesian Salafi Jihadi groups replicate the ideas of transnational Salafi Jihadis. According to Solahudin (2011), there are several characteristics of Salafi Jihadi’s doctrine that are different from the mainstream Salafi movement. First, Salafi Jihadis hold the opinion that there is no other legitimate meaning of jihad except war or physical struggle. The followers of this movement reject the interpretation that the greater jihad is a struggle against oneself. According to Abu Muhammad Jibriel, a prominent Salafi Jihadi leader, the hadith which distinguishes the greater and the lesser jihad is a false hadith and therefore could not be used as a reference. He further asserts that the greater jihad is not the struggle against desire but fighting against non-believers
who have fought Muslims (Jibriel, 2009). Second, Salafi Jihadis regard jihad in the form of armed struggle as a fardhu ‘ain (an individual obligation) for all Muslims today and terrorising enemies is allowed in jihad. A specific example can be found in the book written by Imam Samudra, one of the masterminds of the first Bali Bombing, as the justification for his participation in the first Bali bombing in 2002. He wrote confidently in his book that the obligation to participate in armed jihad has become an individual responsibility for Muslims all over the world and his action was a manifestation of jihad fi sabillah (struggle in the way of God) (Samudra cited in MH Hassan, 2006). Another mastermind of the Bali bombing, Ali Ghufron, contends that armed jihad has become obligatory because many Muslim countries are occupied by non-believers; many Muslim authorities have become apostates because they have rejected the implementation of Islamic law; the Islamic caliphate has disappeared; and the jails in many places are full of Muslim fighters (Ghufron, 2009). This distinct perspective on jihad is strongly influenced by the thinking of Abdullah Azzam the mentor of the leader of al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden. In his book Signs of ar-Rahman in the jihad of Afghan, he argues:

If the citizens of the Islamic state are unable to repel the enemy, or due to some reason do not engage in the Jihaad (sic), the duty then devolves on all those Muslims who are closest to the Muslims under attack. The Jihaad (sic) becomes Fardh-e-Ain (an individual obligation) upon them (Azzam, n.d., p. 60).

In addition, Salafi Jihadis also believe that political sovereignty is in the hand of God, therefore there is no accepted social and political regulation except Islamic law (Solahudin, 2011).

With regard to the position of jihad in Islamic piety, Salafi Jihiadi consider armed jihad as the best form of Islamic pieties. The prioritisation of armed jihad above other forms of Islamic pieties is a common feature of global Salafi Jihadism. This interpretation is particularly influenced by the thinking of a classic Islamic scholar Imam Ibn Nuhas, an Islamic scholar who died during the war against the Roman army in the year 814 Hijri in Egypt. In a book titled Mashari al-ashwaq ila masari al-ushaq’, which was used as part of the syllabus of study for the members of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt during the 1940s, Nuhas strongly argues in that book that armed struggle jihad ‘is the greatest deed of all’ and ‘mujahid (the fighter) is the greatest of all people’ (Nuhas, n.d., p. 29). Several prominent Salafi Jihiadi in Indonesia echo this opinion. For instance, Ali Ghufron, in one of his books, states that jihad is the most preferred deed by the prophet Muhammad, his companions and those who follow the prophet’s companions (Ghufron, 2009). Abu Muhammad Jibriel, a prominent leader of Indonesian
Mujahidin Council *Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia*-MMI, also holds a similar opinion, he contends

...jihad is a noble deed and it has positioned in the highest degree compared to other deeds. jihad is the only piety which has become the defence and the salvation of all Islamic teaching and its position could not be replaced by other deeds. [...] jihad merupakan amalan mulia dan paling tinggi derajatnya berbanding dengan amalan-amalan lain, bahkan jihad *fie sabiilllah* merupakan satu-satunya amal shalih yang menjadi benteng dan penyelamat seluruh ajaran Islam, dan kedudukannya tidak bisa digantikan dengan amalan yang lain.] (Jibriel, 2009, p. 7).

Despite their similar interpretation of jihad, there are also rivalries among *Salafi Jihadi* groups in Indonesia. After the collapse of *Jemaah Islamiyah*, Abu Bakar Ba’asyir and his followers founded the Indonesian Mujahidin Council in 2000. However, in 2008 Abu Bakar Ba’asyir resigned from MMI because of a dispute over the organisation’s leadership structure and established a new organisation named *Jamah Ansharut Tauhid* (JAT) (International Crisis Group, 2010). Abu Bakar Ba’asyir declared JAT as a non-violence-organisation, but not long after its establishment, several members of JAT were arrested and accused for their involvement in terrorist actions and an illegal military training in Aceh 2010 (International Crisis Group, 2011). Another split occurred after the declaration of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria in 2014. Abu Bakar Ba’asyir decided to pledge loyalty to the Islamic State, but many prominent members of JAT opposed this decision and established a new organisation named *Jamaah Ansharusy Syariah* (JAS) in August 2014 (*Arrahmah*, 11 August 2014).

It is difficult to identify the precise vehicles by which the ideology of *Salafi Jihadism* first spread in Indonesia. The activities of *Salafi Jihadi* groups are mostly conducted underground. In early 2010, a training camp which was established by an alliance of major *Jihadi* groups in Indonesia was found in Aceh and approximately 200 members were arrested by Indonesian authorities. In addition to this training camp, other smaller activities were noticeable in Medan, North Sumatra; Poso, Central Sulawesi; Solo, Central Java; Bima, West Nusatenggara; and part of East Kalimantan (International Crisis Group, 2012).

**Contextual jihad in contemporary Indonesia**

Despite the use of jihad to justify militaristic struggle, there is still a moderate majority who considered jihad to be a peaceful struggle. Van Bruinessen’s research shows that only a very small number of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia have a
connection with Islamic political oriented organisations such as the transnational Islamic Brotherhood or the local _Darul Islam_ movement (van Bruinessen, 2008). In his research about _pesantren_ in Indonesia, Lukens-Bull (2005) suggests that the mainstream _pesantren_ in Indonesia tend to develop a distinct identity of ‘Islamic modernity’ by emphasising the teaching of ‘peaceful jihad’ within their education system (p. 129). The interpretation of jihad as necessarily an armed struggle against non-believers is rejected by the mainstream Muslim organisations in the twenty-first century Indonesian context especially the state-sponsored Indonesian Ulema Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia-MUI) and the two biggest non-government organisations _Muhammadiyah_ and _Nahdlatul Ulama_. They argue that jihad can take place through non-violent struggle for the development of Islamic communities. In a _fatwa_ in 2004, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), the official Muslim clerical body in Indonesia, contends that jihad can be interpreted in two different forms; namely jihad as a struggle to fight and defend Islam from the aggression of the enemies and jihad as any serious and sustainable endeavour to protect and uphold the religion of Allah (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 2004). This opinion is also supported by the two biggest Muslim organisations in Indonesia, _Muhammadiyah_ and _Nahdlatul Ulama_. In the official document of the latest national congress in 2010, _Muhammadiyah_ states:

> In the enlightenment movement, _Muhammadiyah_ interprets and implements jihad as an endeavour to mobilise all abilities in manifesting the advancement, justice, prosperity, dignity and sovereignty of human life. Jihad in _Muhammadiyah's_ perspective is not a struggle with violence, conflict and hostility. In response to the complex problems and challenges, Muslims should reconsider their strategy from the struggle against something to the struggle to face something by providing the best alternative answers for a better life. [Dalam gerakan pencerahan, Muhammadiyah memaknai dan mengaktualisasikan jihad sebagai ikhtiar mengerahkan segala kemampuan (_badlul-juhdi_) untuk mewujudkan kehidupan seluruh umat manusia yang maju, adil, makmur, bermartabat, dan berdaulat. Jihad dalam pandangan Muhammadiyah bukanlah perjuangan dengan kekerasan, konflik, dan permusuhan. Umat Islam dalam berhadapan dengan berbagai permasalahan dan tantangan kehidupan yang kompleks dituntut untuk melakukan perubahan strategi dari perjuangan melawan sesuatu (_al-jihad li-al-mu'aradah_) kepada perjuangan menghadapi sesuatu (_al-jihad li-al-muwajahah_) dalam wujud memberikan jawaban-jawaban alternatif yang terbaik untuk mewujudkan kehidupan yang lebih utama.] (Muhammadiyah, 2010, p. 20).

Similar statements can also be found in the official website of _Nahdlatul Ulama_. In an article titled ‘Jihad from the perspective of Islamic law [Jihad menurut syariat Islam]’, the author argues:

> The term jihad can be interpreted as struggle, but not all struggles are necessarily identical with physical struggle. In Islam, jihad can be classified into three different forms. First, physical struggle such as the battle of Badr, the Indonesian’s war against the Dutch colonization, the war in Iran and Iraq against
the US and its allies etc. This jihad can be categorized as the small jihad. Second, spiritual jihad, namely the war against desire such as purifying the heart from the doubt of the God, arrogance, jealousy, despotism, vanity and so on. This jihad can be categorized as the great jihad. Third, the biggest jihad (the biggest struggle or the ultimate jihad), namely the combination of physical and spiritual struggle such as teaching, building Islamic schools and prayer facilities and so on. [Jihad secara istilah memang dapat diartikan sebagai perjuangan. Tetapi tidak selamanya perjuangan itu identik dengan fisik. Karena dalam Islam jihad dapat kelompokkan menjadi tiga macam. Pertama jihad jasmani yaitu perjuangan fisik, seperti perang badar, perang Indonesia melawan penjajahan Belanda, perang Irak-Iran melawan Sekutu, dan lain-lain. Jihad ini dikategorikan sebagai jihad ashghar (jihad kecil). Kedua jihad ruhani yaitu yaitu memerangi hawa nafsu, seperti membersihkan hati dari syak atau keraguan kepada Allah, sombong, iri hati, zholim, ujab dan lain-lainnya yang termasuk sifat-sifat tercela. jihad ini dikategorikan sebagai jihad akbar (jihad besar). Ketiga “jihad akbarul akbar” atau jihad “ghayatul Akbar” (perjuangan yang paling besar atau puncak jihad) yaitu perpaduan antara perjuangan jasmani dan ruhani, seperti: mengajar, membangun madrasah, tempat-tempat ibadah dan lain-lain.] (NU Online, 2012).

Nahdlatul Ulama’s opinion is also strengthened by the statement of several individual prominent leaders of Nahdhatul Ulama such as Said Agil Siradj, the general chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama and Salahudin Wahid (the younger brother of the former general chairman of Nahdhatul Ulama and former Indonesian president from 1999 to 2001, Abdurrahman Wahid). In a meeting with Indonesian Muslim farmers, Siradj stated that Muslims should perform the correct jihad by improving economic conditions, improving the quality of life and defending the nation’s security. According to him, this contextual interpretation will help Muslims in Indonesia to gain a prosperous life (NU Online, 2010). In addition, Salahudin Wahid argues that the biggest jihad in the context of the Indonesian nation state is to fight against corruption and injustice (NU Online, 2013).

According to the mainstream moderate groups, the term perjuangan (struggle) is regarded as the most appropriate translation of the term jihad in Indonesian language. The term perjuangan in Indonesian language can be used more broadly and includes any kind of physical, intellectual or spiritual struggle. The struggle can be understood as war or battle if the term qital (fight) or harb (war) is specifically used in the Qur’an or hadith (prophetic traditions). The use of the term perjuangan can cover a broader meaning according to the social condition and the capabilities of Muslims in a particular time. The adaptation of the meaning of jihad with the social condition is a process of contextualisation and not a process of constriction of the doctrine of jihad (Romli & Sjadzili, 2004). Quraish Shihab, a prominent Indonesian scholar in the study of the Qur’an, supports this broad meaning of jihad. He says

11 The battle of Badr was one of the most famous battles in the early days of Islam.
eradicating illiteracy, poverty and diseases are types of jihad that are not less important than armed struggle. Scientists do their jihad by applying their knowledge, employees do their jihad with their best work, teachers with their excellent education, leaders with their justice, entrepreneurs with their honesty and so forth [...memberantas kebodohan, kemiskinan, dan penyakit adalah jihad yang tidak kurang pentingnya daripada mengangkat senjata. Ilmuwan berjihad dengan memanfaatkan ilmunya, karyawan bekerja dengan karya yang baik, guru dengan pendidikannya yang sempurna, pemimpin dengan keadilannya, pengusaha dengan kejujurannya, demikian seterusnya] (Shihab, 1996, p. 685).

This broad interpretation legitimises the use of jihad in every struggle in the context of development and social change in Indonesia.

In addition to the printed publications, several self-professed moderate Muslim groups have also published articles related to the broad meaning of jihad in their websites. For instance, The Center for Moderate Muslim (CMM) published numerous articles about jihad in response to the glorification of armed jihad by Salafi Jihadi leaders and their supporters.12 Islamlib.com, the website of the Islamic Liberal Network (Jaringan Islam Liberal-JIL) established in 2001 has also published several articles related to the contextual interpretation of jihad. In 2009, an NGO called Lazuardi Birru (literally sky blue) initiated a website which has published articles and e-books promoting the ‘contextual’ meaning of jihad in response to the use of jihad to justify terrorist actions in Indonesia. Republika, the most popular Islamic newspaper in Indonesia, has also supported the interpretation of jihad in a more general meaning. In the online version of the newspaper (www.republika.co.id), Republika has also published news items and opinions articulating the broad meaning of jihad. A more detailed analysis of the content of Republika Online representing the self professed moderate Muslims will be discussed in Chapter 5.

**Conclusion**

Jihad has been a contested doctrine across the world and through most periods of history. Arguably, the term jihad—which in Qur’an has a general meaning related to any exertion of strength--has been used by Muslim leaders to justify wars and interpreted by classical Muslim jurists as a doctrine of war and peace. On the other hand, the non-violent interpretation of jihad has also been promoted by moderate Muslim scholars to justify less antagonistic attitude towards colonial rulers during the colonial period and

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12 Unfortunately, the CMM website can not be accessed anymore because the publisher stopped the operation of the website in 2011.
maintaining a peaceful relationship with un-Islamic authorities and non-Muslims in general. This pacifist interpretation has also been promoted by contemporary moderate Muslims to denounce the use of jihad as the justification for many recent terrorist actions.

A similar pattern to the global trajectory of the interpretation of jihad can also be found in Indonesia. Islam arrived in Indonesia through a peaceful process, therefore the doctrine of armed jihad was largely absent in early Islamisation of Indonesia. However, since the establishment of Islamic states/kingdoms in several parts of Indonesia, the doctrine of armed jihad started to be used to justify the wars between the states and the fight against colonialists. Since the nineteenth century, mainstream Islamic movements in Indonesia have started to build an accommodating relationship with the colonial rulers. This moderate approach emphasised the pacifist interpretation of jihad and this interpretation has become a dominant attitude of the majority of Muslims in Indonesia.

The militaristic jihad tradition is generally a minority tradition in Indonesia. However, the idea has secured substantial following in particular periods of Indonesian history. In the early years of Indonesian independence, the doctrine of militaristic jihad was used by Islamic organisations to motivate Indonesian Muslims in the fight to defend independence and this justification was repeated in the fight against Indonesian communists in 1965--1966. During the New Order era the idea of militaristic jihad was used by small clandestine organisations to foment rebellion against the perceived anti-Islamic government.

After the fall of Soeharto’s authoritarian regime the doctrine of militaristic jihad was used to mobilise a paramilitary Islamic group during the conflict between Muslims and Christians in Ambon in 1999--2004. The doctrine of armed jihad has also been used by several non-mainstream Muslim groups to argue for the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia and the attack on non-Muslims and westerners. Former members of the Darul Islam returning from their exile have also introduced the ideology of transnational Salafi Jihadi movement into Indonesia. In contrast, the mainstream organisations especially Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah reject this transnational ideology and tend to promote the pacifist interpretation of jihad as a nationalist struggle in education, welfare and economic development. The media have been used by all groups to articulate different interpretations of jihad. Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrate how this contestation is presented in Islamic online news websites and discuss the contribution of these websites to the formation of contemporary Islamic identities in Indonesia.
CHAPTER 5

The ummat, contextual jihad and mainstream Muslim identity: The case of

Republika Online

This chapter elaborates on the ‘moderate’ Indonesian Muslim identity by analysing ummat and jihad as presented by Republika Online, an Islamic online news service in Indonesia. Republika is commonly described as the biggest ‘Islamic’ commercial newspaper in Indonesia. Based on the web popularity rank published by Alexa website traffic information service, Republika Online is the most popular Islamic online news service in Indonesia. In the list of ten most popular online news services in Indonesia, Republika Online is the only one which identifies itself as Islamic media. The term Islamic media can be broadly defined as the media which explicitly claim to serve the interests of Muslims. Although the Indonesian population is a predominantly Muslim, Islamic media are generally less popular than the ‘secular’ media category, so while Republika represents a mainstream Islamic audience and is by far the largest Indonesian news service with a professed Islamic editorial position, it is a relatively marginal news source in the Indonesian context.

The chapter argues Republika presents a distinctly Indonesian ummat and a contextual interpretation of jihad. These depictions, I argue, represent the view of the mainstream or the majority of Muslim groups in Indonesia which have tried to contextualise the universal Islamic teaching within the local culture. The chapter also argues that Republika tends to construct a ‘legitimising’ identity for mainstream Muslims in Indonesia. As discussed in chapters 3 and 4, scholars of Indonesian Islam usually identify two large Muslim organisations namely the traditionalist, Nahdhatul Ulama and the reformist, Muhammadiyah as the largest and most dominant organisations which have played an important role in the process of national identity building since the early twentieth century.

The analysis of Republika Online in this chapter is conducted mainly by employing analytical tools from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to uncover the interpretation of jihad and the tendency to construct a certain type of Muslim identity in the texts. The textual analysis is supported by a descriptive content analysis of news items published by Republika Online in order to gain a more comprehensive picture of the content of the websites. The analysis focuses on the items published in the ‘Dunia Islam’ section which publishes news on Islamic issues and events in Indonesia and overseas. I start by outlining the profile of Republika and briefly analyse the news
content in the Islamic section of Republika Online. I then go on to analyse the
description of ummat and jihad to understand the kind of reading public that is being
addressed by Republika.

The profile of Republika

Contradictory as it may sound as the following account shows, Republika is the biggest
Islamic commercial newspaper in Indonesia which is ‘broadly secular in its coverage of
events and issues, yet informed ideologically by Islamic values’ (Hill, 2007, p. 126).
The name of the newspaper ‘Republika’ is derived from the Latin’s word res publica
which literally means public affairs or the concern of the community and does not have
any particular connection with Islamic identity. Republika was established in 1993
under the holding company PT Abdi Bangsa (translated in English as ‘a servant of the
nation’), with strong support from the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals
(Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia--ICMI). Republika also initially received
significant support from Muslim business people such as Tanri Abeng, a prominent
Muslim business executive in 1990s. In mid-February 1993, Republika offered shares in
the newspaper to the public; but interestingly the shares could only be purchased by
Muslims and ‘could not be re-sold without the permission of the company’ (Hill, 2007,
p. 127). The reason behind this exclusive sale was to develop a sense of ownership from
Muslim families in Indonesia and to have as many Muslim families as possible
purchasing the shares, because every Muslim family could only purchase one share with
the price of 5000 rupiah (Utomo, 2010). This exclusive selling can be seen as part of
Republika’s marketing strategy to position themselves as representing the voice of
Muslims in Indonesia. Therefore, since its early establishment, Republika has developed
an integrated construction of nationalist and Islamic identity as the editorial position of
the newspaper. This exclusive selling was ended due to a financial crisis faced by the
company in 2000. At this point, several young Muslim businessmen took over the
majority of Republika’s share and in 2002 the company was listed on the Indonesian
Stock Exchange (previously called Jakarta Stock Exchange) and the shares became
available to the general public (Utomo, 2010).

In 2003, the holding company changed the name from PT Abdi Bangsa to
Mahaka Media and started a business expansion as a multimedia holding company with
two subsidiary business units, namely PT Pustaka Abdi Bangsa and PT Republika
Media Mandiri. The change of the name of the holding company from PT Abdi Bangsa

69
to *Mahaka Media* indicates a more commercial orientation rather than ideological orientation. The word ‘mahaka’ was apparently taken from a Javanese language dictionary which means the first step (Utomo, 2010). In 2004 the expansion of *Mahaka Media* was broadened and it currently owns significant shares in sixteen subsidiary business units which include *Harian Republika*—the largest Muslim daily newspaper in Indonesia, *Golf Digest Indonesia*—the No.1 Golf Magazine in Indonesia, *Alif TV*—an Islamic cable TV station (the name *Alif* is taken from the name of the first letter in the Arabic alphabet), *Jak TV*—a local Jakarta TV station, and *Gen FM*—the Jakarta radio station with the largest audience (source: www.mahakamedia.com). Most of these subsidiaries are ‘secular’ business units except *Harian Republika* and *Alif TV* which have a clear Islamic orientation. The expansion of *Mahaka Media* to develop more secular business units can be seen as a survival strategy of a money-making enterprise. However, *Mahaka Media* has not completely forgotten its Islamic roots; as evidenced in the continuing preservation of Islamic identity in the *Republika* daily newspaper and *Alif TV*.

*Republika* is the only Islamic newspaper which can compete with the more secular newspapers in Indonesia. It is not easy to define the term Islamic media in a predominantly Muslim country like Indonesia. In a study about Islamic press in Indonesia, Irawanto quotes a definition of Islamic press as a press ‘in which journalism practices serve Muslim interests, both material and ethical’ (Irawanto, 2010: 68). According to a Nielsen Media Research survey in 2012 *Republika* has the fourth biggest readership among the national newspapers in Indonesia with 106,000 overall readers after *Kompas* (1.24 million), *Pos Kota* (568,000) and *Seputar Indonesia* (178,000) (infoasaid, 2012). The online version of the daily newspaper, *Republika Online*, is also one of the most popular online news services in Indonesia. *Republika* started the online publication as an extension of the newspaper in 1995 and became the first online news service in Indonesia (Nugroho et al, 2012). In the early years of the publication, *Republika Online* uploaded the items which had already been published in the printed editions of the newspaper, and only started to develop independent content in 2009. In April 2013, *Republika Online* was ranked sixtieth among all websites in Indonesia and was one of the ten most popular online news services in Indonesia (www.alexa.com/topsites/ countries/ID). The ten most popular online news services in Indonesia in April 2013 can be seen in Table 5.1 below.

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13 *Kompas* is the most influential national daily newspaper in Indonesia; *Pos Kota* is a Jakarta-centred blue collar workers newspaper; and *Seputar Indonesia* is a national daily newspaper belonging to MNC Group, the dominant player in Indonesian commercial television.
Table 5.1: Ten most popular online news services in Indonesia (April 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Media name</th>
<th>Web page address</th>
<th>Alexa top sites ranking Indonesia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Detik</td>
<td><a href="http://www.detik.com">www.detik.com</a></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kompas</td>
<td>kompas.com</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Viva</td>
<td>us.viva.co.id</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Merdeka</td>
<td><a href="http://www.merdeka.com">www.merdeka.com</a></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Okezone</td>
<td><a href="http://www.okezone.com">www.okezone.com</a></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tribunnews</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tribunews.com">www.tribunews.com</a></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Tempo</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tempo.co">www.tempo.co</a></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Inilah</td>
<td><a href="http://www.inilah.com">www.inilah.com</a></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Liputan6</td>
<td><a href="http://www.liputan6.com">www.liputan6.com</a></td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Republika Online</td>
<td><a href="http://www.republika.co.id">www.republika.co.id</a></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/ID

The table shows that secular media continue to dominate the Indonesian public sphere and even the ‘moderate’ category of Islamic media such as Republika Online are still less popular than their secular competitors.

In the Islamic media category, Republika Online is regarded as the most popular Islamic online news services in Indonesia. This information can be found in the list of 500 most popular websites in Indonesia, published by Alexa website traffic information service in April 2013 and summarised in the following table.  

Table 5.2: Five most popular Islamic online news services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Media name</th>
<th>Web page address</th>
<th>Alexa top sites ranking Indonesia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Republika</td>
<td><a href="http://www.republika.co.id">www.republika.co.id</a></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dakwatuna</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dakwatuna.com">www.dakwatuna.com</a></td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Arrahmah</td>
<td>arrahmah.com</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Voice of Al-Islam</td>
<td><a href="http://www.voa-islam.com">www.voa-islam.com</a></td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Erasmuslim</td>
<td><a href="http://www.erasmuslim.com">www.erasmuslim.com</a></td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/ID

Republika is the only online news service which has the print version of the publication from this list. All other media listed above are only available online.

The recent secular and commercial expansion of Mahaka Media as the holding company seems to have had a minimal impact on Republika’s Islamic orientation. Beside its secular coverage, the printed edition of the newspaper still provides significant coverage of Islamic events and issues and the publisher regularly publishes

\[14\] I developed this table from the general list of 500 most popular websites in Indonesia. Alexa does not provide the ‘Islamic media’ category in the list and I made the judgement according to their self-proclaimed editorial position.
special Islamic supplements in addition to the daily newspaper editions such as the ‘Islam digest’ supplement and the *Dialog Jum’at* (Friday dialogue) supplement which specifically publish Islamic issues and events. In the online version of *Republika*, the publisher also provides a special section named ‘Dunia Islam’ (Islamic world) in addition to the secular items which are normally found in other secular news services. The Islamic world section specifically covers various events and issues related to the daily life of Muslims. This special section was divided into several sub-sections, namely ‘Islam Nusantara’ (Islam in the archipelago), ‘Islam Mancanegara’ (Islam in foreign countries), ‘Mualaf’ (Convert), ‘Hikmah’ (Wisdom), ‘Khazanah’ (Repertoire), ‘Fatwa’ (Legal opinion), ‘Tasawuf’ (Sufism), ‘Buku Islam’ (Islamic book), ‘Wakaf’ (Islamic endowment), ‘Pojok Arifin Ilham’ (Arifin Ilham’s Corner) and ‘Celoteh Kang Erick Yusuf’ (Erick Yusuf’s Chatting).15

However, as part of its mainstreaming, *Republika* has also tended to conceal some symbols of Islam in the publication. There is no specific information on the identity page of the publication about *Republika*’s Islamic orientation. However, on the identity page of the printed newspaper, *Republika* mentions its national and universal mission with the statement *Republika terbit demi kemaslahatan bangsa, penebar manfaat bagi semesta* [*Republika is published for the good of the nation, to spread benefits for the universe*]. The phrase ‘benefits for the universe’ provides an oblique reference to a commonly quoted Islamic phrase *rahmatan lil alamin* [a blessing for the universe] taken from a verse in the Qur’an to show the universal mission of the prophet Muhammad.

In 2012, the name of ‘Dunia Islam’ (Islamic world) section was changed into ‘Alif’ and the word ‘Islam’ in ‘Islam Nusantara’ and ‘Islam Mancanegara’ sub-sections was removed and simply named ‘Nusantara (Archipelago)’ and ‘Mancanegara (Overseas)’.16 In 2014, the ‘Nusantara’ and the ‘Mancanegara’ sub-sections were removed, and the contents of these sub-sections were integrated into two new sub-sections namely Cahaya Islam [the light of Islam] and Jejak Islam [the trail of Islam]. In early May 2013 the ‘Alif’ section name was changed once more to ‘Khazanah’.17 According to the editor, the change of the name of the ‘Dunia Islam’ section was mainly based on the editorial policy to focus on content rather than symbols in *Republika*’s Islamic representation (personal interview with M. Irwan Ariefyanto, the managing

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15 Arifin Ilham and Erick Yusuf are both prominent Muslim preachers who are popular among cosmopolitan Muslims in Indonesia.
16 The name *Alif* is taken from the first alphabet of the Arabic alphabets.
17 The word *Khazanah* is an Indonesian word borrowed from Arabic which means treasure.
editor of *Republika Online*, April 23 2013). The use of the word ‘khazanah’ also indicates a more Indonesian choice rather than the word ‘alif’ which is clearly an Arabic word. The removal of the word ‘Islam’ in the name of the section and sub-sections and also the change of the name of the Islamic section from ‘Alif’ to ‘Khazanah” can be seen as part of *Republika’s* marketing strategy to attract a wider audience inside and outside Muslim communities in Indonesia and overseas.

**The readers of *Republika Online***

A survey of *Republika Online*’s readership shows that the overwhelming majority of the readers of *Republika Online* are male (84.37%), while only 15.63% of the readers are female. With regard to the educational background, 66.33% of the readers are graduates from university or other tertiary institutions and 10.20% of the readers have postgraduate degree. In addition, 53.50% of the readers are in the age bracket of 25-40 (see figure 5.1 below). These statistics suggest that the majority of the readers of *Republika Online* are well-educated young males and part of the growing Muslim middle class in Indonesia.

**Figure 5.1: *Republika Online* readers’ profile**

Source: http://www.republika.co.id/page/about
Another set of figures from Alexa’s audience demographics confirms that males dominate in the profile of *Republika Online* readers. In addition, the readers in the age bracket of 35-44 and college graduates are over-represented in *Republika Online* compared to the general users of the internet (see figure 5.2).

**Figure 5.2: Audience demographic of *Republika Online***

![Audience Demographic Chart](image)

Source: Alexa, 22 December 2014

With regard to the location of the readers, the majority of the readers are from Indonesia (93.7%) and approximately 1.1% of the readers are from Singapore and 0.8% from Saudi Arabia (Source: Alexa, December 22 2014).

The profile of the print version *Republika* daily newspaper is relatively similar to the readers of *Republika Online*. A psychographic analysis of the print *Republika’s* readership also shows that the majority of *Republika’s* readers are white collar workers, well-educated and ‘moderate’ Muslims in urban areas of Indonesia (Kasman, 2010). This information confirms another survey conducted by *Kompas* that the majority of the newspaper readers in Indonesia are well-educated middle-class and upper-class
professionals who have more concern about the quality of journalism rather than ideological orientation (source: http://www.kompasiklan.com/profil).

Republika’s intention to represent the voice of Muslims in Indonesia has faced many challenges to its representative claim from the beginning. The hardline Muslim organisation, Indonesian Council for Islamic Predication (Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia--DDII) protested against Republika which according to them did not reflect the interest of Muslims in Indonesia. 18  DDII organised mass demonstrations at Republika’s office in 1995 and 1996. Several issues were raised during the protest such as Republika’s tendency ‘to adopt a cosmopolitan attitude’ by providing space for so called ‘un-Islamic’ entertainment in the publication; the publication of the life and thought of Ahmad Wahib; and Republika’s sympathetic attitude toward the People’s Democratic Party (Partai Rakyat Demokrasi--PRD) (Hefner, 1997). 19  In contrast, there is also a widespread opinion among the more ‘liberal’ Muslims that Republika represents the voice of radical Muslims (personal interview with M. Irwan Ariefyanto, the managing editor of Republika Online, April 23 2013).

A more recent protest came from several Muslim groups which have accused Republika as representing the interest of the Shi’a group in Indonesia (Arrahmah, 11 February 2012). 20  Interestingly, one of the high profile protesters and opponents of Shi’a, Athian Ali Da’i has been invited to write a regular column in Republika since April 2014 in a sub-section titled ‘The fortress of belief (Benteng Aqidah)’ and he never mentions the Shi’a specifically in his contributions. 21  In one of his contributions titled ‘Recognising the deviation of Ahmadiyya (Mengenali kesesatan Ahmadiyah)’, he only mentioned Ahmadiyya as an example of a deviant group in Islam. 22  This example is

18  DDII was established in 1967 by Muslim politicians and intellectuals as an umbrella association of reformist Muslims linked to an Islamic political party in the Old Order Indonesia, Masyumi. However, the hardline faction has later become more dominant in the leadership of the organisation (see Hefner, 1997 and van Bruinessen, 2002).
19  Ahmad Wabib was a young ‘liberal’ Muslim intellectual who died in a motorcycle accident in 1972 and Partai Rakyat Demokratik (PRD) was a political party which grew from student movements in the late 1980s and which was accused as promoting communism.
20  Shi’a is a faction in Islam which has a different opinion to mainstream Sunni Muslims regarding the leadership in Islam after the death of the prophet Muhammad. The Shi’a was in favour of Ali ibn Abi Talib as the first caliph and rejected the authority of Abu Bakr as the elected first caliph after the death of the prophet Muhammad. Although Shi’a followers have arrived in Indonesia since the early introduction of Islam in the archipelago, the followers of Shi’a in Indonesia just started to explicitly expose their identity in the last few years.
21  Athian Ali Da’i is the chairman of a hardline group the Forum for Indonesian Muslim Scholars (Forum Ulama Umat Islam Indonesia—FUUI) and also the chairman of the Anti-Shi’a National Alliance (Aliansi Nasional Anti Syiah—ANNAS).
22  Ahmadiyya is a faction in Islam which is based on the teaching of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908). Many of the members believe that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet; opposing the mainstream Muslims believe that there is no prophet after Muhammad.
emblematic of how *Republika* seeks to represent a moderate Muslim identity through inclusion and moderation.

While claims about the ideology of a newspaper readership are hard to substantiate, it is possible to observe the general ‘moderate’ orientation of *Republika’s* Islamic discourse through a brief analysis of its content. Because Islam is so ubiquitous in Indonesia, it is possible to assume that the vast majority of *Republika* readers would at least nominally identify themselves as Muslim. What follows is a content analysis of *Republika Online* over three years, which reveals the general focus and orientation of the newspaper.

‘Dunia Islam’ news coverage

This section analyses the coverage of the news items published in the ‘Dunia Islam’ section.\(^{23}\) The samples are purposefully taken from the sub-sections of ‘Islam Mancanegara’ (Islam overseas) and ‘Islam Nusantara’ (Islam in the archipelago). These sub-sections are chosen because both sub-sections publish news items related to the development of Islam in Indonesia and overseas. By analysing the contents of both sub-sections it is therefore possible to uncover *Republika’s* particular representation of Islam to the readers. The samples of the news items are taken from the news archives in three different periods of publication from July 2009 to July 2011\(^{24}\). The distribution of samples from *Republika Online* can be seen in Table 5.3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>‘Islam Mancanegara’ sub-section</th>
<th>‘Islam Nusantara’ sub-section</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2009</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2010</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2011</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>518</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{23}\) The analysis was conducted before the change of the Islamic section to ‘Alif’ and ‘Khazanah’. The current content of the ‘Khazanah’ section has changed and mainly focused on the social and cultural dimension of Islam in Indonesia and overseas.

\(^{24}\) The number is generated from the result of a search of all the news items which are published in *Islam Mancanegara* and *Islam Nusantara* sub-sections in July 2009, July 2010 and July 2011 which are available in *Republika Online*’s archive. Therefore, the number of the samples is different in each sample period.
The news items in ‘Islam Mancanegara’ sub-section can be classified into several categories, namely the news items related to the grievances and discrimination experienced by Muslims; the news items related to the inclusion of Muslims within predominantly non-Muslim communities; and other general news. The news items related to the grievances of Muslims in many parts of the world dominate the publication in ‘Islam Mancanegara’ sub-section within the sample period (see Graph 5.1).

**Graph 5.1: Alif-Mancanegara news themes**

- **Grievances/discrimination of Muslims**: 51% (July 2009: 34%, July 2010: 45%, July 2011: 52%, Total: 52%)
- **Discriminations within Muslim communities**: 45.70% (July 2009: 13%, July 2010: 34%, July 2011: 26%, Total: 26.70%)
- **Inclusion of Muslims**: 60% (July 2009: 6%, July 2010: 2%, July 2011: 15%, Total: 17%)
- **General news**: 60% (July 2009: 60%, July 2010: 29%, July 2011: 21%, Total: 30%)

The news items related to grievances of Muslims are found in more than 50% of the news items within the sample period. Further analysis of the cause of the grievances reveals that the most dominant cause of this perception is the discriminatory treatment experienced by Muslims in Muslim minority countries such as some discriminatory treatment experienced by Muslim women who wear hijab and the rejection of plans to build mosques in Manhattan New York and Kosovo. This perception can be observed in the headlines such as ‘Refused to take off the hijab, Hani Khan fired from her office [Menolak lepas jilbab, Hani Khan dipecat dari kantornya]’, ‘Two Muslim women prohibited from getting on a bus because of wearing face-covering hijab [Dua Muslimah ini dilarang naik bus hanya karena bercadar]’, ‘Sarah Palin and the Republican party rejected mosque at Ground Zero [Sarah Palin dan kubu Republik tolak masjid di Ground Zero]’, and ‘Although Muslims are in the majority, Kosovo Muslims struggle to obtain a building permit for a new mosque [Meski mayoritas, izin masjid baru sulit diperoleh Muslim Kosovo]’. The detailed information about the cause of the grievances are presented in the following graph.
With regard to the location of the grievances and the discriminatory treatments, there are six countries most frequently mentioned in the news items (see Graph 5.3). The discriminations highlighted in news items analysed here are located mainly in western countries especially the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, France and Germany. China is also mentioned in the list. However, the reason for the grievances and relative exclusion of Muslims in China is mainly because of the violence experienced by Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang. The news about the conflict in Xinjiang is mainly found in July 2009 and contributed to the dominant appearance of violence as the cause of grievances of Muslims in the sample period of July 2009.

Graph 5.3: Six most frequently mentioned countries related to the grievances of Muslims in the Alif-Mancanegara sub-section

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25 The dominant appearance of the news from big countries such as the US, the UK, France and Germany may also reflect another issue with news production and distribution, because more news come from these countries than other smaller countries such as Greece or Denmark.
Republika also pays special attention to the conflict between Palestine and Israel. Interestingly, the editors place the news items related to the Palestine-Israel conflict in the general ‘secular’ international news section and not in the Islamic world section. In 2011, the editors created a sub-section named Palestina-Israel as part of the general Internasional (international) news section. Numerous news items related to the conflict between Palestine and Israel have been published in this sub-section. Republika published 134 news items related to the Palestine-Israel conflict within a month in July 2011. Similarly, the news items related to a more recent conflict between Muslims and Buddhists in Myanmar in 2012 were also placed in the ‘secular’ ASEAN news sub-section. The placement of the news items related to the conflict between Palestine and Israel and also the conflict between Muslims and Buddhists in Myanmar in the general ‘secular’ international news items indicates Republika’s editorial policy to secularise the conflicts in Palestine and Myanmar as general humanitarian and political issues and not specifically religious issues. The editorial policy to secularise political issues was strengthened by the relocation of the items related to politics to the ‘secular’ news section after the subsequent change of the name of ‘Dunia Islam’ section to ‘Alif’ and then to ‘Khazanah’ (personal interview with M. Irwan Arieyanto, the managing editor of Republika Online, April 23 2013).

The dominant appearance of the news items related to the grievances of Muslims in many parts of the world indicates Republika’s editorial position that globally Muslims are generally discriminated against. The perception of discrimination is especially strong in the United States and other western countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia. The dominant occurrence of the news items related to the discrimination against Muslims in western countries is in line with the suspicious attitude that many Muslims in Indonesia and other predominantly Muslim countries tend to hold toward the government of western countries especially the United States. Riaz Hassan’s survey in 1997—1998 shows that about half of Indonesian respondents said that the attitudes of the United States government were anti-Islamic (R Hassan, 2008). A more recent Pew global attitude survey in 2011 shows a nearly similar result with 41% of Muslims in Indonesia saying that relations between Muslims and westerners are poor (Pew Research Center, 2011). This similarity suggests that Republika is playing to its audience, following the imperatives of commercial media by trying to cater to their predisposition.
‘Islam Nusantara’ news coverage

In the Islam Nusantara sub-section, Republika Online publishes a wide range of news items related to everyday Muslims’ lives in Indonesia. The news items cover themes ranging from the ritual dimension of Islam (such as the prayer, the hajj and fasting), the theological dimension, the social and economic dimension, the legal dimension and the relationship between Islam and other issues (such as environment, music, and science/technology). The diversity of the issues covered by Republika Online in the Nusantara sub-section can be observed in the following graph.

Graph 5.4: Alif-Nusantara news themes

The publication of a wide range of news items in this section indicates Republika’s interpretation of Islam as a universal belief system which covers every aspect of human life. The news was mainly dominated by items related to the ritual and social dimension of Islam and also the publication of activities and statements of mainstream Muslim organisations in Indonesia, especially Nahdhatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. From the total 276 samples of news items in ‘Islam Nusantara’ sub-section, 42 (17%) of the news items reported the activities of Nahdhatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah or quoted statements from the prominent leaders of both organisations. The publication of numerous activities and statements of mainstream Muslim organisations in Indonesia
support the editorial policy that *Republika* represents the view of Mainstream Muslim groups in Indonesia (personal interview with Nasihin Masha, the editor in chief of *Republika*, November 9 2012). The news items related to ritual dimensions of Islam dominated the news in this section during the sample periods, especially in July 2011. The news items relating to *Ramadhan* (the fasting month) contributed to the dominant appearance of ritual news items in July 2011 because Muslims started to welcome the month of *Ramadhan*, which in 2011 started on 1 August; whereas in 2009 and 2010 *Ramadhan* started on August 21 and August 11 respectively. The high appearance of the news items relating to the social dimension of Islam can be seen as the tendency of *Republika* to frame internal problems within Muslim community, such as poverty and lack of education as part of the main problems faced by Muslims in Indonesia. For instance, in an item titled ‘Empowering the economy of the *ummat* [Mendorong ekonomi umat]’ *Republika* quotes a statement from Didin Hafidhuddin, a prominent scholar in Islamic economics, that the advancement of the *ummat* can only be achieved by internal struggle. He argues:

> Indonesia as a predominantly Muslim country is full of potential for the development of the economic power of *ummat*. However, this enormous potential has not been optimally developed. Therefore, a strong Islamic economic power must be developed internally from the *ummat*. [Penduduk Indonesia yang mayoritas Muslim merupakan potensi besar untuk membangun ekonomi umat. Namun, potensi umat yang sangat besar ini belum tergali optimal. Karena itu, kekuatan ekonomi Islam yang tangguh mesti ditumbuhkan dari umat sendiri] (Republika Online, July 9 2009).

In addition, only one item which mentions jihad was found from the samples represented here. In the item titled ‘Let’s correct the interpretation of jihad [Mari meluruskan makna jihad]’ *Republika* quotes a statement from Nasarudin Umar, the former vice minister of Religious Affairs, that jihad has a general meaning which can be interpreted as a physical struggle but also can be interpreted as an intellectual struggle and a struggle against individual desire (Republika Online, Juli 17 2010).

The analysis of the news items in the ‘Dunia Islam/Alif’ section suggests that *Republika* clearly attempts to represent the voice of mainstream Muslim groups in Indonesia through its editorial position. Although most of the readers still prefer to read the printed edition of *Kompas* or the online *detik.com*, the ability of *Republika* to survive and become the only Islamic oriented national daily newspaper in print in Indonesia indicates the relative success of this representation. For the more radical Muslims, *Republika* appears to be part of the western oriented ‘secular’ media enterprise, but for many middle-class cosmopolitan Muslims in Indonesia *Republika* can
be seen as an Islamic alternative among numerous ‘secular’ print and online news services in Indonesian language.

*Republika and Muslim Ummat in Indonesia*

*Sources of authority*

As a commercial newspaper, *Republika* necessarily promotes a less explicit claim of divine truth than that which is normally found in religious oriented publications. As discussed earlier in this chapter, there is a stronger tendency of *Republika* to conceal its Islamic identity especially after the significant change of the ownership in 2001 when several young Indonesian businessmen took over *Republika* and then listed its shares at the Jakarta Stock Exchange in 2002. Consequently, the company opened its shares to the general public instead of limiting share ownership to Muslims. Despite this change, *Republika* still continuously maintains its editorial position to represent the voice of mainstream Muslim groups in Indonesia. The tendency to accommodate the mainstream Muslim voices can particularly be seen in the policy to provide religious opinion from various sources and special sections which publish the views of authoritative Muslim scholars. These Muslim scholars come from various backgrounds, which include Muslim scholars from the mainstream traditional and reformist Muslim organisations (see Chapter 3 for the description of mainstream Muslim groups in Indonesia), and also independent popular preachers who gained their popularity because of their entertaining method of Islamic propagation.

*Republika* does not rely on a specific figure or an organisation in presenting *fatwa*. In presenting *fatwa*, *Republika Online* created sub-sections presenting questions and answers on many issues related to the everyday life of Muslims in Indonesia. In a sub-section called ‘Ustadz Siaga’ [Stand-by religious experts], *Republika Online* publishes questions and answers related to any religious issues in cooperation with IKADI (Ikatan Dai Indonesia-The Association of Indonesian Islamic Preachers). In a sub-section called ‘Klinik Syariah’ [Syariah clinic], *Republika Online* publishes questions and answers which specifically address issues related to economic issues from the Islamic perspective. This sub-section is organised in cooperation with the department of Economics IPB (Institut Pertanian Bogor - Bogor Institute of Agriculture). In another sub-section which is specifically called ‘Fatwa’, *Republika* publishes a compilation of *fatwa* from Muslim organisations in Indonesia, especially
Muhammadiyah and Nahdhatul Ulama and also fatwa from renowned Muslim scholars from overseas such as the Egyptian mufti Dr. Yusuf Qardhawi.

The opinion of Muslim intellectuals from a reformist Muslim background is mainly accommodated in the sub-section called ‘Resonansi’ [resonance]. In this sub-section, Republika regularly publishes short articles written by prominent Muslim intellectuals such as Ahmad Syafii Maarif (the former chairman of Muhammadiyah), Azumardi Azra (a prominent Muslim intellectual from the State Islamic University Jakarta) and Yudi Latief (a young Muslim intellectual and the founder of the Indonesian Institute). These Muslim intellectuals have western educational backgrounds and represent the view of neo-modernists who promote the idea of indigenous Muslim identity in Indonesia based on Pancasila as the foundation of the state. The contributions of Muslim scholars affiliated with traditional Muslim organisations are mainly accommodated in the sub-sections called ‘Hikmah [wisdom]’ and ‘Gaya Sufi [Sufi’s style]’. In the ‘Hikmah’ sub-section Republika regularly publishes articles written by Ali Mustafa Ya’qub the imam of the Istiqal Mosque Jakarta (the largest national mosque in Indonesia). In the Gaya Sufi’s sub-section Republika regularly publishes articles written by Nasarudin Umar the vice minister of Religious Affairs and also a prominent leader of Nahdhatul Ulama. The publication of contributions from these mainstream Muslim organisations indicates Republika’s tendency to highlight the views of the official Islamic representatives in Indonesia who have legal-rational authority.

In addition to the contribution from Muslim scholars affiliated with the mainstream traditional and reformist Muslim organisations, Republika also provides a special section for two Indonesian popular preachers namely Arifin Ilham and Erick Yusuf. Arifin Ilham’s special section is called ‘Pojok Arifin Ilham [Arifin Ilham’s corner]’ and the section for Erick Yusuf is called ‘Celoteh Erick Yusuf [Erick Yusuf’s Chatting]’ (see figures 5.3 and 5.4). Arifin Ilham is a young entertainer-preacher who has been very popular in Indonesia with his sufistic televangelical congregations which are usually conducted by reciting zikir together (recitation of specific texts as a remembrance of the god) together (Howell, 2008). Erick Yusuf is also a young entertainer-preacher, a musician and also the founder of ‘iHAQi’ (integrated human quotient) management training. Preachers such as Arifin Ilham and Erick Yusuf represent new figures of Muslim scholars who have modern and cosmopolitan orientation and they are not strictly affiliated with transnational Muslim groups or the conventional classification of traditional and reformist Muslim groups in Indonesia.
Most of these figures do not have formal Islamic education backgrounds and gained their popularity because of their marketing strategy to promote simple and entertaining religious messages which are arguably more suitable for many middle-class Muslims who have little time for, and perhaps interest in, intellectualised discourse but they are serious about improving their religious understanding and practising their faith in a devout way (Fealy, 2008, p. 36).

Figure 5.3: The front page of Erick Yusuf’s Chatting section

Figure 5.4: The front page of Arifin Ilham’s Corner section

Republika’s coverage of diverse sources of Muslim authority and the editorial policy to provide a special section for entertainer-preachers such as Arifin Ilham and Erick Yusuf indicates Republika’s business strategy to attract readers from various Muslim groups. Republika’s accommodation of the so called ‘westernised intellectuals’ can also be seen as part of Republika’s strategy to appeal to the growing number of middle-class Muslims in Indonesia as the main market of the publication.
As mentioned in Chapter 1, the concept of *ummat* in Islam usually refers to the unity of Muslims all over the world within a single global community. In Indonesian language, the Arabic word *umma* or *ummah* is usually transliterated as *umat* or *ummat*. The word *umat* or *ummat* is generally used to identify Muslim community in the local or global context but sometimes it can also be used to identify religious community in general or a specific religious community other than Islam. The use of the term *komunitas* or *masyarakat* is more common in Indonesian language to describe a more general and non-religious description of community. A search of *Republika Online*’s items using the key word ‘ummat’ shows that the term *ummat* is mainly used to describe Muslim community. From the first fifty items appeared in the search, only three items use the term *ummat* to describe non-Muslim community and two items use the term *umat* to describe religious community in general.

Although the term *ummat* can be used in the global context, *Republika* focuses on the issue of Muslim community in Indonesia. Sixty-two percent of the items which appeared in the search describe the *umat* in Indonesia and only 34% describe *ummat* in a global context. The result of the search indicates that the majority of *Republika Online* articles address *ummat* as defined as Indonesian but that there is also frequent representation of an international *ummat* (see Graph 5.5 below). The dominant appearance of items about *ummat* in Indonesia is also supported by the tendency to correlate Islamic consciousness with national consciousness as an indication of a genuine Indonesian Muslim identity. For instance, in an item titled ‘Umat’ the author writes

In the context of our heterogenic country (which consists of various tribes, races and religions) Islam always considers the differences and diversity in the position of *ummat* which has a potential to be brought together in developing the nation and enforcing the divine truth on earth [...dalam konteks negara kita yang sangat heterogen -- terdiri dari berbagai suku, ras, dan agama -- sudah barang tentu Islam senantiasa menempatkan perbedaan dan keanekaan ini dalam posisi umat yang potensial untuk diajak bersama-sama membangun bangsa dan menegakkan kebenaran Ilahi di muka bumi] (*Republika*, April 7 2009).

In another item titled ‘The Minister of Religious Affairs expects Muslim organisations to develop the *ummat* [Menag harap organisasi Islam bangun ummat]’, *Republika* quotes a statement from the minister of Religious Affairs that Muslim organisations in

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26 The graphs presented in this section is the result of a search of *Republika’s* items which contain the word ‘ummat’ by using the search tool in *Republika Online* website. The sample is taken from the first 50 items appearing in the search.
Indonesia should put forward their vision of ummat [visi keummatan] and national vision [visi kebangsaan] (Republika Online, December 15 2012). Republika’s perspective on the concept of ummat can be seen as highly influenced by the idea of ‘Islamic Indonesianness’ or the combination of Islamic consciousness and national consciousness promoted by neo-modernist Muslim scholars in the later years of the New Order era. Republika’s support for the concept of ‘Islamic Indonesianness’ can also be observed in the choice of the name of the sections and sub-sections in the newspaper.

The description of ‘local’ ummat in Indonesia is also supported by Republika’s portrayal of the ummat in the context of peaceful social and economic development. The majority of the items which contain the term ummat describe the position of ummat in relation to social or economic problems experienced by Muslims in Indonesia or overseas (92%) and only a small number of the articles (8%) portray the ummat in the situation of conflict with the perceived enemies (see Graph 5.6). The commitment of Republika to the nation state is also in line with Republika’s mission statement written in the identity page of the printed edition of the newspaper that ‘Republika is published for the benefit of the nation’ [Republika terbit demi kemaslahatan bangsa].
Republika supports the idea that the love of motherland (cinta tanah air) is part of Islamic teaching. This phrase appears in headlines such as: ‘The prophet Muhammad also refers to the love of motherland [Rasulullah juga sebutkan soal cinta tanah air] (Republika Online, November 13 2012). In this item Republika quotes a statement from Said Agil Siradj (the chairman of Nahdhatul Ulama) that the motherland has to be defended because the prophet Muhammad said that whoever does not have a motherland does not have history [barangsiapa tidak memiliki tanah air maka tidak mungkin memiliki sejarah]. In another item titled ‘Defending the country from Islamic perspective [Bela negara menurut pandangan Islam]’, Republika quotes a statement from a Muslim scholar from State Islamic University Bandung that Indonesian Muslim heroes took a part in defending the nation from the colonial invasion. He argues:

During the events of 10 November (1945), Bung Tomo said takbir (Allah is great) with other defenders of the nation calling for the liberation of the motherland and the expulsion of the colonialists [Pada saat itu peristiwa 10 November, Bung Tomo bersama para pembela tanah air lainnya, Ia bertakbir, menyerukan pembebasan tanah air dan mengusir para penjajah] (Republika Online, October 23 2012).

The acceptance of the love of motherland and the defence of a nation from colonialism as part of Islamic teaching also indicates Republika’s support for the development of a unique Indonesian Muslim identity within the context of a sovereign nation state.

In a significantly smaller number of articles, Republika also highlights the importance of global Muslim solidarity to defend the dignity of the global Muslim ummat. This solidarity can be observed in the publication of the number of items related to grievances of Muslims in many parts of the world as discussed earlier in this chapter. The reference to the global Muslim community is not only limited to the life of Muslims in the Middle East but also covers the life of diasporic Muslim communities in other
parts of the world including western countries. In the Mancanegara sub-section, *Republika* publishes stories on the development of Islam in many places outside Arabic countries, such as in Hong Kong, France, Tajikistan and the United States. In one the news items titled ‘Aisha Robertson: Islam does not belong to the Arab nations [Aisha Robertson: Islam bukan milik bangsa Arab], *Republika* quotes a statement from a Muslim convert in the United States that she was impressed when she found out that the population of Muslims all over the world is approximately one billion and they are not only from the Arab nations (*Republika Online*, November 20 2013). In another item titled ‘Ashraf Williams: I am happy to have more than a billion brothers/sisters [Ashraf Williams: Bahagia punya saudara satu miliar lebih], Ashraf Williams another Muslim convert says

> I am really happy; I have more than one billion brothers/sisters, Because Islam is not the property of Arabs, Indians or anyone particular [Saya begitu bahagia, saya punya saudara berjumlah 1 miliar lebih. Karena Islam bukan milik bangsa Arab, India atau siapa] (*Republika Online*, March 11 2014).

It can be seen from the quotes mentioned above that *Republika* supports the idea of the network model (the proliferation of the centre of authority in Islam) introduced by van Bruinessen as discussed in Chapter 3 and challenges the old concept of centre and periphery in Islam with the holy cities in Saudi Arabia as the centre of Islam and other parts of the world as the peripheries. *Republika* challenges the old concept of centre and periphery by developing a cosmopolitan but a state centred idea of Islam.

*The language of ummat*

*Republika* highlights its national orientation through the dominant use of Indonesian words in the publication. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the name of the newspaper ‘Republika’ is derived from the Latin’s word *res publica* which clearly has no correlation with Arabic. *Republika* has also used the words in Indonesian language for most of the name of the sections and sub-sections of the newspaper and has avoided the use of words in Arabic and English. For instance, In the Islamic section ‘Khazanah’, *Republika* uses Indonesian words in the sub-sections--such as ‘Mancanegara’ which means overseas or foreign countries and ‘Nusantara’ which means archipelago--rather than their Arabic equivalents.27 Both sub-sections were later removed and the contents

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27 The term *Nusantara* is central in Indonesian history. The term had been found in the old Javanese manuscripts in the early fourteenth century. The use of the term was revived in the 1920s by Suwardi Surjiningrat (the founder of the nationalist school *Tamansiswa*, who later changed his name to Ki Hadjar Dewantara) and it is commonly used to denote the Indonesian archipelago (Ave, 1989).
were combined into two new sub-sections which also use Indonesian words, namely ‘Cahaya Islam [the light of Islam]’ and ‘Jejak Islam [the trail of Islam]’. In the ‘secular’ section of the website, Republika Online also mainly uses Indonesian words for the name of sections such as ‘Gaya Hidup [lifestyle]’, ‘Senggang [leisure]’ and ‘Olah Raga [sport]’. The use of Indonesian words in Republika is even more evident than in its more popular competitors such as Detik and Kompas. Detik mainly uses English as the names of the sections in the website such as ‘Detik News’, ‘Detik Finance’, ‘Detik Sport’ and ‘Detik Health’ and Kompas also uses many English words as the name of sections such as ‘News’, ‘Entertainment’, ‘Health’ and ‘Travel’. However, these sites typically publish their articles in Indonesian language. The dominant use of Indonesian language in the main sections and sub-sections of Republika Online indicates a symbolic support for the construction of a distinct Indonesian Islamic identity and the imagination of a home-grown Islamic ummat in Indonesia as discussed in the previous section. The dominant use of the national language by Republika also indicates a preservation of Anderson’s idea of an imagined community limited within the boundary of a sovereign nation state (Anderson, 1983). Republika Online also has an English section on the website. The English section provides the English translation for selected items from the Indonesian sections. The availability of the English section is arguably part of Republika Online’s strategy to attract non-Indonesian speaking readers. However, the editors seem to be only paying a little attention to this section because only a very limited amount of items are translated to English every day.

Republika tends to construct a combination of global and local descriptions of Muslim ummat in Indonesia. This ummat is part of the wider global Muslim community but has certain distinct local characteristics which are more relevant to the context of Indonesia as a plural and sovereign nation state. This imagination of a distinct Indonesian Muslim ummat is constructed through the reliance on a combination of the traditional authority and the legal-rational authority of mainstream Muslim organisations in Indonesia, and the charismatic authority of popular independent Muslim preachers.

**Jihad from Republika’s perspective**

Republika does not specifically discuss the concept of jihad in a special section. Republika’s perspective on jihad can be observed in the analysis of the items which contain the word jihad. I conducted a search of Republika’s items which contain the
word ‘jihad’ by using the search tool in *Republika Online*’s website. From the first fifty items appearing in the search, 28% of the items specifically describe jihad as non-violent struggles and 12% describe jihad in a general meaning as both armed struggle and non-armed struggle. However, even in a self-proclaimed moderate news source such as *Republika*, jihad was most commonly used to describe an armed struggle (40%) (see Graph 5.7).

Graph 5.7: Jihad items in *Republika*

![Graph showing the distribution of jihad items in *Republika*.]

However, jihad as armed struggle was generally used either to describe historical events or, referring to others’ use of the term, rather than presenting an editorial endorsement of the armed struggle meaning. These armed struggle descriptions of jihad were mainly found in the news reporting the appearance of anti-jihad advertisements in the United States in 2012 and the news reporting of the commemoration of the ‘Jihad Resolution’ during the struggle to defend Indonesian independence. Headlines related to the appearance of anti-jihad advertisements in the United States include: ‘Anti-jihad advertisements appeared in New York [Iklan anti jihad muncul di New York]’, ‘Anti-jihad advertisements go up in Washington [Iklan anti jihad rambah Washington]’, ‘A woman ruining an anti-jihad advertisement is arrested [Rusak iklan anti-jihad, 1 wanita ditangkap]’. It seems that *Republika* published the news items related to the appearance of anti-jihad advertisements in the United States for the reporting purpose only and does not suggest *Republika*’s support of jihad as armed struggle.

However, the content of several news items related to the ‘Jihad Resolution’ indicates *Republika*’s editorial policy to allow the publication of items related to militaristic jihad in the context of defending a nation from colonial occupation. Such headlines related to the commemoration of the ‘Jihad Resolution’ include: ‘Jihad resolution is almost forgotten [Resolusi jihad nyaris dilupakan]’, ‘Hasyim Asy’ari the initiator of jihad resolution [KH Hasyim Asy’ari pencetus Resolusi Jihad]’, ‘Reviving
history through the jihad resolution carnival [Bangkitkan sejarah melalui kirab Resolusi Jihad’]. Republika’s tendency to allow the legitimisation of nationalist oriented militaristic jihad has also been found in Republika’s portrayal of a conflict between Muslims and Christian in Ambon in 1999. In research on the media frame during the conflict in Ambon, Sharp argues that Republika ‘attempts to redraw inter-communal fighting in Ambon as a Muslim nationalist struggle against renegade Christian separatists with foreign backing’ (Sharp, 2013, p. 158).

From the search using the key word ‘jihad’, six articles and statements which contain detailed explanations about the meaning of jihad were found in Republika Online’s archive. Three articles titled ‘De-radicalisation of the meaning of jihad [Deradikalisasi makna jihad]’, ‘Between jihad and terror [Antara jihad and teror]’ and ‘The greater jihad [Jihad akbar]’ were found in the Hikmah sub-section, two statements titled ‘jihad’ and ‘The biggest jihad in life [Jihad terbesar dalam hidup]’ were found in the Pojok Arifin Ilham sub-section and one article titled ‘This is the field of jihad for Muslim women [Inilah medan jihad bagi Muslimah]’ was found in the ‘Khazanah’ sub-section. All of the items mentioned above were written by prominent Indonesian Muslim scholars who were selected by the editor.

Four of the items mentioned above describe jihad in a general meaning as a serious endeavour in any aspect of the life of Muslims, which include physical, intellectual and spiritual struggles and two other items highlight the non-violent interpretation of jihad. In the article ‘De-radicalisation of the meaning of jihad’ the author, Nasaruddin Umar (the vice minister for religious affairs and also a prominent leader of Nahdhatul Ulama), argues:

Jihad aims to defend the dignity of human life and is not for tormenting or bringing to death innocent people [Jihad bertujuan untuk mempertahankan kehidupan manusia yang bermartabat, bukannya menyengsaraan, apalagi menyebabkan kematian orang-orang yang tak berdosa] (Republika Online, September 28 2011--Deradikalisasi makna jihad).

In the article ‘Between jihad and terror’, Ilyas Ismail (a senior lecturer at the Islamic State University Jakarta), suggests a broad interpretation of jihad which includes intellectual and spiritual struggle as well as physical struggle. He contends:

Jihad can be conceptually understood as a long struggle to achieve glory. As a concept and a path for struggle, jihad should be implemented by tireless hard and smart work and optimise all potential and power not only limited to physical power but also moral, intellectual and spiritual power. Jihad is obviously a main doctrine of Islam and a way of life for Muslims to attain success and glory. [Jihad, yang dapat dipahami sebagai konsep perjuangan, merupakan jalan panjang yang harus ditempuh untuk mencapai cita-cita (kemuliaan). Sebagai konsep dan jalan perjuangan, jihad tentu harus diaktualisasikan melalui kerja
keras dan kerja cerdas, tanpa kenal lelah, dengan mengoptimalkan penggunaan segenap potensi dan kekuatan yang dimiliki, tak hanya kekuatan fisik, tapi juga kekuatan moral, intelektual, dan spiritual. Dalam pengertian ini, jihad tak pelak lagi merupakan doktrin pokok Islam dan jalan hidup kaum Muslim menuju kesuksesan dan kemuliaan.] (Republika, March 18 2010--Antara jihad dan terror).

Both of the descriptions mentioned above challenge the interpretation of jihad as a revolutionary armed struggle against non-believers promoted by Salafi Jihadi websites (these sites will be discussed in Chapter 6). This editorial interpretation of the general meaning of jihad can also be found in online version of the daily newspaper Kompas, one of the most popular ‘secular’ news websites in Indonesia. This interpretation is found in the headlines such as ‘Terror is not jihad [Teror bukanlah jihad]’, ‘BNPT (National Anti-Terrorism Agency): Do not equate terrorism with jihad [BNPT: Jangan samakan aksi terorisme dengan jihad]’, ‘Terrorists misinterpreted jihad in the Qur’an [Teroris salah menafsirkan jihad dalam Al-Quran]’. In the first item mentioned above, Kompas quotes a statement from Ma’ruf Amin, a prominent Muslim scholar in Indonesia, that jihad is ‘all utmost effort and willingness to endure hardship in the fight against all types of enemies [segala usaha dan upaya sekutu tenaga serta kesediaan untuk menanggung kesulitan di dalam memerangi dan menahan agresi musuh dalam segala bentuk]’ (Kompas, November 27 2009).

Republika often publishes items which support a non-violent interpretation of jihad in the Indonesian context. In a contribution titled ‘The biggest jihad in life [Jihad terbesar dalam hidup]’ Arifin Ilham specifically highlights the non-violent interpretation of jihad as an inner struggle within every Muslim individual to stop undertaking immoral actions. Ilham says ‘My dear friends, the biggest jihad in our life is when we are engrossed in vice and then we struggle to stop doing it!’ [Ketahuilah sahabatku, jihad terbesar dalam hidup kita adalah, saat kita sudah asyik tenggelam dalam maksiat, lalu kita berjuang keluar untuk tidak melakukannya lagi!] (Republika, January 25 2012--Jihad terbesar dalam hidup). The tendency of Republika to allow the non-violent interpretation of jihad is also supported by the publication of several news items related to jihad in many different contexts. The search reveals many editorial interpretations of jihad as a generalised struggle; such as jihad in business, jihad for food sovereignty, jihad against corruption and jihad against illegal drugs. Such headlines include: ‘Jihad in business, a breakthrough for the prosperity of Muslim communities [Jihad bisnis,

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28 Kompas is a leading Indonesian national newspaper initially established in 1965 by Chinese and Javanese Catholic journalists to represent a Catholic voice in Indonesian politics during the transition between the Old Order to the New Order regime (Hill, 2007).
The publication of this statement indicates Republica’s editorial policy to allow the publications of items related to militaristic jihad in several war zones, especially Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan. The support of militaristic jihadi groups in these war-torn territories is relatively significant in Indonesia. For instance, Pew Global Attitude Survey in 2010 showed that 39% of Muslim respondents in Indonesia explicitly expressed a favourable attitude toward Hamas in Palestine and 43% of them explicitly expressed a favourable attitude toward Hezbollah in Lebanon; whereas only 33% of the respondents explicitly expressed negative views toward Hamas and 30% of them explicitly expressed negative views toward Hezbulloh. The rest of the respondents did not did not offer their opinion (Pew Research Center, 2010). Although these numbers highlight a moderate attitude on behalf of the majority of Indonesian Muslims, the
numbers indicate Muslims in Indonesia confess a relatively strong support for the militaristic application of jihad in Palestine and Lebanon.

The description of jihad in Republika represents the contextual interpretation of jihad which is commonly held by mainstream Muslim groups in Indonesia. This contextual interpretation suggests the possibility of the interpretation of the doctrine of jihad as an armed struggle, as well as other generalised struggles, depends on specific local conditions. Unlike the Salafi Jihadi media which promote the single meaning of jihad as a revolutionary armed struggle against non-believers (see Chapter 6), Republika’s editorial policy has allowed various interpretations of jihad including limited type of violent jihad in the context of defending a nation and also an interpretation of jihad as a struggle in any aspect of human life in order to advance the life of Muslim communities across the Indonesian archipelago. However, as part of its identification with the mainstream Muslims in Indonesia, Republika has never used jihad as a justification or explanation for contemporary terrorist actions in Indonesia.

The construction of identities

After the collapse of Soeharto’s authoritarian regime the contest over communal identities started to occupy the Indonesian public sphere including the emergence of radical groups on the internet. Many non-mainstream Muslim groups which were previously suppressed by the authoritarian regimes ‘rose to the surface’ and ‘competed for the newly liberated public sphere and fought for popular support’ (Hasan, 2006, p. 13). This contestation has created a complex process of identity formation influenced by local, transnational, and global identities. In this contestation Republika tends to legitimise the common perception of the moderate attitude of mainstream Indonesian Muslims who condemn the use of jihad to justify terrorist actions but who also criticise the response of the United States and other western countries toward global terrorism.

Legitimising mainstream moderate Muslim identity

The description of mainstream Muslims in Indonesia is commonly associated with the term moderate Muslims (Islam moderat). Republika echoes this common perception by highlighting through the repetition of the ‘moderate’ label in relation to mainstream Muslims in Indonesia: ‘Democracy and moderate Islam has become a new identity of Indonesia [Demokrasi dan Islam moderat jadi identitas baru Indonesia]’, ‘Indonesian
moderate Islam must become an example [Islam moderat Indonesia harus jadi contoh], and ‘The role of moderate Islam groups is needed to overcome radicalism [Peran kelompok Islam moderat dibutuhkan atasi radikalisme].’ In the item titled ‘The role of moderate Islam groups is needed to overcome radicalism’, Republika quotes a statement from Ansyad Mbay the chief of the National Anti-Terrorism Agency that:

The active role of the majority moderate Islam groups is not only important for eradicating terrorism in Indonesia but also globally in the world. Indonesian Muslims as the majority should continuously promote Islam as the grace of the universe. [Peran aktif kelompok Islam moderat yang mayoritas tidak hanya baik untuk penanganan terorisme di Indonesia, namun juga di dunia secara luas. Umat Islam di Indonesia dengan jumlahnya yang mayoritas, harus terus menyuarakan Islam yang rahmatan lil alamin] (Republika Online, March 17 2012-Peran kelompok Islam moderat dibutuhkan atasi radikalisme).

However, as discussed in Chapter 3, the term moderate Muslim is highly contested. The way Republika describes moderate Muslims can be seen as representing the characteristics of the group, namely ‘the moderate Islamist’, based on the Bochari and Senzai’s classification mentioned in Chapter 3 to differentiate between the moderate and the violent groups. Republika’s distinction of the mainstream moderates from the violent groups particularly can be observed in its promotion of non-violent interpretation of jihad. Republika criticises the violent interpretation of jihad and the use of jihad as the justification of terrorist actions. In the sample of news items under the themes Islam, radicalism and terrorism, Republika considers terrorism as un-Islamic and condemns the use of jihad to justify terrorist actions. In the samples of news items in the period of July 2009 (this period coincided with the bombing of two hotels in Jakarta in 17 July 2009), Republika published eight items which contain statements from Muslim scholars and organisations condemning the actions. The headlines, published over several days, included: ‘Hasyim: NU condemns the bombers [Hasyim: NU kutuk pelaku bom]’, ‘Alkhairat condemns the bombing in Jakarta [Alkhairat mengutuk bom di Jakarta]’, ‘Do not associate the bomb with Islam [Jangan kaitkan bom dengan Islam], ‘Terrorism is not a religious teaching [Terorisme bukan ajaran agama]’ and ‘Terrorists should not hide themselves behind religions [Teroris jangan bersembunyi dibalik agama]’. Republika also tends to distinguish the characters of mainstream Indonesian Muslims with the violent minority of Muslims. In a news item titled ‘Terrorism and mainstream Muslims [Terorisme dan mainstream Muslim]’ terrorists were contrasted with mainstream Muslims in Indonesia. In this article the author argues:

The silence of the mainstream group in response to crucial problems is questionable. Why do they not dare to speak out? Why do they allow the minority groups to ‘capture’ Islam by claiming themselves as the most Islamic,
and sometimes in the name of Islam they do something contradictory toward Islam itself. One group freely cuts a verse of Qur’an or a saying of the prophet Muhammad and disconnects it from the historical background to justify their ways. Consequently, for instance the terrorists kill thousands of innocent lives. [Diamnya kelompok mainstream di dalam menghadapi persoalan krusial menarik dipertanyakan. Mengapa mereka seperti tidak berani speak out? Mengapa mereka membiarkan kelompok minoritas "menyandera" Islam dengan mengklaim dirinya paling paling Islam, dan terkadang atas nama Islam melakukan sesuatu yang sesungguhnya kontraproduktif dengan Islam itu sendiri. Satu kelompok begitu bebas memotong-motong ayat atau hadis serta melepaskan historical background -nya untuk membenarkan tujuan dan cara mereka. Akibatnya, antara lain, teroris melayangkan ribuan nyawa tak berdosa] (Republika Online, July 19 2009—Terorisme dan mainstream Muslim).

In this item, Republika explicitly quotes the English term ‘mainstream’ to represent the majority of Muslims who are affiliated with traditionalist and reformist Muslim organisations in Indonesia.

In Manuel Castells’ term, this construction of the mainstream could be seen as a creation of a legitimising identity. According to Castells (2010, p. 8), ‘legitimizing identity’ is ‘introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination vis a vis social actors’. Castells echoes Gramsci in defining civil society as an entity which is ‘formed by a series of apparatuses’ which ‘on one hand, prolong the dynamics of the state, but, on the other hand, are deeply rooted among people’ (Castells, 2010, p. 9). The establishment of the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI) as the founder of Republika was seen by many observers as part of Soeharto’s ‘legitimizing’ policy to control the political aspirations of middle-class Muslim in the late New Order era. According to Liddle:

Despite the hopes of some Muslims and the fears of some non-Muslims, ICMI is not an autonomous organization representing the political interests of the Muslim community to the government. Rather it is a state corporatist organization, dominated by high officials beholden to President Soeharto, whose main policy slogan is human resources development and whose chief political enemies are not Christians and other non-Muslims but market-oriented economists (Liddle, 1996, p. 625).

In addition, the establishment of Republika in the middle of the New Order authoritarian regime would have been impossible without the approval of Soeharto. There was also a period when Soeharto ordered the change of the editor in chief of Republika because Soeharto was unhappy with the appearance of a contribution written by Amien Rais, a prominent Muslim intellectual, in May 29 1997 which criticised the ‘status quo’ of the New Order regime (Utomo, 2010).

Several Muslim organisations such as Al-Irsyad, Persatuan Islam, Muhammadiyah and Nahdhatul Ulama existed long before Indonesian independence
and have played an important role in the development of civil society in Indonesia (see for instance Mitsuo et.al., 1991 and Azra, 2006). These organisations, especially the two biggest Nahdhatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah have developed civil networks from the provincial down to the district, sub-district and village levels. Republika frequently publishes the activities of these organisations and quotes statements from the prominent leaders of the organisations. Republika is both a creation of the moderate mainstream and one of its key outlets.

Criticising the United States’ dominant power

Many Muslims believe that the term moderate Muslim is perpetuated by western countries to undermine Islam. Bokhari and Senzai (2007, p. 139) argue that ‘the call for moderation’ is often seen by many Muslims as ‘part of the larger plan by the West to dilute the religion’. However, the attitude of mainstream moderate Muslims in Indonesia is not identical to western moderate values. Republika maintains a critical voice toward western countries especially the United States. The criticism toward the United States’ dominant power has become a distinct feature of Republika’s editorial perspective. Republika condemns terrorism and the use of religious teaching to justify terrorist actions. However, Republika often criticises the responses of the United States Government and its allies toward Islamist terrorism. In a section named Resonansi (resonance), Republika published a series of two articles titled ‘Terrorism (1) (terorisme (1))’, written by Ahmad Syafii Maarif, a prominent Muslim intellectual and a former leader of Muhammadiyah. In the articles Maarif quoted Johan Galtung’s opinion that the United States and Israel are terrorist states. Maarif argues

Speaking about terrorism, I remember an article written by Johan Galtung on 20 September 2002, titled ‘To end terrorism, end state terrorism’. Galtung explicitly dubbed the United States as a terrorist state, in addition to Israel. In Galtung’s notes, since 1945 the United States, by direct commands from Pentagon to attack other countries or through CIA’s operations, has killed 12 million people, excluding what has happened in Afghanistan and Iraq. [Berbicara tentang terorisme, saya teringat artikel Johan Galtung bulan 20 September 2002 di bawah judul “To End Terrorism, End State Terrorism” (Untuk Menghentikan Terorisme, Hentikan Terorisme Negara). Galtung terang-terangan mengatakan

29 Resonansi (resonance) is a daily column published in the printed and online version of the newspaper which are written by prominent Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia including several senior editors of Republika
30 Ahmad Syafii Maarif was the president of Muhammadiyah, one of the biggest Muslim organisations in Indonesia and the founder of Maarif Institute for Culture and Humanity. In 2008 he received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Peace and International Understanding, which is commonly regarded as an Asian version of the Nobel Peace Prize.
Amerika sebagai negara teror, di samping Israel tentunya. Dalam catatan Galtung, sejak tahun 1945, Amerika, baik melalui perintah langsung Pentagon untuk menyerang negara lain atau melalui operasi CIA (Central Intelligent Agency), tidak kurang dari 12 juta umat manusia telah menjadi korban, belum termasuk apa yang berlaku di Afghanistan dan Irak. (*Republika Online*, January 29 2013—Terorisme (1)).

The critical view toward the United States Government is found in other articles written by Maarif which were published in the same section. In an article titled ‘The cost of neo-imperialist war [Ongkos perang neoimperialisme]’ and another series of three articles titled ‘The US empire is in a critical condition (I) [Imperium Amerika di ujung tanduk (I)]’, Maarif strongly criticises the United States’ neo-imperial ambition, he says

In order to support its imperial ambition, the United States has drained millions of tax dollars from its own people and also sacrificed its own people and also people from other nations in the wars. These actions have been justified by using many arguments such as to export democracy or human rights [Untuk mendukung nafsu imperiumnya, Amerika telah menguras uang pajak rakyatnya sendiri dalam angka triliunan dan mengorbankan rakyat bangsa lain serta rakyatnya sendiri di medan pertempuran. Semuanya ini dilakukan dengan berbagai helat dan pembenaran, apakah untuk mengekspor demokrasi atau hak-hak asasi manusia]. (*Republika Online*, September 18 2012-imperium Amerika di ujung tanduk (I)).

In addition to the articles mentioned above, *Republika* also frequently quotes critical statements from several opponents of the United States’ policy from vastly diverse critics inside and outside the United States, such as Noam Chomsky the leading linguist on the one hand and on the other, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and the former president of Venezuela Hugo Chavez. These critical statements can be seen in the headlines such as ‘Chomsky: the US is a prominent terrorist state [Chomsky: AS negara teroris terkemuka]’, ‘Ahmadinejad: the US is desperate, can only spread threats [Ahmadinejad: AS sudah kehabisan akal, hanya bisa main ancam]’, ‘Iran: US is the initiator of terrorism in the world [Iran: AS adalah penggagas terorisme dunia]’, and ‘These are controversial statements of Hugo Chavez for the US [Inilah uantaian kata kontroversial Hugo Chavez buat Amerika]’. These statements are selectively chosen by *Republika* to support the operation of anti-imperialist identity in *Republika* in addition to its Islamic identity.

This oppositional voice is sometimes exaggerated by *Republika* publishing conspiracy theories related to the United States’ hidden agenda in the war against terrorism. For instance, in an analysis of news items related to the Bali bombing in 2002, Greg Fealy (2003) criticised *Republika’s* ‘lapse in standards’ in reporting the bombing incident. After the bombing, *Republika* published numerous unconnected conspiracy theories surrounding the bombing event, such as the suspicious death of a
key eyewitness of the bombing in an Australian hospital, the presence of several United States and Australian navy ships in Balinese docks several months before the bombing, the disappearance of the corpses of four Australian soldiers from the bombsite, and an opinion from a conspiracy theorist, Joe Vialls, who asserted that the bomb was actually a micro-thermo nuclear device and not a conventional explosive. As Fealy has suggested further, that with regard to the Bali bombing, Republika ‘has served its readers poorly by focusing on fanciful conspiracy theories rather than substantive reporting’ (Fealy, 2003). In the case of the ISIS, Republika Online also published several articles mentioning a speculation about a connection between the ISIS and the US and Israeli governments. Such speculation can be observed in headlines such as ‘Snowden: ISIS is a creation of Israel, the US and the UK’ [Snowden: ISIS bentukan Israel, AS, dan Inggris], ‘Is ISIS truly a creation of Israel and the US? [Benarkah gerakan ISIS bentukan Israel dan AS?]’ and ‘Is the video showing the execution of two US journalists fabricated by the US? [Video dua jurnalis dipenggal ISIS rekayasa AS?]’. The publication of these conspiracy theories represents a strongly suspicious attitude in Indonesia toward western countries especially the United States. Republika’s editorial policy to allow critical voices toward western countries especially the United States can be seen as part of the operation of ‘legitimizing identity’, which legitimises Indonesian sovereignty and prolongs ‘the dynamics of the state’ by establishing a distinctly national Islamic identity (Castells, 2010, p. 9).

_Constructing a distinct Indonesian Islamic identity_

Republika’s editorial policy seeks to construct a distinct Indonesian Islam identity. Republika shares a critical position against the United States’ dominant power alongside a range of groups around the world, including but by no means limited to the jihadi groups. However, Republika does not promote a global revolutionary armed jihad as a response to this domination. Instead, Republika tends to focus on a national agenda to develop a distinct Indonesian identity of Islam within the boundary of the nation state. Republika’s Indonesian identity is as much about separating its position from the US-dominated west as about separating from Middle-Eastern cultural practices and radical Islam.

The nationalist agenda of Republika is not a new phenomenon, because Republika was initially published as a newspaper with a strong nationalist agenda. By condemning the use of jihad to justify terrorist actions and emphasising the non-violent
interpretation of jihad, Republika tends to show the common perception of a tolerant and peaceful Islam in Indonesia. In contrast, Republika’s support of armed jihad in the particular global contexts indicates its intention to demonstrate global Muslim solidarity. In addition, the strong criticism of Republika toward the United States’ dominant power indicates the legitimisation of nationalist identity of mainstream Indonesian Muslims by rejecting the intervention of western countries especially the United States in the future development of Islam in Indonesia.

The notion of a distinct identity as a mixture of an Islamic and a nationalist identity can be found in the description of jihad promoted by Republika. The descriptions of non-violent jihad are usually associated with the Indonesian development agenda and the descriptions of jihad as armed struggle are usually associated with the struggle to fight against colonial occupations in Indonesia. In order to articulate its claim as the newspaper for mainstream Muslims in Indonesia, Republika seeks to negotiate the meaning of jihad by rejecting the notions of terrorism as an expression of jihad and providing a range of non-violent interpretations of jihad. Republika tries to emphasise the position of mainstream Muslims in Indonesia as a moderating force in the process of Indonesian nation building. However, despite Republika’s important role in distinguishing mainstream Muslims from violent groups, the description of mainstream Muslims in Indonesia as moderate Muslims remains problematic. Burhani criticises this moderate position as a tendency to ‘play safe’. He argues:

In the global and local Indonesian context, being moderate Muslims can be seen as a suitable and a safe option. However, the moderate label is normally used as a cover when someone cannot explain his/her position in the midst of the struggle for influence between the hardline Islamic groups and the liberal Islamic groups. Neither ‘right’ nor ‘left’ is a negation, and not yet an identity. [Dalam konteks percaturan global saat ini, dan juga konteks lokal Indonesia, menjadi Muslim moderat barangkali menjadi pilihan yang pas dan “aman”. Tapi label moderat ini seringkali hanya menjadi baju ketika seseorang tidak bisa menjelaskan posisi dirinya di tengah perpecahan pengaruh antara kelompok garis keras Islam dan kelompok liberal Islam. “Tidak kanan” dan “tidak kiri” adalah sebuah negasi, belum menjadi sebuah identitas] (Burhani, 2008).

Republika does not adopt any external ideological positions about the true identity of Islam, the true definition of ummat and the correct use of jihad. Rather, it presents its definitions which betray a wide range of influences but which are all fused with a distinct interest in the preservation of the Indonesian nation.
Conclusion

The editorial position of *Republika Online* reflects the difficulties of defining a mainstream Muslim identity in Indonesia. While references to mainstream Islam in Indonesia are commonly associated with the traditionalist *Nahdhatul Ulama* and the reformist *Muhammadiyah*, the plurality of ideas within these mainstream groups is evident. *Republika Online* accommodates various interpretation of Islam in Indonesia within a loose concept of mainstream Muslim groups by providing relatively equal coverage of the interpretation of Islam from Muslim scholars affiliated with the mainstream traditionalist and reformist Muslim organisations. *Republika* also accommodates the voices of independent Muslim scholars who have gained popularity with their entertaining method of Islamic preaching. These indigenous Muslim scholars support a distinct construction of Islamic *ummat* in Indonesia by combining Islamic consciousness and national consciousness. The imagination of an integrated local and global *ummat* in Indonesia as presented by *Republika Online* is in line with the interpretation that jihad should be contextually interpreted depending on the local conditions. This particular description of *ummat* has offered a distinct identity of Islam in Indonesia which is different from Islam in the Middle East.

*Republika’s* commitment to the nation state has been articulated into more contextual interpretations of jihad from the perspective of Indonesia as a sovereign nation state as mentioned in the headlines such as ‘Jihad for food sovereignty is urgent [Mendesak, jihad menuju kedaulatan pangan] and in the items related to the commemoration of the ‘Jihad Resolution’ during the struggle to defend Indonesian independence. The description of contextual jihad can be seen as a process of negotiation between national identity and Islamic identity in Indonesia. The doctrine of jihad has been used by *Republika* to support the development of national awareness among Indonesian Muslims. Therefore, the way *Republika Online* constructs Islamic identity in Indonesia can be seen as an operation of ‘legitimizing identity’ by extending the role of the print version of *Republika* and other national commercial newspapers in the preservation of the construction of traditional imagined community within the boundary of the Indonesian nation state. The following chapter looks at a different representation of Islamic identity in Indonesia as demonstrated by *Arrahmah* and *Voaislam* representing the views of Salafi Jihadi groups in Indonesia.
This chapter investigates how Arrahmah and Voice of Al-Islam (Voa-Islam), representing Salafi Jihadi websites in Indonesia, describe armed struggle jihad as an important part of Islamic teaching. As discussed in Chapter 4, Salafi Jihadi groups in Indonesia are part of the transnational Salafi Jihadi movement which emerged during the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s. The chapter argues that Arrahmah and Voa-Islam represent the voice of the Salafi Jihadi movement in Indonesia has and that these news sites develop a transnational resistance identity against a perceived global conspiracy against Islam. This representation is evident in a distinct interpretation of jihad as a revolutionary armed struggle to restore the existence of a global Islamic caliphate and justifying armed jihad in many parts of the world. I start by describing the profile of the websites, followed by an exploration of the meaning of ummat and jihad from the Salafi Jihadi perspective. The chapter then discusses how this distinct interpretation leads to the description of friends and enemies and the construction of a global and transnational resistance identity.

Several previous studies have discussed the existence of Indonesian jihadi groups on the internet. Hefner (in Eickelman and Anderson, 1999) started the discussion by exploring the emergence of ‘violent jihadi’ voices on the internet which, according to him, has undermined civic pluralism in Indonesia. Several other studies of the presence of radical Islamic voices on the internet in Indonesia have also been conducted as part of bigger projects on either the development of the internet in Indonesia or the development of Islamic militancy in Indonesia (Lim 2004, Hill and Sen 2005, Hasan 2006). Specific studies of the use of the internet by an Indonesian Islamist group, Laskar Jihad, during the Muslims-Christians conflict in Maluku have been conducted by Brauchler (2004) and Lim (2008). More recently, Hui (2010) has analysed the typical narratives and operations of radical websites in Indonesia. While those previous studies observe the initial development of exclusive Muslim groups’ websites and blogs which have limited audience reach, my study focuses on the emergence of new and renewed Salafi Jihadi websites which have been transformed into more accessible Islamic online news services.

The name Salafi Jihadi is used for the groups identifying with salafism and jihadism. As discussed in Chapter 3. Salafi is a contested term which is commonly used
by Muslim groups to identify themselves as the follower of the pious predecessors (salafus shalih), ‘the first three generations of Muslim community, who are seen as the best generations of Muslims and the paragons of proper Islamic thinking and behaviour’ (Fealy, 2005, p. 13). The term Salafi Jihadi is specifically used to identify a subcategory of Salafi group members who promote a single interpretation of jihad as a revolutionary armed struggle against the enemies of Muslims. As discussed in Chapter 4, Salafi Jihadi groups are regarded as a rebel group by the dominant Salafi movement, because the mainstream Salafi movement focuses on moral and ritual issues rather than political issues. The mainstream Salafi movement also supports secular government in Indonesia, whereas the jihadis argue that secular governments, including the Indonesian government, lack legitimacy. Therefore, the Salafi Jihadi movement can be understood to be a political movement instead of a purely religious movement.

Media profiles

Two explicitly Salafi Jihadi websites, namely Arrahmah and Voice of Al-Islam (Voa-Islam) were chosen for close textual analysis. These websites explicitly mention their ideology as emulating Salafus Shalih (the pious predecessors). Arrahmah and Voa-Islam are the two most popular Salafi Jihadi websites in Indonesia. In 2012 both websites are listed in the 500 most popular websites in Indonesia (Source: www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/ID). The rank is calculated using a combination of average daily visitors and the number of pages viewed by the visitors. Their daily reach (estimated percentage of global internet users who visit the website) has also increased gradually from mid-2012 to early 2014 and showed a fluctuative trend in 2014 as illustrated in the Graph 6.1 below.

31 A brief description of salafism and salafi jihadism has been discussed in chapters 3 and 4. For more detailed account on salafism and salafi jihadism in Indonesia see Bubalo and Fealy, 2005; International Crisis Group, 2004; Solahudin, 2011.
32 Salafus Shalih is a title which refers to the first three generations after the prophet Muhammad, namely the companions of the prophet, their followers and those who followed them and the groups which emulate these pious predecessors are called Salafi.
33 The information about the web’s popularity is based on website traffic rank information provided by Alexa.com, an open source website that provides information about traffic data statistics on the internet.
The traffic of *Republika Online* and *Voa-Islam* showed a dramatic increase in July 2014 arguably because of the growing popularity of Islamic online news services in 2014 and many readers were looking for information about *Ramadhan* and Indonesian presidential election at that time. *Republika Online* and *Voa-Islam* frequently publishes information about Ramadhan in Indonesia, while *Arrahmah* seems to be focusing the publication on political issues and rarely publishes information about ritual elements of Islam such as *Ramadhan* (the month of *Ramadhan* in 2014 started on June 28 2014). This graph also shows an indication that the readers of *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* represent a substantial minority of audience, as their reach is still below the audience of *Republika Online* which purports to represent the mainstream character of Islamic identity in Indonesia.

The analysis of *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* in this chapter is conducted mainly by employing critical discourse analytical tools to uncover the interpretation of the concepts of *ummat* and jihad and the tendency to construct a certain type of Muslim identity represented in the texts. The textual analysis is supported by a descriptive content analysis of news items published in *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* in order to gain a more comprehensive picture of the content of the websites. The samples of the news items are taken from the news items archives in three different periods of publication. *Arrahmah* organises the news items in two sections, namely ‘World News’ and ‘Indonesia News’ and *Voa-Islam* organises the news items in three sub-sections namely, ‘World News’, ‘International Jihad News’ and ‘Indonesia News.’ *Arrahmah* samples

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The y-axis in this graph reflects the percentage of worldwide web visits, which results in very low y values. Therefore, the graph only indicates the relative reach of each site.
are taken from the period of August--October 2006, August 2008 and the first week of August 2010. *Voa-Islam* samples are taken from the period of weeks one and two in July 2009, weeks one and two in July 2010 and weeks one and two in July 2011. The distribution of samples from both media can be seen in tables 6.1 and 6.2 below.

Table 6.1: Sample of *Arrahmah*’s news items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>World News</th>
<th>Indonesia News</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August–October 2006</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2008</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First week of August 2010</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2: Sample of *Voa-Islam*’s news items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>World News</th>
<th>International Jihad News</th>
<th>Indonesia News</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 and 2 July 2009</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 and 2 July 2010</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 and 2 July 2011</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Arrahmah (arrahmah.com)*

*Arrahmah* Media was founded and is owned by Muhammad Jibriel Abdul Rahman, the son of Abu Jibril, a well-known hardline Islamic cleric in Indonesia. Muhammad Jibril spent his childhood in Malaysia following his parents’ exile during the New Order era. His father Abu Jibril brought his family to Malaysia to avoid intimidation from the Indonesian authorities because of his involvement with NII (the Islamic State of Indonesia) in 1985. Muhammad Jibril established *Arrahmah* Media in 2006 after returning from his study in Karachi, Pakistan. He was accused of being involved in the bombings of the Ritz Carlton and JW Marriot hotels in Jakarta in 2009 and was sentenced to five years’ jail.

35 The number of days in each period of Arrahmah’s samples is different because Arrahmah published less news items in the early years of publication. Therefore, longer time frames are needed to collect samples in 2006 and 2008 in order to obtain a relatively balanced number of samples in each period. The sample items of *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* were also taken from different time in order to cover the items from the first year of the establishment of the websites and their subsequent development after several years of establishment. *Arrahmah* started its publication 2006 and *Voa-Islam* started its publication in 2009.

36 Abu Muhammad Jibril also known as Abu Jibril or Fihirudin, is the vice chairman of the Indonesian Mujahedeen Council (Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia), and he was also a former member of Darul Islam (Indonesian Islamic State). See Solahudin (2011).
In the ‘About Us’ section of its website Arrahmah describes itself as an Islamic media network aimed at providing balanced information about Islam and the Islamic world in the middle of the flow of modern information and globalisation. Arrahmah has a motto ‘Filter your mind, get the truth’ which is written clearly in the name plate of the website (see Figure 6.1 below).

![Arrahmah's name plate](image-url)

Figure 6.1: Arrahmah’s name plate

A claim to represent the true Islam is a common platform found in most Muslim groups. Every group claims that their interpretation and practice of Islam is more appropriate than others’, because there are many sources of legitimacy and no single authority which is universally accepted, such as for instance the Vatican in the Catholic tradition. Arrahmah’s motto clearly shows a claim to truth used to convince the reader about the authenticity of information provided on the website.

Arrahmah also explicitly mentions its vision and mission on the website. Arrahmah states its vision is ‘to spread Islam as rahmatan lil alamin (a grace to the universe), to enlighten and to educate the ummat and also to emulate Salafus Shalih as the best generation of the ummat [Menebarkan Islam sebagai Rahmatan lil Alamien, mencerahkan dan mencerdaskan umat, serta meneladani generasi terbaik ummat (Salafus Shaleh)]’. Arrahmah also provides a mission statement on its website ‘to make a call toward a better world order and to build an extensive network in order to uphold the glory of Islam and Muslims [dakwah menuju tatanan dunia yang lebih baik dan membangun jaringan kerjasama secara luas demi tegaknya Izzul Islam wal Muslimin]’ (http://arrahmah.com/ about.html).

In the early years of publication, Arrahmah focused on publishing news about jihad from many places such as Afghanistan, Kashmir, Palestine and Chechnya. Since the end of 2011 Arrahmah has expanded the content of the websites by including more general items about Islam and has also created a women’s section named ‘Muslimah Zone [Muslim women’s zone].’ The development of the website can be seen in the screen shots of Arrahmah’s front page below (see figures 6.2 and 6.3).
The extension of the content indicates the intention of Arrahmah to attract wider audiences for the website, especially women who are generally under-represented in the audience demographic of Indonesian online news services. Even in the more popular ‘secular’ news websites such as Kompas, female readers are only account for around 20% of the number of visitors of the website (Source: http://apps.kompas.com/ratecard/sub-index-kcm.html#readers).
Voice of Al-Islam (Voa-Islam) was founded in Bekasi West Java in April 2009 and started publication in June 2009. According to the publisher, the establishment of this website was motivated by the concern about the marginalisation of Muslims in Southeast Asia by capitalists and Zionists (Source: http://www.voa-islam.com/about). In the view of Voa-Islam, this marginalisation has occurred through the stigmatisation of Salafi’s Islamic propagation which emulates the Salafus Shalih (the pious predecessors) as extremist, conservative and fundamentalist (Source: http://www.voa-islam.com/about).

Voa-Islam, like Arrahmah, makes a truth claim with its motto ‘Voice of the truth’, written into the name plate of the website (see figure 6.4 below). One of Voa-Islam’s visions as stated in the website is ‘to become a trusted medium by upholding truth and justice professionally [Menjadi media terpercaya yang mengedepankan kebenaran dan keadilan secara professional]’. Voa-Islam also has several missions including a mission ‘to advocate for Muslims in Southeast Asia through the development of online media [Membangun dakwah online dan sebagai bentuk advokasi terhadap umat Islam Asia Tenggara] and also a mission ‘to provide balanced information about the existence of the problems of the Muslim ummat especially in Southeast Asia and in the world in general [Menyampaikan informasi berimbang tentang eksistensi dan permasalahan umat Islam di Asia Tenggara khususnya, dan dunia pada umumnya]’. (Source: http://www.voa-islam.com/about#sthash.KKJNFJaV.dpbs).

The use of the abbreviated name Voa-Islam is interesting, as we might speculate that Voa-Islam tries to promote a counter-discourse against the colonial discourse presented by the multimedia and multilingual broadcaster funded by the US government, Voice of America, with its widely recognised abbreviation, VOA.

Figure 6.4: Voa-Islam’s name plate

Voa-Islam publishes various items about Islam including special sections for women and teenagers. However, Voa-Islam has a special section on jihad named Jihad.
This section contains articles about jihad from the publisher’s perspective. There is also another sub-section which contains information about jihad, namely ‘International Jihad’ sub-section as part of the ‘World’ section. The example of the content of the website can be seen in the front page of *Voa-Islam* below (see figure 6.5).

![Figure 6.5: *Voa-Islam*’s front page 4 April 2015](image)

Although both media represent the views of *Salafi Jihadi* movement in Indonesia *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* tend to have different focus. *Arrahmah* seems to pay more attention to events in the current battlefields such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. In contrast, *Voa-Islam* seems to pay more attention to ‘local’ grievances experienced by Muslims in Indonesia which will be discussed later in this chapter.

**The readers of *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam***

Alexa’s audience demographics on *Arrahmah*’s readership show a similar trend of male domination as seen in *Republika Online*’s audience profile. The number of male visitors of *Arrahmah* is clearly significantly higher compared to general figure of the visitors of the internet. In addition, people who went to college and middle-aged people in the age bracket of 35--44 are also over-represented (see figure 6.6). These figures suggest a
relatively similar demographic profile for the visitors of *Arrahmah* and *Republika Online*.

Figure 6.6: Audience demographics of *Arrahmah*

The audience demographics of *Voa-Islam* show a relatively similar figure to *Arrahmah* and *Republika Online* (see Figure 6.7). However, there is a difference in terms of the educational background of the visitors. The number of visitors to *Voa-Islam* who went to graduate school is over-represented. This figure suggests that *Voa-Islam* may attract a more highly educated audience than either *Republika Online* or *Arrahmah*. The higher number of highly educated readers of *Voa-Islam* is arguably influenced by the ability of *Voa-Islam’s* editors to provide more critical accounts about the condition of Muslims in Indonesia compared to *Arrahmah* and *Republika Online*. 
With regard to the location of the visitors, Alexa’s statistics show that 85.7% of the visitors of Arrahmah are from Indonesia, 3.5% from Singapore, 3.3% from Malaysia and 2.8% from Japan (Source: Alexa, December 22 2014). The statistics of Voa-Islam’s readers show a slightly different figure with 92.4% visitors from Indonesia, 2.0% from Singapore, 1.7% from Japan and 1.2% from Malaysia. The higher number of Arrahmah’s visitor from overseas indicates its capability to attract more visitors from outside Indonesia compared to Republika Online and Voa-Islam. The higher number of Arrahmah’s visitor form overseas may be influenced by the availabily of the English and Arabic translation of some items in Arrahmah, it may be attributed to Arrahmah’s more international orientation (see Graph 2 in this chapter).

**Sources of authority**

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Arrahmah and Voa-Islam claim to represent the voice of the transnational Salafi Jihadi movement which tends to promote jihad as a revolutionary armed struggle to defend Islam from perceived enemies. While Arrahmah seems to have a more international orientation, Voa-Islam focuses on local issues in Indonesia, such as the issue of Christianisation and the problem of ‘deviant groups’ within Islam. In a letter published to commemorate the change of Voa-Islam’s web
design in 2013, the editor wrote that *Voa-Islam* will keep the focus on Muslim issues in Indonesia because Muslims in Indonesia are still in a marginal position (*Voa-Islam*, November 20 2013).

The transnational orientation of *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* can particularly be seen in their references to jihad. *Arrahmah* frequently publishes guidance about performing the true jihad from prominent overseas Salafi Jihadi leaders who are currently in the battlefields or those who died in the battlefields, such as Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Laden, Aiman Az-zawahiri and Abu Yahya Al-Liby. For instance, in an item titled ‘Syeikh Aiman az-Zawahiri to release Al-Qaeda’s guidance of jihad and propagation [Syeikh Aiman az-Zawahiri merilis pedoman jihad dan dakwah Al-Qaeda]’, *Arrahmah* publishes a full statement from Aiman Az-Zawahiri, a prominent leader of Al-Qaeda, to jihadi groups all over the world which contains information about general guidance to perform jihad [Arahan-arahan umum untuk perjuangan jihad] (see Figure 6.8). The exclusive reference of jihad to the mujahidin in the battlefield is admitted by the owner of *Arrahmah*, Muhammad Jibril Abdurrahman. According to him those who are in the battlefield are the most authoritative people in talking about jihad, because they have been close to death (personal interview with Muhammad Jibril Abdurrahman, 25 January 2012). In the issue of jihad *Arrahmah* proposes new centre and periphery relations in Islam with the battlefield as the centre and other parts of the world as the periphery. *Voa-Islam* echoes *Arrahmah* in highlighting the reference of jihad from overseas prominent Salafi Jihadi leaders. For instance, in an item titled ‘Syeikh Abu Yahya Al-Liby dreamed of the Prophet and the way of jihad [Syaikh Abu Yahya Al-Liby mimpikan Rasulullah dan jalan jihad]’ *Voa-Islam* publishes a statement that Abu Yahya Al-Liby, a prominent leader of Al-Qaeda, has received a justification to perform jihad from the prophet Muhammad in his dream (see Figure 6.9). The strong reference to prominent jihadi leaders from overseas has strengthened *Arrahmah*’s and *Voa-Islam*’s tendency to construct a transnational Muslim religious authority and a reliance on charismatic and traditional authority with the main reference to Muslim leaders conducting violent jihad in many of the ‘central’ Islamic countries, especially Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.
Arrahmah and Voa-Islam overtly delegitimise prominent ‘moderate’ Muslim scholars in Indonesia such as Said Agil Siradj the chairman of Nahdhatul Ulama and Ahmad Syafii Maarif the former chairman of Muhammadiyah. For instance, in an Arrahmah’s item titled ‘Kyai Said, are you really a Muslim? [Kyai Said, sampeyan Muslim?]’, the author questions Said’s status as a Muslim. The author also collected many statements of Said Agil Siradj which he regarded as controversial, mainly related to Said’s support of the idea of religious pluralism and his strong criticism toward
Islamic radicalism. The same item was also published by *Voa-Islam* on the same day. *Voa-Islam* also published some other sarcastic attacks on Said Agil Siradji in items such as ‘Is Said Agil Siradji the misled Muslim scholar feared by the Prophet? [Apakah Said Agil Siradji ulama penyesat yang dikhawatirkan Nabi?]’ In another *Arrahmah* item written by Irfan S. Awwas, the chairman of the executive committee of MMI, titled ‘The intervention of democracy in the Islamic struggle’s ideology [Intervensi demokrasi dalam ideologi perjuangan Islam]’, the author questions the commitment of Ahmad Syafii Maarif (the former chairman of *Muhammadiyah*) to Islam because he continuously promotes the idea of pluralism and rejects the formalisation of Islamic law (syariah Islam) in Indonesia.

*Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* also both maintain a connection with so called radical Islamist groups and their prominent leaders in Indonesia. At the local level *Arrahmah* holds an informal connection with the Council of Mujahideen for Islamic Law Enforcement (Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia -- MMI) by frequently publishing opinions from prominent leaders of MMI, especially Abu Muhammad Jibriel (the vice chairman of the advisory board of MMI) and Irfan S. Awwas (the chairman of the executive committee of MMI). This connection is mainly established because of the family connection between the owner of *Arrahmah*, Muhammad Jibriel and both Abu Muhammad Jibriel and Irfan S Awwas (the owner of *Arrahmah*, Muhammad Jibril Abdurrahman is the son of Abu Muhammad Jibril, and Irfan S Awwas is the younger brother of Abu Muhammad Jibril). The explicit connection of *Voa-Islam* with local Muslim groups in Indonesia is unclear, but it can be observed from the publication that *Voa-Islam* frequently publishes the opinion of the prominent leaders of Jama’ah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT) especially Abu Bakar Ba’asyir and Fuad Alhazimi. Although MMI and JAT are established as local Muslim groups in Indonesia, both organisations have the same transnational goal to establish a global Islamic leadership. The idea of global Islam is necessarily working against the history of contextually Indonesianised Islam. As Azra (2013) argues that the cultural expression of Islam in Indonesia ‘has its origin in various local customs and traditions that have been adopted by Islam in the course of history’ (p. 65).

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37 Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) was established in August 2000 as an umbrella organisation for Indonesian holy warriors (Mujahidin). The purpose of MMI is to ensure the implementation of Islamic law in Indonesia from individual level to national level (see for instance: Hilmi, 2010).

38 Jama’ah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT) is a Muslim group in Indonesia established by Abu Bakar Ba’asyir after he separated from Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) in 2008. JAT was named as a foreign terrorist organisation by the United States Department of State in 2012 (Source: http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm).
Ummat from *Arrahmah* and *Voa Islam’s* perspective

*Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* use the term *ummat* to identify the unity of Muslims as one community. A search of *Arrahmah’s* and *Voa-Islam’s* items using the key word ‘ummat’ shows that the term *ummat* is mainly used to describe Muslim communities in Indonesia and overseas or the global Muslim community in general. As with *Republika Online*, only less than 10% of the items on these sites use the term *ummat* to describe religious communities other than Muslims. However, while *Republika Online* tends to present a relatively positive description of non-Muslim *ummat*, *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* tend to show negative descriptions of non-Muslim *ummat* with the headlines such as ‘The Buddhist community blocked donations for Rohingnya’s Muslims [Ummat Budha menghalangi bantuan untuk Muslim Rohingnya]’ and ‘The Christian community is trying to make Christianity as an official religion, Malaysian Muslims were angry [Ummat Kristen berusaha menjadikan Kristen sebagai agama resmi, Muslim Malaysia marah]’.

Unlike *Republika*, which tends to develop the idea of a distinct Indonesian Muslim *ummat*, *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* tend to promote the idea of *ummat* as a global Islamic political community. *Arrahmah* shows a more apparent international orientation by publishing more items related to global Islamic *ummat*. From the search of *Arrahmah’s* items, 42% of the items that appeared in the search are related to *ummat* in the global context, 22% of the items mention *ummat* in other countries and only 36% of the items describe *ummat* in Indonesia (see Graph 6.2).\(^{39}\) A search of *Voa-Islam’s* items shows a different result. The result of the search shows that *Voa-Islam* publishes a relatively balanced coverage of *ummat* in International and local context. Fifty per cent of the items appeared in the search are related to *ummat* in Indonesia and 40% of the items mention *ummat* in the global context (see Graph 6.3). Although *Voa-Islam* publishes a substantial coverage of *ummat* in Indonesia, *Voa-Islam* does not suggest any distinction between the identity of *ummat* in Indonesia and *ummat* in other countries. *Voa-Islam* seems to identify *ummat* in Indonesia as a portion of the global *ummat* that exists within Indonesia. This description can be observed in the headlines such as ‘Indonesian Muslim *ummat* should be focusing their support to jihad in Syria [Umat Islam Indonesia harus fokus dukung perjuangan jihad Suriah]’.

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\(^{39}\) The graphs presented in this section are the result of a search of items in *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* which contain the word ‘ummat’ by using the search tool provided in both websites. The sample is taken from the first fifty items appearing in the search.
The description of *ummat* as a political community can be observed in the tendency of *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* to associate the *ummat* with the struggle to establish a global Islamic caliphate and the enforcement of Islamic law. For instance, in an *Arrahmah* item titled ‘The urgent need of jihad and what stance shall *ummat* take’ [Urgensi jihad dan bagaimana seharusnya umat bersikap]’ the author writes:

> The role of the Islamic caliphate which can protect the *ummat* from the vicious treason of the enemies of Muslims has vanished. Since that time Muslim *ummat* has become the victim of blasphemy, abuse, ethnic cleansing, etc. and no single power is capable of being a defender [Peran Khilafah Islamiyah yang selama ini bisa melindungi ummat dari makar keji musuh-musuh Islam pun telah sirna, sehingga sejak saat itu pulalah ummat Islam menjadi bulan-bulanan sasaran makian, hujatan, cacian, pelecehan, pembersihan etnis, dll. dan tidak ada satu kekuatan pun yang mampu menjadi pembela] (*Arrahmah*, April 18 2011).

In another *Voa-Islam* item titled ‘Muslim *ummat* in Indonesia should focus the support of jihad in Syria [Umat Islam Indonesia harus fokus dukung perjuangan jihad Suriah]’ the author writes:
Many Muslim scholars argue that jihad in Syria has become the first step of the revival of Islamic caliphate. Therefore, Muslim ummat in Indonesia should keep the focus on supporting jihad in Syria. [Banyak pengamat dari kalangan ulama menyatakan bahwa jihad Suriah menjadi langkah awal tegaknya khilafah Islamiyah lagi. Karenanya umat Islam Indonesia harus terus fokus dukung perjuangan jihad di Suriah.] (Voa-Islam, December 13 2013).

This imagination of the revival of a global Islamic caliphate is further reinforced by the optimism that the occupation of western countries by Muslims will be achieved in the near future. In an Arrahmah item titled ‘Democracy in the dynamics of global jihad [Demokrasi di tengah dinamika jihad global]’ the author asserts:

In the near future we will see men with the Afghan’s typical hat and cloth. They will be back and forth in the streets of Rome holding the legendary AK 47 gun. They are currently on patrol to secure the city after conquering it. Yes, don’t misread; conquering it. This is one of the signs of the end of the days, and the way to that direction has been increasingly open. [Tak lama lagi kita akan menyaksikan pria-pria dengan topi khas Afghan, dengan baju khas Afghan, lalu lalang di jalan-jalan kota Roma dengan menenteng senapan AK 47 yang legendaris itu. Mereka sedang berpatroli mengamankan kota setelah menaklukkannya. Ya, jangan salah baca; menaklukkannya. Ini adalah salah satu nubuwat akhir zaman, yang jalan ke arah sana sudah makin terbuka.] (Arrahmah, February 8 2013).

It appears that the political orientation of Arrahmah and Voa-Islam is mainly influenced by the ideology of Salafi Jihadism (as described in Chapter 3). The ideology of Salafi Jihadism has developed as part of the so called contemporary global Islamist movement. Salafi Jihadi groups have the same mission as other radical Islamist groups in the formalisation of Islam in the form of a global Islamic caliphate or local Islamic states. However, Salafi Jihadi groups specifically promote violent jihad as the tool for achieving their goal. This political orientation is also supported by the tendency of Arrahmah and Voa-Islam to portray the ummat as being in a situation of conflict with the perceived enemies of Islam. The majority of the items in Arrahmah and Voa-Islam which mention the term ummat portray the struggle of the ummat against perceived enemies such as non-believers and global conspiracy against Islam (96% in Arrahmah and 80% in Voa-Islam). Only a small number of the items found in Arrahmah and Voa-Islam describe the ummat in the context of peaceful social and economic development (see graphs 6.4 and 6.5).
Graphs 6.4 and 6.5 show that unlike Republika which pays strong attention to the issue of social and economic development of ummat, Arrahmah and Voa-Islam pay little attention to the issue of social and economic development. Voa-Islam looks at ummat in social and economic development more often than Arrahmah but significantly less than Republika. These figures support the notion that the different ways these sites identify the problems of ummat are influenced by their different imaginations of the ideal form of Islamic ummat.

Arrahmah and Voa-Islam represent the view of Salafi Jihadi groups in supporting the establishment of a global Islamic political community by challenging the boundary of nation state. In order to undermine the boundary of nation state, Arrahmah publishes several items related to the arrival of many Mujahid from several countries to the battlefield of jihad in several countries such as Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia and Burma. The arrival of these transnational Muslim fighters were published in items such as ‘This Moroccan family emigrated to Syria for jihad [Keluarga Maroko ini bersama-sama berhijrah ke suriah untuk berjihad]’, ‘Students from UK joined jihadi groups in
Somalia [Mahasiswa Inggris bergabung dengan kelompok jihad di Somalia], ‘Allah is great!, one more young Indonesian dies as a martyr in Syria [Allahuakbar!, satu lagi pemuda asal Indonesia syahid di bumi Syam]’, and ‘Rohingnya’s holy fighters need personnel from Indonesia [Mujahidin Rohingnya butuh personel mujahidin dari Indonesia]. Voa-Islam also shows a tendency to challenge the boundary of nation by publishing headlines such as ‘Taliban in Pakistan and Afghanistan to plan a joint military operation in Afghanistan [Taliban Pakistan dan Afghanistan rencanakan operasi militer bersama di Afghanistan]’ and ‘A Muslim cleric from Jordan to join the Islamic State of Iraq and Syam [Ulama Yordania bergabung dengan Daulah Islam Iraq dan Syam].

Arrahmah and Voa-Islam share a similar position with other radical Islamist groups which oppose the concept of the nation state and nationalism. Voa-Islam criticises nationalism as a failed ideology. For instance, in an editorial opinion titled ‘Who else in Indonesia still holds the spirit of nationalism? [Siapa lagi di Indonesia masih berjiwa nasionalis?]’ the author argues

Nationalism as an ideology has been abandoned by its founders. Why should we keep debating this obsolete ideology. In the midst of global change, nationalism is not an actual ideology and it no longer provides a solution in the current modern world. [Nasionalisme sebagai dokrin ideologi, sejatinya telah ditinggalkan oleh para penggagas dan ideolognya. Mengapa harus masih diperdebatkan tentang nilai-nilai nasionalisme yang sudah usang itu. Nasionalisme di tengah-tengah perubahan global, sudah tidak aktual lagi, terutama untuk memberikan solusi bagi kehidupan modern sekarang ini.] (Voa-Islam, October 22 2012).

Arrahmah hold a stronger negative opinion that Muslims who believe in nationalism are regarded as apostates. This opinion is presented in the sample text below:

In Islam, nationalism is not only prohibited, it is even symbolises a form of scepticism (disbelief, translator), by participating in war and dying for the sake of nationality is the opposite of dying for the sake of religion. [Dalam Islam, nasionalisme tidaklah hanya terlarang, tetapi bahkan hal itu dilambangkan sebagai bentuk kesangsian (ketidakberiman, pent.), dengan berperang dan mati karena sebab kebangsaan sebagai lawan dari sebab keagamaan.](Arrahmah, June 12 2008).

The rejection of the political concepts originating from the west such as nationalism and democracy is commonly shared by transnational Islamist movements. Such a rejection has been widely promoted in Indonesia especially by a growing transnational Islamist movement Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). HTI promotes a radical vision of Islam by rejecting democracy, nationalism, and other secular systems adopted from western countries, but HTI also rejects the use of violence to reach its goal in establishing an Islamic caliphate to unite Muslims all over the world (Ward, 2009). Although
Arrahmah is not explicitly allied with HTI, Arrahmah also promotes the rejection of the concept of nationalism and wars which are fought for a nation state. A closer reading of Arrahmah’s influences and articles makes it clear that according to Arrahmah, the only war which can be considered as worthy is the war dedicated to Allah.

The similarity of ideas between Arrahmah and HTI can be understood because it seems that Arrahmah is highly influenced by al-Muhajiroun, a radical Islamist group in the United Kingdom which was officially disbanded by the government in 2004. The top leader of Al-Muhajiroun, Omar Bakri Muhammed, was previously the leader of Hizb at-Tahrir in the UK but finally established the group independently from Hizb at-Tahrir. The connection between Arrahmah and al-Muhajiroun can be found by tracing the source of articles published on Arrahmah’s website. Many articles published by Arrahmah are cited from another Indonesian website, almuhajirun.net, which is not only using the same name as al-Muhajiroun in the UK but also provides the link to the profile of two al-Muhajiroun leaders, Omar Bakri Muhammed and Anjem Choudary (almuhajirun.net).40

Furthermore, Arrahmah condemns Indonesian jihadi’s who perform jihad in support of the nation state. For instance, in the sample text below Arrahmah criticises the action of Laskar Jihad a paramilitary group in Indonesia which organised voluntary jihad fighters on Moluccas Island in the conflict between Muslims and Christians in 1999--2003.

Although they participate in jihad, it is in the wrong context, namely to eradicate RMS [Indonesian separatist movement, the Republic of South Moluccas], defending the sovereignty of the NKRI [Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia]. Which Islamic scholar has the courage to say that defending NKRI is considered as jihad? [Kalaupun “berjihad” dalam konteks yang keliru: memberangus RMS, membela kedaulatan NKRI. Ulama` mana yang berani mengatakan membela NKRI sebagai sebuah jihad ?] (Arrahmah, March 6 2007).

This opinion reinforces the distinction Arrahmah makes between contemporary Salafi Jihadi groups and the ‘nationalist’ jihadi groups such as Laskar Jihad who have used the term jihad to represent the struggle to defend the sovereignty of a nation state.

Arrahmah holds a vision that the establishment of a global Islamic caliphate can be started by the establishment of Islamic countries or territories (dawlah/imalah Islamiyah) in many parts of the world. In an article titled ‘88 years without caliphate: from imarah to khilafah [88 tahun tanpa khilafah: from imarah to khilafah]’, M Fachry, the former editor in chief of Arrahmah argues:

40 The popularity of this website is significantly below Arrahmah and Voa-Islam and this website can not be accessed anymore.
Islamic territories such as in Afghanistan, the Caucasus region, Somalia and Iraq from the perspective of Islamic law can be categorised as particular Islamic territories, namely a particular Islamic leadership in a particular territory, where the Islamic law is implemented in that territory. This particular territory by the permission of Allah can be developed into a global Islamic leadership which is known as a caliphate for all Muslims in the whole world which will bring tranquillity, prosperity and blessing from Allah, not only for Muslims, but also for non-Muslims and even the whole universe. (Arrahmah, March 2 2012).

Arrahmah also created a sub-section called ‘Dawlah Islam (Islamic states/Islamic territories) News’ in the website. Interestingly, Arrahmah only mentions the territories which are currently under the authority of Salafi Jihadi groups and does not consider other Islamic states such as Saudi Arabia and Iran as part of Islamic territories. Voa-Islam echoes Arrahmah in the depiction of ‘legitimate’ Islamic States/Islamic territories (Daulah Islam) which are currently in the control of Salafi Jihadi groups such as the territories in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and Somalia. These items were published with the headlines such as ‘The photos of the fighters from the Islamic State of Iraq in the Aleppo battlefield [Foto-foto mujahidin Daulah Islam Iraq di front tempur Aleppo]’, ‘The genealogy of the Prophet in the figure of the leader of Muslims in the Islamic State of the Greater Syria [Silsilah Nabi pada figur amirul Mu'minin Daulah Islam Syam]’, ‘An interview with foreign fighters in the troop of the Islamic States of Iraq and the Greater Syria (ISIS) [Wawancara dengan mujahidin asing di barisan Daulah Islam di Irak dan Syam (ISIS)]. Voa-Islam echoes Arrahmah in reporting positive coverage of the Islamic States of Iraq and Syria by publishing items related to the victory of the ISIS such as ‘The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria launched 809 military operations in Iraq [Daulah Islam Iraq dan Syam lancarkan 809 operasi dalam sebulan di Irak]’ and ‘ISIS to arrange the territory based on Islamic Law [ISIS konsidikan daerah kekuasannya sesuai syariat Islam]’. The establishment of so called Islamic territories in several battlefields such as in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria has reinforced an imagination of the revival of a global Islamic caliphate as a source of traditional authority. Initially, both Arrahmah and Voa-Islam considered ISIS as a legitimate Islamic territory. However the rivalry
between Salafi Jihadi groups in Iraq, Syria and the surrounding areas has subsequently influenced the portrayal of the ISIS by Arrahmah and Voa-Islam. In the newer items Arrahmah echoes the position of Al-Qaeda that ISIS is not a legitimate Islamic caliphate. The change of this editorial position indicates the tendency of Arrahmah to position the prominent leaders of Al-Qaeda as the centre of authority. In contrast, Voa-Islam maintains favourable views toward ISIS, Al-Qaeda and other jihadi groups.

The imagination of the possibility of a revival of the global Islamic caliphate influences Arrahmah’s and Voa-Islam’s views on democracy. There is a slight difference of opinion between Arrahmah and Voa-Islam in response to democracy. Voa-Islam seems to hold an absolute rejection of the concept of democracy. According to Voa-Islam, democracy is rooted in the idea of secularism and therefore it should be totally rejected. To support the rejection of the idea of democracy, Voa-Islam publishes several articles with headlines such as ‘Democracy is one of the ways of evil! [Demokrasi salah satu jalan setan!], ‘The essence of democracy is slavery [Hakikat demokrasi itu perbudakan], and ‘Communism and democracy have the same dirty face [Komunisme dan demokrasi memiliki satu wajah sama kotor].

While Voa-Islam’s view on democracy is clear, Arrahmah’s view on democracy is ambiguous. Arrahmah has published several articles opposing the idea of democracy with the titles such as ‘JAT: Human rights and democracy the tools to slaughter the ummah [JAT; HAM dan demokrasi alat pembantai umat]’, ‘Egypt was fooled by democracy? Who else? [Mesir tertipu demokrasi? siapa lagi?]’, ‘Democracy is the root of destruction [Demokrasi; Sumber kerusakan]’. However, Arrahmah also presents the current view of the MMI which accepts democracy as a procedure but rejects democracy as an ideology. In an article titled ‘The view of Majelis Mujahidin on democracy [Pandangan Majelis Mujahidin tentang demokrasi]’ the author argues:

As an ideology we consider it (democracy) as idolatrous, but as a mechanism it is permissible. Those who want to use it are fine as long as the commitment is clear for the benefit of Islam. That is to elevate Islam and not to subordinate Islam. [Kalau sebagai ideologi kita jelas mengatakannya itu musyrik tetapi sebagai mekanisme bisa saja, itu mubah saja. Yang mau menggunakananya silahkan asal komitmennya jelas untuk kepentingan Islam. Meninggikan Islam bukan untuk merendahkan Islam] (Arrahmah, September 7 2013).

Arrahmah and Voa-Islam tend to construct a description of ummat as single global and transnational Muslim community. According to them, this ummat should be organised under a single political authority of a global Islamic caliphate and the unity of the so called Islamic territories. This imagination of a global Muslim community is constructed through the reliance on charismatic and traditional authorities of Muslim
leaders in the battlefield of jihad in many parts of the world and their prominent followers in Indonesia.

The language of ummat

*Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* tend to show their transnational orientation by the extensive use of English and Arabic on the websites. The name of the website ‘Arrahmah’ is an Arabic word which means the mercy and the name *Voa-Islam* is an abbreviation of an English name ‘Voice of Al-Islam’. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, *Arrahmah* uses the motto in English ‘filter your mind, get the truth’ and *Voa-Islam* uses an English motto ‘voice of the truth’. This transnational orientation can also be observed from the use of Arabic and English in the items and in the name of sections and sub-sections in *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam*. *Arrahmah* uses several English terms such as ‘Islamic World’ and ‘Jihad Zone’ as the name of the sections on the website, and *Voa-Islam* also use several English terms such as ‘Counter Faith’, ‘Smart Teen’ and ‘Share Voices’ as names of the sections. In addition, *Arrahmah* provides English and Arabic sections on the website which contain the translation of several items into English and Arabic (see Figure 6.10).

Figure 6.10: The English and Arabic sections on *Arrahmah’s* website

The transnational orientation of *Arrahmah* can also be seen in a video in English uploaded by *Arrahmah* titled ‘A message to the Muslim ummat in Indonesia from Sheikh Anjem Choudary [Pesan untuk ummat Islam Indonesia oleh Syaikh Anjem Choudary]’. This video contains a special message from Anjem Choudary, a radical Muslim leader in the United Kingdom, to Indonesian Muslims encouraging them to struggle for the establishment of a global Islamic caliphate and for the domination of the world by Islam (*Arrahmah*, March 27 2011). The partial use of English or Arabic in several items and also in the name of the sections of the websites and by *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* supports the increasingly important role of English as the language of global
Islam in addition to Arabic as the official language of Islamic teaching. As Turner argues:

> Arabic is the language of revelation in the Qur’an and a sound comprehension of Arabic was the foundation of traditional religious knowledge and authority. However, English is increasingly the language of Muslim websites and offers intellectuals in the diaspora an instant international audience (Turner, 2007a, p. 58).

However, there is still a limit to this transnational tendency. The majority of Indonesians do not use English or Arabic on a regular basis. Only a small number of the pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and Middle Eastern universities’ graduates speak fluent Arabic and the majority of people remain equipped with an inadequate knowledge of English (van Dam, 2009; Lauder, 2008).

**Jihad from Arrahmah and Voa-Islam’s perspective**

*Salafi Jihadist* websites tend to promote a distinct perspective that jihad is an armed struggle against non-believers. In one of the articles on *Arrahmah* titled ‘Perbedaan antara kekerasan dan jihad’, the author argues that ‘Jihad is a struggle to kill or to be killed for the sake of Allah...[ Jihadi adalah berjuang –membunuh dan dibunuh- demi Allah semata,...]’ (*Arrahmah*, June 12 2008). In this statement the author explicitly highlights killing other people as the manifestation of jihad. Similar statements can also be found in *Voa-Islam*. In one of the articles published by *Voa-Islam* ‘Uncover the meaning of ‘In the way of Allah’ in the Qur’an and the prophetic traditions *Membedah makna ‘Fi Sabilillah’ dalam Al-Qur’an dan hadits’, the author contends:

> The global meaning of the term jihad in the Qur’an, the prophetic traditions and the statements of Muslim jurists cannot be interpreted as anything else except war. [Bahwa kalimat jihad, apabila disebutkan secara global dalam kitabullah dan Sunnah Nabi shalallahu ‘alaihi wasallam dan perkataan fuqaha’, maka tidak dibawa kecuali kepada perang] (*Voa-Islam*, May 26 2010).

This interpretation represents a popular view of jihad among radical Islamists who believe that the one and only way to engage in jihad is by participating in a war or armed struggle against non-believers as the perceived enemy (Woodward, 2001). To support this interpretation, *Arrahmah* also publishes many other articles which specifically associate jihad with war and the fight against non-believers. For instance, in the *Arrahmah* article mentioned above, when explaining that all Muslims have a responsibility to perform jihad, the author refers to the Qur’an in *surah* (chapter) *al-Baqarah* (2: 216) which actually mentions the term *qital* (killing/fighting/war) instead of jihad. In this article, the author further argues,
(jihad) is a responsibility which was revealed in the Qur’an (see al-Baqarah 2: 216). Of course there is a spiritual meaning of the term jihad (from a linguistic perspective), but we don’t need to explain that here [(jihad) adalah sebuah kewajiban yang ditahbiskan dalam Al-Quran (lihat al-Baqarah 2: 216). Tentu saja, terdapat istilah spiritual—lebih linguistik—kosa kata jihad, tetapi kami tidak menguraikan tentang itu disini] (Arrahmah, June 12 2008).

The verse 216 in chapter 2 of the Qur’an specifically mentions that ‘fighting (al-qital) has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you’ (Sahih International English translation of the Qur’an). In another article ‘Jihad in the way of Allah- uncover the hypocrisy [Al-jihad fie sabilillah- menyingkap tabir kemunafikan]’, the author also cites the Qur’an, chapter An-Nisa (4: 74) which also explains specifically about fighting (qital) in the path of Allah (Arrahmah, January 13 2009). Verse 74 in chapter 4 of the Qur’an specifically says ‘so let those fight (yuqatil) in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the hereafter’ (Sahih International English translation of the Qur’an). It is interesting to note that the writers of the Arrahmah website do not refer to the verses which explicitly mention the word ‘jihad’ when they write about it, rather they prefer to quote the verses which mention qital (fight) and harb (war). In this way they try to avoid explaining the more general meaning of jihad and promote their specific interpretation of the term.

Voa-Islam uses a different approach in explaining the meaning of jihad. In Voa-Islam, Qur’anic verses which mention the word jihad are quoted by the authors, but they contend that the words jihad and qital (war/killing) in the Qur’an both have the same meaning. Voa-Islam admits that the term jihad is not only related to armed struggle but can also be interpreted as struggle against oneself, struggle against evil and struggle in dakwah (Islamic propagation). This opinion can be found in an article published in Voa-Islam titled ‘Is the meaning of jihad in the verse ‘those who strive in us’; propagation or war? [Makna jihad ‘Alladzina jaahaduu fiinaa’; dakwah atau perang?]’. However, in other articles Voa-Islam tends to impose the interpretation of jihad as armed struggle against non-believers. For instance, in article titled ‘Hijrah and jihad 1 [Hijrah dan jihad 1]’ the author concludes

It is true that Islam is enforced with sword. And indeed it would not be possible to raise the flag of monotheism all over the world except with sword. Sword is the only way to eliminate obstacles and the only way to establish an Islamic state [Memang benar, bahwa agama Islam tegak dengan pedang. Dan sesungguhnya bendera tauhid tidak akan mungkin dapat berkipar tinggi di penjuru dunia, kecuali dengan pedang. Dan pedang adalah satu-satunya jalan untuk menghilangkan rintangan-rintangan, dan satu-satunya jalan untuk menegakkan Daulah Islam (Voa-Islam, September 22 2009).
The emphasis on armed jihad in these websites is also supported by the placement of many photographs and news items related to Muslims participation in armed struggle around the world. News items about Muslims’ struggle against their enemies in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine and other places in the world are given special attention by both Arrahmah and Voa-Islam. For instance, in a section titled ‘Let’s go for jihad [Hayya alal Jihaad! Ayo berjihad!]’, Arrahmah published numerous pictures portraying armed struggle from overseas without any information about the source of the pictures (see Figure 6.11 below). These overseas struggles have various objectives such as the struggle for liberation in Kashmir and the Philippines, the fight against foreign occupation in Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine and even the struggle against their own so called ‘apostate governments’ which are regarded as allies of western countries in countries such as Pakistan. Similarly, Voa-Islam also published photos which highlight the importance of armed jihad (see Figure 6.12).

Figure 6.11: Jihad photos in Arrahmah

There is a slightly different opinion between Arrahmah and Voa-Islam with regard to the position of jihad in Islamic teaching. Arrahmah tends to support the opinion that jihad has become fardul ain (individual responsibility) for all Muslims today. This statement is found in a translation of a speech by Abu Zubair ‘Adil al-‘Abab one of the prominent leaders of a radical Islamic group Qaidatul Jihad in the Middle East, quoted in the text below. In this speech, al-‘Abab argues that participating in a war is an individual obligation for every Muslim. He says:

My dear brothers, wage the spirit of war! Because war is fardlu ‘ain [an individual obligation for every Muslim], which needs the greatest sacrifice according to ulama (scholars), fuqaha (jurists), muhadditsin (the experts in the prophetic traditions) and mufassirin (the experts in the commentary of the Qur’an). [Wahai saudaraku, kobarkan semangat berperang! Karena sesungguhnya perang adalah fardhu 'ain yang paling membutuhkan pengorbanan menurut kesepakatan 'ulama', fuqoha', muhadditsin dan mufassirin.] (Arrahmah, December 7 2009- Tidak shodaqoh dan tidak jihad? lalu dengan apa engkau masuk surga?).

A similar view is also found in a book written by Imam Samudra (the mastermind of the Bali bombing) which refers to the commonly held opinion of classical Muslims scholars that ‘if an inch of Muslim’s land is seized then it becomes incumbent on all Muslims to liberate it through armed jihad’ (MH Hassan, 2006, p. 74).

Moreover, Arrahmah contends that armed jihad is better than any form of worship. This opinion can be found in the sample text below:

When jihad has become an individual responsibility, it has higher status even above salaah (the prayer), zakat (alms giving), haj (the pilgrimage) and other types of worship. During a war in a defensive jihad, our jihad is our salaah, we can not stop jihad even for salaah, so how can we stop jihad for study? [Pada saat jihad menjadi fardhu ‘ain, itu bahkan di atas shalat, zakat, haji dan semua ibadah lainnya, pada saat kita berperang dalam jihad defensif, jihad kita adalah shalat kita, kita tidak bisa menghentikan jihad bahkan untuk shalat, jadi bagaimana bisa menghentikan jihad...]

Figure 6.12: Jihad photo in Voa-Islam Facebook’s page
It is clear from the quote above, that Arrahmah considers participation in war (armed jihad) as the highest priority of worship even above the five pillars of Islam, namely the profession of faith, prayer, almsgiving, fasting during the holy month of Ramadhan and pilgrimage to Mecca. This opinion is in line with the opinion of other prominent jihadi leaders such as Hafiz Saeed the leader of Jamaat-ud-Dawa in Pakistan (Yasmeen, 2013).

More specifically, Arrahmah’s perspective on jihad subscribes to the new definition of jihad promoted by global jihadi movements such as al-Qaeda which promotes a more offensive meaning of armed jihad and seeks to systematically ‘elevate the status of jihad in Muslim consciousness and make it equal with the five pillars of Islam’ (Gerges, 2005: 3). Although Osama Bin Laden considered his struggle as a defensive jihad, he has distorted the old meaning of defensive jihad by justifying the attacks on all Americans ‘in any country in which it is possible to do it’ as a direct response to the US occupation of many Muslims countries (Johnson, 2002, p. 12).

Meanwhile, Voa-Islam tends to be more cautious in explaining the law of jihad as an armed struggle. Voa-Islam considers jihad as a fardhu kifayah, namely an obligation that can be performed by some in order to remove the obligation from the rest. The difference opinion on jihad being individual obligation (fard ain) or a collective obligation (fard kifaya) is a point of distinction among global Salafi groups. This opinion can be found in the statement below.

Muslim scholars have different opinion on the law of jihad…the more true opinion is that it is fardhu kifayah for this umma according to the available propositions. [Para ulama berbeda pendapat tentang hukum jihad…pendapat yang lebih benar adalah fardhu kifayah bagi umat ini, berdasarkan dalil-dalil yang ada.] (Voa-Islam, October 19 2010- Hukum jihad antara fardhu ain dan kifayah).

However, Voa-Islam also considers jihad as the best deed in Islam. In one article the author quotes a hadith which illustrates the similarity of jihad with fasting, praying and continuous reading of the Qur’an. The author also contends that

….whoever has been blessed to do jihad, Allah has given him/her all the privileges in Islam. This is because a struggler will be given the rewards while he/she is asleep, during his/her journey, in his/her tiredness, in his/her hunger and thirst and rewards in all his/her motion. […]siapa yang telah Allah karuniakan kesempatan berjihad, seolah, Allah telah memberikan kepadanya semua keutamaan yang ada dalam Islam. Hal ini dikarenakan seorang mujahid tetap diberi pahala jihad dalam tidurnya, perjalannya, capek dan lelahnya, lapar dan hausnya, dan pahala dalam setiap gerakannya] (Voa-Islam, February 3 2012- Tidak ada amal yang bisa menandingi jihad).
With regard to the legal status of jihad for women, Voa-Islam and Arrahmah state a similar opinion that jihad is not compulsory for women. In an article titled ‘The legal status of jihad for women [Hukum jihad bagi wanita]’, Voa-Islam states that it is only compulsory for women to participate in jihad if the number of men who can go for jihad is very limited or if the enemy has attacked them directly in their homes (Voa-Islam, 8 January 2009). Similar views can also be found in one of Arrahmah articles. In an article titled ‘The role of Muslim women in the field of jihad [Peran Muslimah dalam kancah jihad]’ the author argues that there are several roles that the women can play in jihad. They can motivate their husbands, their sons and their relatives to participate in jihad. They can also help by supporting the fighters with their wealth or verbal support. They can also participate physically in jihad but the author underlines that it is not compulsory for them (Arrahmah, March 17 2011). While there are differences, both Arrahmah and Voa-Islam use jihad to mean violent struggle.

In-group and out-group description

According to van Dijk, the dichotomy of in-group and out-group is usually presented in the ‘ideological square’ formulation which: 1) Emphasises information that is positive about Us; 2) Emphasises information that is negative about Them; 3) De-emphasises information that is positive about Them; 4) De-emphasises information that is negative about Us (van Dijk, 1998a, p. 267). In an article of Arrahmah titled ‘Tikaman terhadap jihad fi sabilillah [A stab toward jihad in the way of Allah]’, the author differentiates two groups in the war of ideas in interpreting the concept of jihad. Firstly, there is a group of people that he describes as Muslims who really understand Islam, who always refer to the true source of Islam (the Qur’an and the prophetic traditions) and believe that al-Jihad fi Sabilillah should be interpreted as war against non-believers. Secondly, there is a group of people who only satisfy their self-interest and always ignore the responsibility to fight against non-believers (Arrahmah, 6 March 2007). The author argues further that Muslims in the second category have distorted the meaning of jihad to such an extent that it is more suitable to their own interest and it means that they are not only distorting the meaning of jihad but, even more, undermining Jihad fi Sabilillah. In this article, the author strongly criticises other Muslims who do not consider fighting non-believers as their top priority and prefer to promote other issues before jihad, such
as *khilafah* (caliphate)\(^{41}\), *tarbiyah* (education) and peaceful ways of establishing Islamic law. This article represents the polarised opinions about jihad within Muslim communities all over the world and through articles such as this *Arrahmah* strongly promotes its distinct perspective that jihad means armed struggle against non-believers and it should be placed as the top priority of every Muslim’s agenda.

**Defining enemies**

*Arrahmah* considers Jews, Christians and non-believers in general as enemies of Muslims. In an *Arrahmah* article titled ‘Who denies terrorism as part of Islam is a non-believer [Yang menyangkal terorisme bagian dari Islam berarti kafir]’, the author states:

There should be no doubt in the mind of Muslims that Jews and Christians are non-believers and the enemies of Muslims and Islam [Seharusnya tidak ada keraguan dalam pikiran kaum muslimin bahwa Yahudi dan Nasrani adalah kafir dan musuh kaum Muslimin dan Islam] (*Arrahmah*, January 18 2007).

In the early years of its publication, *Arrahmah* focused on Israel and Jews as the enemies. However, *Arrahmah* gradually expanded the identification of enemies to non-believers in general including the puppet authorities in predominantly Muslim countries and Muslims who have deviated from *Arrahmah*’s interpretation of Islamic teaching. This trend can be observed in the Graph 6.6 below. Graph 6.6 indicates that more than half of *Arrahmah*’s international news items contain the depiction of enemies and this proportion increases from 58% in 2006 to 72% in 2008 and then reaches 81% of the total sample in 2010. Of those depicted enemies Israel and the Jews were the most frequently mentioned enemies in the first year of *Arrahmah*’s publication, followed by the US and non-believers in general. In 2008 and 2010 the depiction of Israel and the Jews as enemies declined in relative terms as *Arrahmah* broadened the perceived enemies by including ‘puppet governments’ in predominantly Muslim countries and deviant Muslims as depicted enemies.

\(^{41}\) This criticism is mainly directed to groups such as Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) which consistently promotes the establishment of a global Islamic governance in the form of caliphate as the only solution for the current problems in the world.
The content analysis of Voa-Islam shows a slightly different figure. Non-believers in general are the most frequently mentioned enemies in the three periods examined, while Israel or Jews are only mentioned in less than 10% of the news items (see Graph 6.7). The tendency to blame a conspiracy of non-believers is exemplified in one of Voa-Islam’s articles. In an article titled ‘Hijrah dan jihad 1 [Hijrah and jihad 1]’, the author contends:

The current crusade is a conspiracy of Orientalists who really hate Islam. They use Jews’ lobbying power and also the US and other western countries’ military power to destroy Islam. [Peperangan Salib sekarang ini merupakan konspirasi Orientalis yang sangat benci Islam dengan menggunakan loby-loby Yahudi yang menggunakan kekuatan militer negara Amerika dan Barat untuk menghancurkan Islam] (Voa-Islam, September 22 2009).

The reference to the term ‘crusade’ is commonly used by Salafi Jihadi to contextualise historical events in the past within the current condition in Muslim countries and to justify the view that Muslims are innocent victims of a colonialist anti-Islamic conspiracy (Woodward, 2010). The use of strong words such as ‘destroy’ [menghancurkan] rather than ‘attack’ [menyerang] also heighten the perceived vulnerability of Islam.
In general, *Voa-Islam* shares the same perceived enemies with *Arrahmah*; namely, Israel/Jews, the US and its allies, Christian and other non-believers, puppet governments in predominantly Muslim countries and also deviant Muslims. However, both websites seem to be increasingly paying more attention to the so called puppet governments in predominantly Muslim countries. It seems possible that this is related to the growing disappointment of Salafi Jihadi groups with the policies of these governments which tend to support the agenda of the ‘War on Terror’ carried out by the United States and its allies. For instance, when describing the enemies’ place as *Darul kufur* [the land of non-believers] the description is not only given to non-Muslim lands but also includes Islamic states which are considered to not be applying comprehensive Islamic law. In the sample text below the author argues,

…Saudi Arabia is truly a land of non-believers because (the government) does not implement Islamic law comprehensively […sejatinya secara nyata Saudi Arabia adalah darul kufur, karena tidak menerapkan hukum-hukum Islam secara kaafah] (*Arrahmah*, May 22 2010- Dapatkah darul Islam menjadi darul kufur?).

*Voa-Islam* provides a more detailed description of local enemies in an Indonesian context by identifying local threats to Islam. *Voa-Islam* created a section on the website titled ‘Counter Faith’ which has three sub-sections namely ‘Christology’, ‘Liberalism’ and ‘Intelligence Leaks’. In the ‘Christology’ sub-section, *Voa-Islam* publishes items relating to the perceived negative sides of Christianity and the threat of so called ‘christianisation’ in Indonesia. In the ‘Liberalism’ sub-section, *Voa-Islam* publishes items relating to the danger of liberalism in Islam and describes liberal Muslims as hypocrites who constitute one of the enemies of Islam. In the ‘Intelligent Leaks’ sub-section, *Voa-Islam* publishes items relating to many perceived conspiracy theories about attempts in Indonesia to discredit Islam such as the issue of Chinese
conspiracy to marginalise Muslims and indigenous Indonesians (pribumi) and an the Indonesian intelligence conspiracy to undermine jihadi groups in Indonesia. In addition, *Voa-Islam* also published items relating to conflicts between Muslims and Christians. In two articles titled ‘Pelajaran dari Ambon: Mempersiapkan kekuatan Jihad itu penting [Lesson from Ambon: The preparation of jihad’s force is important]’ and ‘Seruan membela Mujahid korban insiden HKBP Ciketing [An appeal to defend the strugglers, the victims of HKPB Ciketing incident]’, *Voa-Islam* considers the conflict between Muslims and Christians in Ambon and Ciketing West Java to be part of jihad against non-believers. In both articles *Voa-Islam* argues that the conflicts were actually part of the Christians’ agenda to discredit Muslims in Indonesia.

*Arrahmah* targeted the United States of America and the United Kingdom, including their citizens as the real enemy. This opinion can be seen in a sample of *Arrahmah*’s item below:

> The United States is known as the enemy of Islam and Muslims. In fact it is really the land of non-believers, which has vigorously made Islam and Muslims as the enemy of their states... The US’ and UK’s people are the real non-believers without any doubt they are our enemies [USA dikenal sebagai musuh Islam dan kaum Muslim. Pada kenyataannya itulah darul kufur yang asli, yang dengan gencar menjadikan Islam dan kaum Muslimin musuh sebagai musuh negaranya ...Orang-orang kafir USA dan UK merupakan kafir asli tanpa ada keraguan mereka adalah musuh kita] (*Arrahmah*, May 22 2010- Dapatkah darul Islam menjadi darul kufur?).

The inclusion of western countries’ citizens especially US and the UK citizens as enemies is not a new phenomenon. A document written by ‘Egyptian Jihadi’ in 1980 reveals the perception that the US government and its citizens are equally responsible for ‘injustice perpetrated against Muslims’ (Gerges, 2005, p. 47). A similar perception can also be found in Osama Bin Laden’s global jihad campaign. He argues that the American people are part of the enemy because ‘they chose this government and voted for it despite their knowledge of its crimes in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, and in other places’ (Swazo, 2008, p. 24). *Salafi Jihadi* groups in Indonesia do not explicitly support this opinion. However, their support of the perpetrators of the Bali bombings and Jakarta hotel bombings suggests they sympathise with Osama Bin Laden’s opinion. In addition, *Arahmah* and *Voa-Islam* hold similar opinions that the US can be categorised as *kafir harbi* (non-believers who fight Islam and should be retaliated against), but they

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42 The Ambon conflict is a long period of tension between Muslims and Christians in Ambon which started in 1999 and consisted of several smaller scale conflicts lasting until 2012. The Ciketing incident was a conflict between Muslims and Christians in Ciketing Bekasi caused by a dispute over the building of a church.
do not clearly indicate whether the *kafir harbi* status is directed only to the government of the US or to also include all the US citizens.

The strong demarcation of enemies is used by *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* to confirm their distinct identity which is different from other groups’ identity inside and outside Muslim communities. This identification is sometimes highlighted by the use of negative labels such as colonialist, crusader, puppet or terrorist. For instance, the use of negative labels in *Arrahmah* world news items has increased significantly from 13% in 2006 to 30% in 2008 and rose to 33% in 2010 (see Graph 6.8). *Voa-Islam* tends to use less negative labelling compared to *Arrahmah*, but the use of these labels can still be found in several *Voa-Islam* news items (see Graph 6.9).

Graph 6.8: The enemies’ labels in *Arrahmah*’s world news section

![Graph 6.8](image)

Graph 6.9: The enemies’ labels in *Voa-Islam*’s world news and international jihad news section

![Graph 6.9](image)
The negative labelling can be categorised as a stereotypical description of enemies by emphasising their negative actions. In this case, the enemies are always portrayed as responsible agents for their bad actions and are illustrated as being ‘consciously, intentionally, and cynically aware of what they do and the consequences of their actions’ (van Dijk, 1998b, p. 58). This stereotypical description can also be observed in the sample text below which mentions the intention of Christians and Jews to destroy Islam:

The destruction experienced by Jewish and Christian (society) will never happen to Islam although they always spread digressions to destroy Islam…[Kerusakan yang dialami Yahudi dan Nasrani tidak akan sampai pada agama Islam meskipun mereka senantiasa melakukan (menyebarkan) kesesatan untuk menghancurkan Islam,…] (Arrahmah, May 22 2010).

This discourse is shaped by the construction of binary opposition; that is, ‘you are part of Us’ or otherwise ‘you are part of Them’. This is illustrated by the following example:

Someone who says that we should fight terrorism means he/she fights against Islam. We really know that what the US meant by terrorism is nothing else but Islam and Muslims. And whoever avoids terrorism means avoiding Islam [Seseorang yang mengatakan bahwa kita seharusnya melawan terorisme, berarti dia berjuga melawan Islam. Kita sangat tahu bahwa yang dimaksud USA sebagai terorisme tidak ada yang lain selain Islam dan Muslim. Dan siapa pun yang menghindari terorisme berarti menghindari Islam] (Arrahmah, May 22 2010).

The perception that the United State government’s war on terrorism is a war on Islam is shared by Muslim communities all over the world. Pew Global Attitude Research in 2003 revealed a growing perception among citizens in the Muslim world about the potential threat of the US military to their countries (The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2003). This perception not only comes from radical or militant Muslims. For instance, a moderate Muslim leader such as Hashim Muzadi, the former general chairman of one of the biggest Muslim organisations in Indonesia, *Nahdlatul Ulama*, has expressed a similar perception. He argues:

After the September 11 tragedy, which destroyed the World Trade Center Towers and killed thousands of human beings, Muslims were suddenly placed at the center of the world’s attention. The international community seemed to judge them as terrorists and responsible for the disaster. In Indonesia, that arbitrary allegation seemed difficult to counter and even heightened when the 12 October tragedy in Bali was said to have been carried out by an Islamic radical group (Muzadi, 2003, p. 90).

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43 Interestingly this rhetorical construction was famously used by the former US president Goerge W. Bush in his statement ‘either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists’.
However, the statement that ‘whoever avoids terrorism means avoiding Islam’ is unusual even in radical Islamist discourse. It seems that this statement is used by Arrahmah to undermine the endeavours of moderate Muslims who support the fight against terrorism.

Moreover, the description of out-groups is expanded to anyone who cooperates with the enemy. The description of non-believers is broadened by the inclusion of Muslims who support the acts of non-believers and Muslim countries which are considered as the allies of non-believers. This description can be observed in the sample texts below:

Imam Syafi‘i says, if someone deliberately sells stones or wood to non-believers for the purpose of building churches, it means you are considered to be a non-believer. [Imam Syafi‘i mengatakan “Jika seseorang yang dengan sengaja menjual batu atau kayu kepada orang-orang kafir untuk membangun gereja, berarti kamu kafir.”] (Arrahmah, May 22 2010).

Allah will not forgive people who are allied with non-believers to fight Muslims. [Allah tidak memaafkan orang yang bersekutu dengan orang kafir melawan kaum muslimin.] (Arrahmah, May 22 2010).

The inclusion of Muslims who deal with non-believers in any way as enemies has escalated internal polarisation within Muslim communities and within Salafi groups themselves. Again, the binary opposition strategy has been used by Salafi Jihadi groups to delegitimise other Muslims who do not support the idea of the glorification of armed jihad.

**Defining friends and heroes**

The emphasis on positive information about ‘Us’ can be found in sample text cited from almuhajirun.net below, which is written to counter the opinion that Salafi Jihadi groups are strongly influenced by the Khawarij group (see the description of Kharijite or Khawarij in Chapter 3). In this article, the writer argues that a person who rebels against a ruler who does not implement Islamic law is not a Khawarij, but the person is considered a Muslim, Mu'min (believer) and Muttaqi (god fearing). Therefore, the author argues further:

The one who defends the honor of Muslims, struggles in the way of Allah and is always in the front line in the fight against non-believers is not a Khawarij, rather he is a Mujahid, a Muwahhid [the believer of the unity of the god], a person who is always within this ummah and part of the victorious group that will be given a victory by Allah [Maka, seseorang yang membela kehormatan kaum Muslimin, berjihad di Jalan-Nya, dan berada di front terdepan melawan orang-orang kafir, bukanlah seorang Khawarij, tetapi dia adalah seorang
Mujahid, seorang Muwahhid, seorang yang selalu ada dalam umat ini, Al-Firqotun Najiyah, kelompok yang selamat, dan At-Toifah Al-Mansuroh, kelompok yang akan mendapatkan kemenangan dari Allah Swt] (Arrahmah, March 17 2010-Mujahid bukan Khawarij).

The description of Mujahid expressed in the article represents an in-group description of ‘Us’ which is always portrayed as having positive values. Islamic values such as Mu’min (the believer), Muttaqi (the god-fearer), and Muwahhid (the monotheist) are frequently used to identify members of the group and positive things such as happiness, smiles and fragrance are also used to illustrate the character of individuals who belong to ‘Us’. Furthermore, in-group members will be highly praised and considered as martyrs if they die during a fight or a war. The concept of martyrdom is commonly found in contemporary radical Islamist discourse to provide justification for suicide attack operations such as the Bali bombing (MH Hassan, 2008). According to radical Islamists the martyrs will be elevated and provided a special place in Heaven. The glorification of suicide bombers as martyrs resonates with the idea of jihad as supreme struggle or sacrifice in Islam. In fact, tales of martyrdom are commonly found in other radical Islamist discourses and it has become a spiritual incentive for radical Islamic group members to risk their lives for the glory of Islam (Wiktorowicz & Kaltenthaler, 2006).

The positive description of the Mujahid (holy fighters) is also supported by the glorification of the martyrs. In an article ‘The Smile and fragrance of the martyrs are the evidence of Allah’s special gift to the Mujahidin [Senyum dan wangi para syuhada, bukti karomah Allah SWT kepada Mujahidin]’, the author categorises terrorist group members who are sentenced to death as syuhada (martyrs). In this article, the author quotes several testimonies from their relatives that they have seen some special sign of the death of a syahid (martyr). For instance, the wife of Imam Samudra confirmed that the face of her husband was clean and she could smell a sweet aroma from his dead body. Imam Samudra’s brother also shared a similar perception that his brother’s face looked happy, clean and smiling when he saw his brother’s corpse (Arrahmah, 17 November 2008). The glorification of an in-group member as a martyr can also be found in one of Voa-Islam articles. In an article titled “Kesan pelayat: Karamah pada jenazah Urwah? [The impression of the mourners: Unique signs in Urwah’s dead body?]”, the author illustrates the signs of martyrdom which could be seen on the dead body of Urwah as it arrived in his hometown Kudus Central Java (Voa-Islam, 2 October 2009). Urwah or Bagus Budi Pranoto is a suspected terrorist group member who was killed in an ambush by Indonesian counter-terrorism squad, Densus 88, in 2009. The
description of these positive signs supports the opinion that these people are not terrorists; rather they are heroes and martyrs who fight in the way of Allah.

The construction of transnational resistance identity

*Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* represent the concept of resistance identity introduced by Castells (2010). According to Castells, this type of identity:

Constructs forms of collective resistance against otherwise unbearable oppression, usually on the basis of identities that were, apparently, clearly defined by history, geography, or biology, making it easier to essentialize the boundaries of resistance (Castells, 2010, p. 9).

The articulation of this identity can be found in several texts published on the websites. One example can be observed in a letter written by *Arrahmah’s* founder Muhammad Jibriel Abdul Rahman. He wrote the letter from jail to motivate his fellow ‘Mujahid media (media holy fighters)’, a term that he used to address Muslims who participate in the war of ideas against non-believers. He says:

This struggle is really hard and filled with episodes that suffocate Muslims when they witness oppressions committed by hypocrites, non-believers and others to this *umma*. The oppressions that they have committed are not only in the form of physical oppressions using military operations and other forces, but are also supported by many Jewish stooges’ secular media as another form of oppression, by using offensive and despicable propagandistic tools through television, the internet, newspapers and so on… disobeying rules created by secularists and non-believers is an honor for Islam and the glory of Islam [Memang perjuangan ini amatlah berat, penuh hal-hal yang membuat kaum Muslimin sesak ketika melihat penindasan-penindasan kaum munafik, kafir dan sebagainya terhadap ummat ini. Penindasan yang mereka lakukan bukan saja secara fisik melalui invasi militer dan kekuatan-kekuatan yang lain, namun juga didukung oleh media-media sekuler antek-antek Yahudi dalam penindasan bentuk lain. Dengan sarana propaganda jijik lagi keji, melalui TV, internet, surat kabar dan sebagainya… menabrak pakem yang telah dibuat oleh kaum sekuler dan kafir ini adalah sebuah kemuliaan buat Islam dan Izzatul Islam.] (*Arrahmah*, November 4 2009-Pesan akhuna Muhammad Jibriel Abdul Rahman untuk para pemuda).

The notion of resistance identity is clearly expressed in this letter. *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* share a collective resistance with other *Salafi Jihadi* groups which believe in armed struggle as the only manifestation of jihad. The basis of *Arrahmah’s* and *Voa-Islam’s* identity is Islamic. However, as explained above, *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* have used Islamic teaching to legitimise their struggle against perceived enemies such as Jews, Christians and western countries and their allies.

The term ‘Mujahid Media’, suggests the potential use of the media including the internet as a new battlefield of jihad. In another item titled ‘The internet and global jihad
in the virtual world [Internet dan jihad global dunia maya], the former editor in chief of *Arrahmah*, M Fachry argues that jihad with the words is the first step of jihad before physical jihad and jihad with wealth. In the item, Fachry gives examples of many *jihadi* websites, especially the websites which have links with Al-Qaeda such as the well known *As-Shahab* media, *Al-Fajr* media in Afghanistan and *Al-Furqan* in Iraq. Furthermore, Fachry argues that *Arrahmah Media* and other Indonesian *Jihadi* websites such as *Al-Muhajirun*, *Al-Qoidun*, and *As-Sofwah* are part of this global network challenging the hegemony of western and secular media (*Arrahmah*, September 25 2007). In addition to the term ‘Mujahid media’, *Arrahmah* also introduced the term ‘*Media jihadi (Jihadi media)*’ quoted from an article written in Arabic by a prominent *jihadi* mentor Abu Sa’ad Al-Amili titled ‘Waqi’ wa daur al-i’lam al-jihadi (The reality and the role of *jihadi* media)’ (*Arrahmah*, Mei 25 2013). The publication of these items in *Arrahmah*, suggests *Arrahmah*’s intention to be acknowledged as part of the global and transnational *jihadi* media networks to propagate *Salafi Jihadi* ideology.

Furthermore, *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* use the grievances and oppressions experienced by Muslims in many parts of the world as the main inspiration to encourage Indonesian Muslims to participate in global jihad. These grievances have dominated the news themes in the world news section of both websites and especially in the international jihad news section of *Voa-Islam* which can be observed in graphs 6.10, 6.11 and 6.12 below. Graph 6.10 shows that 55% of the total samples from world news section of *Arrahmah* are related to local Muslim grievances in many parts of the world. This tendency can also be seen in *Voa-Islam*’s ‘World News’ section in Graph 6.11 and is even more evident in *Voa-Islam*’s ‘International Jihad’ news section as shown in Graph 6.12.
Graph 6.10: *Arrahmah’s* world news themes

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Graph 6.11: *Voa-Islam’s* world news themes

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Graph 6.12: *Voa-Islam’s* international jihad news themes

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<td>Week 1 &amp; 2 July 2010 n=19</td>
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Arrahmah has published more items related to international issues rather than those related to national issues. Between 2006 and 2012 Arrahmah has published more than 10,000 news items related to international issues (1177 pages of news index found in the world news archives in 22 May 2012 with each page consisting of 10 news items) and has published less than 4000 news items related to events in Indonesia (372 pages of news index found in the Indonesia news archives in 22 May 2012 with each page consisting of 10 news items). This international orientation is also consistently found in the three periods of samples, which shows a relatively constant proportion of international news at around 70% of the total news items published during each period (see Graph 6.13).

Graph 6.13: Sample of Arrahmah’s news items

This strong global orientation can also be seen in a sub-section called ‘Heroes of Jihad’. In this section, Arrahmah published the profile of foreign Muslims who were involved in ‘jihad’ in many countries outside Indonesia such as Abdullah Azzam and Osama Bin Laden (Afghanistan), Anwar al-Awlaqi and Samir Khan (Yaman), Abu Mush’ab az-Zarqawi (Iraq) and Ibn-ul-Khattab (Chechnya). Only one Mujahid from Indonesia was published in ‘heroes of Jihad’, but his profile was mentioned because he was the first Mujahid from Indonesia who died during the war in Afghanistan.

The oldest news archives found in Arrahmah were news items published in August 2006. In August 2006 Arrahmah tends to focus on the conflict between Israel versus Palestine and Lebanon. Most of the news items published in this period emphasised the cruelty of Israeli military forces in Lebanon and Palestine. Several headlines such as ‘Israel’s aggression to Gaza is getting more violent, one rocket hit Reuters’ journalist car [agresi Israel ke Jalur Gaza makin brutal, satu roket hantam
mobil wartawan Reuters], ‘From Lebanon to Palestine, children become targets of Israel’s killing [Dari Libanon ke Palestina, anak-anak jadi target pembunuhan Israel]’, ‘Dozens of Palestinian children became the victim of Israel’s terrorist operation [Puluhan anak Palestina jadi korban operasi teroris Israel]’, ‘Israel will destroy parts of Al-Aqsa Mosque in the near future [Dalam waktu dekat, Israel akan hancurkan bagian bangunan Masjidil Aqsa]’ dominated the publications of Arrahmah during this month. Within this period, Arrahmah specifically portrayed Israel’s military forces as the main enemy.

Two years after the first publication of Arrahmah the coverage of the international news items had broadened. In August 2008 Arrahmah published news items with a more diverse coverage which included events in the Philippines, Somalia, Iraq, Syria and Chechnya. Some of the headlines published during this period include: ‘Philippine non-believer soldiers are to hunt the Mujahidin [Tentara kafir Philipina memburu Mujahidin]’, ‘The Ethiopian non-believer army kills five Somalians on bus [Pasukan kafir Ethiopia bunuh lima warga Somalia di bus]’, ‘Dying Iraqis attacked by US helicopter’s missiles [Rakyat Iraq sekarat, di rudal helicopter AS]’, ‘Syrian Government detains the wives of Muslim activists [Syria tangkapi para istri aktivis Islam]’, ‘A martyr bomb kills two Russian soldiers in Chechnya [Bom syahid menewaskan dua tentara Rusia di Chechnya]’. It can be seen from these news headlines that the main concern of Arrahmah is to present the struggle of Muslims in many parts of the world against their enemies. From 2006 to 2010 Arrahmah’s world news covered at least 36 countries and regions in the world but the five most popular countries were Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, the United States and Lebanon (see Graph 6.14).

Graph 6.14: Five most frequently mentioned countries in Arrahmah’s world news section
A more specific example can also be observed in an example of the front page of Arrahmah below (see Figure 6.13). On 8 February 2011 Arrahmah highlighted a news item titled ‘Salibis asing bunuh dua warga Afghan [Foreign crusaders kill two Afghan residents]’ as the main headline in the front page of the website. This news item mentions the killing of two civilians in Afghanistan by the US-led military coalition. Four other news items about the events overseas were placed as the ‘top news’ in the top right of the front page and only one local news item about the trial of Abu Bakar Ba’asyir (ABB), was placed in the ‘top news’ section.

Figure 6.13. Arrahmah’s front page

Voa-Islam echoes Arrahmah in promoting global jihad. Although it specifically mentions the grievances of Muslims in Southeast Asia as its main concern, Voa-Islam also publishes news items related to Muslims in other parts of the world. With regard to the number of the news items, Voa-Islam keeps at balance between international or regional news and national news. Since 2009 Voa-Islam has published more than 2500 news items related to international issues (257 pages of news archives found in 25 May 2012, each page consisting of ten news items) and about 2900 national news items (295 pages of news archives found in 25 May 2012). The analysis of three periods of Voa-Islam’s sample also shows that Voa-Islam tends to publish more Indonesian news items rather than international news items (see graph 6.15). These figures indicate a more national orientation of Voa-Islam compared to Arrahmah, which seems to have a more international orientation rather than national orientation.
However, in regards to the issue of jihad *Voa-Islam* tends to have a similar orientation to *Arrahmah* in publishing the struggle of Muslims against their enemies in many parts of the world. *Voa-Islam* created a sub-section named ‘International Jihad’ in the world news section which covers the participation of Muslims in many countries in the struggle against their enemies. *Voa-Islam* also created a ‘Mujahid profiles’ sub-section which mainly represents the profiles of foreign *mujahid* from many parts of the world.

*Voa-Islam* publishes numerous news items related to grievances and offences experienced by Muslims in many countries in the Islamic world news sub-section. Several examples of the headlines published in August 2009 are ‘Israel insists Al-Quds residents destroy their own homes [Israel paksa warga Al-Quds hancurkan rumahnya sendiri]’, ‘The suffering of Muslims in Rohingnya [Derita Muslim Rohingnya]’, ‘An employee in Italy fired because of fasting [Di Italia nekad puasa dipecat]’, ‘Geert Wilder equates the Prophet Muhammad with a pig [Geert Wilder menyamakan Nabi Muhammad dengan babi]’, ‘The song of Schalke Football Club offends Muslims [Mars klub sepakbola Schalke menyinggung umat Islam]’, ‘Students in the US offend by wearing anti-Islam t-shirt [Murid-murid Amerika Serikat menyerang dengan kaus anti Islam]’, ‘Philippines troops attack houses in Mindanao [Pasukan Philipina menyerang rumah-rumah di Mindanao]’, and ‘The sadism of Christian extremists in Uganda [Sadisnya extrims Kristen Uganda]’. These news items suggest that *Voa-Islam* echoes common views of Muslims in Indonesia that Islam has been marginalised by non-believers and secular governments in many parts of the world. From 2009 to 2011 *Voa-Islam*’s world news covered 45 countries and regions in the world but there were six prominent countries mentioned in the three sample periods of *Voa-Islam* world news;
namely, Afghanistan, China, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Somalia and the United States (see Graph 6.16). In general, the conflict in Afghanistan became the main concern of Voa-Islam during the period of 2009-2011. However, in 2009 Voa-Islam paid more attention to the conflict between the Uighur’s Muslim minority and the Han ethnic majority in Xinjiang China.

Graph 6.16: Six most frequently mentioned countries in Voa-Islam’s world news

A similar statement about the current condition of Muslims is also illustrated in one of the Voa-Islam articles. In an article titled ‘Wisdom behind the collapse of the jihad movement, please be patient dear fighters! [Hikmah dibalik keterpurukan gerakan jihad, para Mujahid bersabarlah!]’, the author argues:

It is admitted that Muslims are in a terrible condition. The countries that they live are in the hands of non-believers especially the US and its allies. They cannot implement Islamic law as the guidance of their life, even having a dream about the enforcement of Islamic law is forbidden. Hence, Muslims voluntarily or not are governed by a law which is not authorised by their god. [Kondisi umat Islam, diakui, dalam kondisi terpuruk. Negeri tempat tinggal mereka berada dibawah tekanan dan kendali bangsa-bangsa kafir, khususnya Amerika dan sekutunya. Syariat Islam yang menjadi aturan kehidupan mereka tidak boleh diterapkan. Bahkan bercita-cita tegaknya syariah saja sudah diancam. Sehingga dengan sukarela atau terpaksa kaum muslimin di atur dengan syariat dan aturan yang tidak diridhai Rabb mereka.] (Voa-Islam, March 13 2012)

Concern about grievances experienced by Muslims in many parts of the world can also be found in Arrahmah. For instance, in a statement written by the founder of Arrahmah Media, from prison, Muhammad Jibril says:

Only stupid people say jihad is not compulsory, while our brothers and sisters have been slaughtered in other parts of the world, they were tortured, sentenced to jail, killed, and the women were raped, and we can only keep silent without saying a word [Hanya orang bodoh sajalah yang mengatakan jihad tidak wajib,
sedangkan saudara kita dibantai dibelahan dunia lain, mereka disiksa, dipenjara, dibunuh, para muslimahnya diperkosa, dan kita hanya bisa terdiam tanpa sepatah katapun] (Arrahmah, November 4 2009).

The quotes mentioned above indicate a relatively similar position of Voa-Islam and Arrahmah in response to the grievances of Muslims in many countries.

The publication of news related to injustice towards and oppression of Muslims is an example of the use of the event model by Arrahmah and Voa-Islam. The events published on the website have been selectively chosen from the abundant news about the Islamic world to convince the readers of the website regarding the importance of armed jihad today. According to Hui (2010) this is a narrative typical of radical websites in the Indonesian language. A similar pattern can also be found on other websites analysed by Hui such almuhajirun.net, www.alfirdaus.org, www.muliamedia.net and infoJihad.wordpress.com. In addition, the way Arrahmah defines ummat and also its concern for the problems faced by Muslims in many foreign countries suggests that Arrahmah considers itself part of the global jihadi network beyond the border of nation state. Although there is also a rivalry among global jihadi groups and their followers in Indonesia, Arrahmah and Voa-Islam have tried to focus on the attempt to show unity among jihadi groups. Both websites frequently quote statements from Osama bin Laden, Abdullah Azzam and other global jihadi activists without mentioning their different opinions about jihad. In fact, Abdullah Azzam held an opinion that jihad can only be waged as a defensive action if Muslim lands are attacked by the army of non-believers and disagrees with Osama Bin Laden’s ambition in promoting more offensive interpretations of jihad (Gerges, 2005).

To emphasise the importance of jihad, Arrahmah also quotes a popular statement within global jihadi groups that Muslims are in need of jihad:

If someone leaves this honourable way (Jihad in the way of Allah), they will pay it back, because we are the ones who need jihad and jihad does not need us...[Jika seseorang meninggalkan jalan terhormat ini (Jihad Fie Sabilillah) maka ia akan menebusnya. Karena kita yang memerlukan Jihad dan Jihad tidak memerlukan kita...] (Arrahmah, November 4 2009).

Similar statements can also be found in Abdullah Azzam’s book “Signs of ar-Rahman in the jihad of Afghan”. He says that jihad in Afghanistan is ‘in need of money and men are in need of jihad’ (Azzam, n.d: 66). The similarity of ideas among global jihadi groups supports Juergensmeyer’s opinion that global jihadi groups share the same rhetoric although the organisations and the grievances are local (Juergensmeyer, 2008). Indonesian Salafi Jihadi websites echo the rhetoric of jihad promoted by overseas Salafi Jihadi groups and encourage the readers to participate in this global endeavour.
Although *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* do not explicitly promote militaristic jihad in Indonesia, both of the websites justify many terrorist actions in Indonesia and glorify the actors as *mujahidin* (holy fighters).

**Conclusion**

Despite some differences in their editorial position, *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* similarly represent the ideology of *Salafi Jihadism*. Both media have created transnational connections with prominent leaders of the *Salafi Jihadi* movement in many parts of the world and their prominent followers in Indonesia. Although *Arrahmah* tends to have a more transnational orientation than *Voa-Islam*, both media tend to construct a similar imagination of Islamic *ummat* as a global political community with an ultimate goal to establish a single global Islamic caliphate. While *Arrahmah* tends to focus on the struggle to fight against perceived global enemies of the *ummat*, *Voa-Islam* contextualises the identification of the enemies of Muslims in Indonesia by highlighting perceived ‘local’ conspiracies to marginalise Islam in Indonesia.

The imagination of a single global Islamic caliphate as presented by *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* correlates with the interpretation of jihad by *Salafi Jihadi* and other Islamist groups. These groups generally interpret jihad as a continuous struggle against non-believers and reinforces the construction of a transnational resistance identity. According to *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam*, jihad in the form of armed struggle is the highest form of Islamic piety, and it is regarded as an individual obligation for all Muslims. *Arrahmah’s* and *Voa-Islam’s* views are presented in the websites by selectively quoting verses from the Qur’an, the *hadith* from the prophet Muhammad and statements from Islamic jurists who associate jihad with war. *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* also constantly portray Muslims as the victims of oppression and injustice committed by their enemies, namely non-believers and governments of western countries.

The discourse of jihad presented by *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* clearly indicates a notion of transnational resistance identity. This identity is articulated in the description of jihad as a continuous war between Muslims and non-believers around the world and the portrayal of Muslims as the victims of oppression perpetrated by non-believers and western countries’ governments. In articulating this identity, *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* also specifically call on all Muslims in Indonesia to unite and to support the armed struggle of Muslims in many parts of the world. The dissemination of this global and transnational resistance through the virtual world has become easier and faster due to
the relatively better access to the internet in Indonesia since the early 2000s and the convivial nature of the internet in the era of Web 2.0. The relative weak of censorship in the use of the internet in Indonesia and the growing use of social networking services have particularly helped the dissemination of resistance voices in Indonesia. Therefore, the internet has been developed into a new battlefield by Salafi Jihadi groups to promote a global resistance identity based on their distinct interpretation of jihad.

Furthermore, the globalisation of information technology has helped the global Jihadi movement to build ‘a new consciousness of the transnational identity’ by reinforcing a sense of solidarity and identification with the grievances experienced by Muslims in many parts of the world (Esposito, 2002, p. 158) and also delegitimising contextual interpretations of Islam in Indonesia. Arrahmah and Voa-Islam reinforce this new consciousness by using the websites as a display case for their readers to share the perception of injustice and exclusion experienced by their fellow Muslims in other countries. Chapter 7 discusses the ways in which participatory features of the internet have reinforced this new consciousness and how social networking sites play their role in the formation of Islamic identities in Islamic online news services analysed in this research.
CHAPTER 7

Constructing the sense of community: The ummat, participatory culture and the challenge of personalised media

This chapter asks how the idea of participatory culture and the operation of personalised media have contributed to the construction of the sense of community in the online news services investigated in this research. The chapter argues that the participatory culture of the internet has played an important role in the process of re-construction and re-imagination of the concept of ummat which has been discussed in chapters 5 and 6. This participatory culture has been developed mainly through the availability of many features in the era of Web 2.0 which are easily used by readers to contribute to the publication such as the comment section on the website and the tools which enable them to share particular content with their friends in social network sites. Moreover, the tendency toward personalisation in current online news services and social networking sites has also contributed to the development of new imagined communities on the internet. While the boundary of the nation state has been undermined, a new set of boundaries has been created by the format of personalised media. The users of the internet have become more and more connected with their in-group which shares many similarities and at the same time have become more and more isolated from other groups which have different points of view or who do not share similar identities.

Online news services and social networking sites in Indonesia

The vast development of the use of internet in Indonesia which has been discussed in Chapter 1 has facilitated a significant growth of online news services. Many of these online news services were established as an extension of print based newspapers or magazines such as kompas.com, republika.co.id, and tempo.co and some of them are exclusively developed as online news services such as detik.com, okezone.com or vivanews.com (Nugroho, et al., 2012). The timeline of the development of these online news services from 1995 to 2008 can be seen in Table 7.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Republika developed its first internet publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Tempo established tempointeraktif.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Kompas created kompas online under Kompas Cyber Media company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1998 Detik.com – the first news portal without a print version – is established
1999-2000 Online media become more popular; news portal, entertainment and web-based business portal are mushrooming
2003 The downturn of online portal and dot-com business. A number of online media portals were closed down or experienced a very hard time surviving
2006 MNC Group launched okezone.com, an online news, entertainment, lifestyle, and sports portal
2008 Vivanews.com – an online news portal was launched by PT Visi Media Asia – holding company of ANTV and TvOne.

Source: Nugroho et al., 2012

In order to compete with print based and electronic news services, these online news services have chosen to maximise the use of many participatory features available on the internet in the era of Web 2.0 to attract readers and maintain the loyalty of the active audience. As Clark and Aufderheide argue:

Rather than passively waiting for content to be delivered as in the broadcast days, users are actively seeking out and comparing media on important issues, through search engines, recommendations, video on demand, interactive program guides, news feeds, and niche sites. This is placing pressure on many makers to convert their content so that it’s not only accessible across an array of platforms and devices, but properly formatted and tagged so that it is more likely to be discovered (2009, p. 9).

Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 2, the massive development of user-generated content in the era of Web 2.0 has become a key factor in the emergence of online participatory culture. This participatory culture has been developed mainly through the possibility of readers contributing to the publication by submitting their opinions to the editors, writing comments in the comments section provided in the website or sharing items with their friends in social networking sites. A survey in the United States in 2010 shows that 37% of internet users in the US contributed to the publication of online news by making comments or disseminating news items on social networking sites (Pew Research Center, 2010). There is no current data about the precise number of ‘participatory’ news readers in Indonesia. However, the increasing number of online news services in Indonesia which have facilitated easier ways for readers to contribute to the creation of news arguably suggests that this number is large and growing.

The role of social networking sites is very important in the development of online participatory culture in Indonesia. In this thesis, I use the definition of social networking (social network) sites offered by boyd and Ellison (2008). They define social network sites as

web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of
connections and those made by others within system (boyd and Ellison, 2008, p. 211).

Several social networking sites, notably Facebook and Twitter, have become very popular sites visited by internet users in Indonesia. For instance, in September 2014 Facebook became the second most popular website in Indonesia after google.co.id (Source: http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/ID, accessed 5 September 2014). The growth of social network users in Indonesia also shows a significant increase from 64.5 million users in 2014 to 72.3 million in 2012 and statista.com predicts it will reach approximately 109.8 million users in Indonesia by 2019 (see Graph 7.1 below).

Graph 7.1: Number of social network users in Indonesia

![Number of social network users in Indonesia from 2014 to 2019 (in millions)](http://www.statista.com/statistics/247938/ number-of-social-network-users-in-indonesia/)

The growth of social network users has contributed to the development of participatory culture in the use of the internet in Indonesia and also arguably facilitates the development of a new form of social connection in the virtual world. As Jenkins and colleagues argue:

In participatory culture, members also believe their contribution matters and feel some degree of social connection with one another (at least, members care about others’ opinion of what they have created) (Jenkins et al., 2009, p. xi).

This feeling of social connection is developed through the interaction in the so called ‘networked publics’ which were discussed in Chapter 2. In the case of Islamic online news services in Indonesia, the publishers have facilitated the development of the
feeling of social connection by providing spaces for the readers’ contributions and establishing ‘fan pages’ on social networking sites. The interaction of the readers through their accounts on social networking sites has facilitated the creation of networked publics, mainly by the use of features such as ‘profiles, friends lists, public commenting tools and stream based updates’ (boyd, 2011, p. 43). The feeling of social connection developed through these networked publics arguably facilitates the construction of the notion of community and the re-imagination of the concept of ummat in contemporary Muslim communities in Indonesia. Many popular social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have offered many features which can be easily used by users to establish social connection within the boundary of new imagined communities in the virtual world.

However, as discussed in Chapter 2, these new imagined communities are created unconsciously through the idea of implicit personalisation introduced by many internet companies. These new imagined communities are also commonly developed in a limited circle of friendship and followers. The limited social connection of these new imagined communities raises a fear of social alienation because of the tendency of information filtering and the creation of a so called ‘filter bubble’ within a particular social network which eliminates the circulation of opinions which contradict the views of the majority of the network’s members (Pariser, 2011). In this chapter, I specifically analyse the role of Islamic online news services in Indonesia in mediating the construction of the notion of community by looking at the combination of the use of online news services and social networking sites in three Islamic online media, namely Republika Online, Arrahmah and Voa-Islam. The analysis of these three news websites and their corresponding pages on social networking sites will reveal the extent to which these online news services generate feelings of social connection and solidarity and also assess the degree to which they operate as an a expression of the idea of the ‘filter bubble’.

**Engagement with the active audience**

*Republika Online*

*Republika Online* utilises several features to maintain its relationship with the active audience of the website. The engagement with the active audience has been achieved mainly by providing the space for readers to express their ideas and show their
solidarity in the comment section on the website and by creating a sense of community by the establishment of official fan pages on social networking sites. Republika Online has also created an online forum to facilitate discussion related to any issue selected by the readers and also created a blog called ngobrol to accommodate many different types of contributions from readers such as true or fiction stories, opinions and poems which can not be accommodated in the main website.

The use of social networking sites has become an important feature in the construction of community by Republika Online. Republika has created official accounts on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and utilised them to maintain a relationship with the active readers of the website. Republika joined Twitter in February 2009 and created its Facebook account on 21 July 2009. On 28 August 2014, Republika’s Twitter account had 518,118 followers and 223,792 internet users had ‘liked’ Republika’s Facebook page. Republika Online explicitly identifies its participatory approach by the tagline ‘one stop portal based on community’ which was written in the cover photo of its Twitter and Facebook account to commemorate the nineteenth anniversary of Republika Online (see Figure 7.1). The introduction of this tagline indicates Republika’s intention to develop a community based news services with a strong tendency to facilitate public engagement and participation in the content’s production.

Figure 7.1: The official Twitter account of Republika Online
As discussed in chapter 6, *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* share many similarities in the ideas presented on their websites. Both *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* also maintain their relationship with their active audience of their websites. *Arrahmah* allows comments on the items published on the website but *Voa-Islam* has removed the comment section which was previously available in the early years of the publication. When I asked one of the editors about the reason behind this removal, the editor seemed reluctant to answer and simply answered that the comments section was moved to Facebook (email interview with Mashadi, the editor in chief of *Voa-Islam*, September 24 2014). Both *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* facilitate their readers to share the items that they read with their friends on social networking sites. In addition, *Arrahmah* created a section named ‘kontribusi [contribution]’ to accommodate contributions of news, articles, stories and information about events from the readers. *Voa-Islam* also created a section called ‘sharevoices’ to accommodate contributions from its readers and also has a subsection named ‘citizen journalism’. The use of the English term ‘citizen journalism’ in *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* is interesting. As discussed in chapter 6, both *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* criticise democracy as a deceptive ideology but they use the term ‘citizen journalism’ which is usually associated with the practice of democracy.

Both *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* maintain a limited connection with their active readers by creating official accounts on social networking sites especially Twitter and Facebook, and by using these sites to disseminate selected items from the websites. *Arrahmah* joined Twitter in June 2009 and *Voa-Islam* joined Twitter in April 2010. On 28 August 2014 the followers of *Arrahmah’s* Twitter account reached 43,899 and *Voa-Islam* recorded 58,951 followers. Both organisations are also following each other on Twitter, which indicates a relatively strong ideological connection between *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam*. In contrast, neither *Arrahmah* nor *Voa-Islam* follow *Republika Online* on Twitter (See figures 7.2 and 7.3).
The official Facebook accounts of Arrahmah and Voa-Islam have recorded a more significant number of followers. In a search in early July 2012, nearly 60,000 readers had clicked the ‘like’ sign of Arrahmah’s Facebook page and 68,000 of readers ‘liked’ Voa-Islam’s Facebook page. By January 2014 Arrahmah’s and Voa-Islam’s official Facebook pages had been removed by Facebook. According to the owner of Arrahmah, the Facebook page was removed for the third time when it reached more than 370,000 readers who ‘liked’ the page (Arrahmah, January 30 2014). As mentioned in the statement of rights and responsibilities, Facebook reserves the right to remove pages for any reason. However, there is speculation that both pages were removed because
Facebook received reports that the web pages incited violence. In early April 2014 Voa-Islam created a new fan page on Facebook and Arrahmah created a new Facebook account in early August 2014. At the end of August 2014 Voa-Islam received another removal warning from Facebook because the page published the flag of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Greater Syria (ISIS). Voa-Islam published a statement in response to this removal warning in an item titled ‘Surely we belong to Allah, Facebook blocked Voa-Islam’s fan page because we uploaded a photo which contains the statement of the oneness of Allah “there is no god only Allah” [Innalillah, unggah foto berlafadz tauhid laa ilaha illallah, Facebook blokir fanpage VOA-ISLAM]’ (Voa-Islam, August 27 2014). In this statement, Voa-Islam considers this removal as an example of Islamophobia because Facebook is owned by a Jew, Mark Zuckerberg. The existence of Arrahmah and Voa-Islam on Facebook despite their repeated removal by Facebook suggests a relatively strong intention of Arrahmah and Voa-Islam to keep their existence on social networking sites despite issues surrounding ownership and control.

The use of some participatory features which are available on the internet by Republika Online, Arrahmah and Voa-Islam indicates the awareness of the editors of these online news services of the importance of public engagement in the era of Web 2.0. The use of user-generated content applications by these online news services also indicates their intention to maintain the loyalty of active readers of the websites and also to create a sense of community in the virtual world. However, these three online news services have demonstrated varying degrees of public engagement initiatives. Republika shows a strong willingness to facilitate public engagement by explicitly mentioning its tagline as ‘one stop portal based on community’, while Voa-Islam offers a more limited public engagement as seen by the removal of the comment sections on the website as discussed above. This could be interpreted as a strategy of Voa-Islam to protect the website from critical voices questioning their truth claim as effective the one and only voice of Islam in Indonesia.

**Participatory culture and the sense of community**

As discussed in Chapter 2, current online news services can be differentiated from the old Web 1.0 news services by the availability of new features which can be easily used by readers to contribute to the publication. These new features which are commonly

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44 There is a screenshot from an unknown Facebook account circulated on the internet which contains a message from Facebook that Facebook has blocked Arrahmah’s page based on a report from a Facebook user (muslimmedianews.com, January 30 2014).
found in current online news services include comment sections under each item published on the website, information about the most popular or the most commented-on items, and features which can help readers to easily share the items that they like with their friends on social networking sites. According to Postill and Pink:

The novelty of social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter, when compared with their technological predecessors (e.g. mailing lists or bulletin boards) is that they prompt users to constantly update one another on news, and to ‘share’ digital content (images, videos, news items, etc.), often via hyperlinks. Another significant contrast with earlier technologies is the ease with which social media users can actually share such content. Catching up and sharing digital content are therefore two thoroughly entangled routines (Postill and Pink, 2012, p. 128).

These participatory features have also been used by Republika Online, Arrahmah and Voa-Islam.

Republika Online provides information about the latest, the most popular and the most commented-on items every day on the website. For instance, on Wednesday 19 March 2014, Republika published a news item titled ‘Mosque in Italy destroyed and the Qur’an burned [Masjid di Italia dirusak, Alquran dibakar]’. On Monday 24 March 2014 this item was counted as the second most popular item and the most commented-on item in the ‘Khazanah’ section with seventeen comments which generally condemned the action. Many readers also actively promoted the news with 134 posting the item on their Twitter account and 229 of the readers sharing the item with their friends on Facebook (see Figure 7.4). Another example can be observed in a news item titled ‘Sadistic, a hospital in Sittwe keen to kill Rohingya patients [Sadis, rumah sakit Sittwe gemar bunuh pasien Rohingya]’ published on 29 April 2014. On the next day this item became the second-most popular item and the most commented-on item in the ‘International’ section. The item was also shared on Twitter by 163 readers and shared on Facebook by 331 readers (see Figure 7.5).
When a news item related to the grievances of Muslims is shared on Facebook by *Republika*, the item also receives relatively strong attention from the readers. For instance, an item titled ‘Chinese officials attack Qur’anic school in Xinjiang again [China kembali serang sekolah Quran di Qinjiang]’ shared on Facebook by *Republika Online* on 16 November 2014 received 31 comments from readers who mostly...
condemned the attack. Most of the items shared by Republika Online on the same day received less than five comments from readers except for this item and the news items related to current Indonesian politics. These figures suggest that the readers of Republika Online display a relatively strong global Muslim solidarity, alongside a concern for specifically Indonesian issues. The news that related to the grievances experienced by Muslims in other parts of the world quickly received attention from the active readers and they indicated their solidarity by reading the news items, making comments and sharing them with their friends on social networking sites. It seems that Republika facilitates free discussion on the comments section of both Republika’s website and Republika’s Facebook page without any intervention from the editors. The editors did not remove any comment from the readers which contradicts Republika’s editorial position. For instance, in an article written by the former editorial in chief of Republika, Ikhwanul Kiram Mashuri titled ‘Coalition between the Sunni and Shi’a to fight against ISIS [Koalisi Sunni-Syiah untuk lawan ISIS]’, there are several comments from the readers criticising the article and the editors did not remove the comments. This open policy can be seen as an implementation of Republika’s intention to develop a community based online news service.

Arrahmah provides information about the latest and the most popular items on the website and Voa-Islam also provides information about the latest news items and the ten most popular items on the website. Both Arrahmah and Voa-Islam encourage their readers to spread the items that they read on the websites to other people and they consider the willingness to spread the items to be a religiously motivated piety or good deed (amal shalih). This encouragement is written in the bottom of every item. Arrahmah specifically writes ‘Achieve piety, spread this information [Raih amal shalih, sebarkan informasi ini]’ and Voa-Islam specifically writes ‘Spread this information, may it become our good deeds! [Sebarkan informasi ini, semoga menjadi amal sholeh kita!]’. In contrast to Republika and other more ‘secular’ news services, Arrahmah and Voa-Islam promise religious incentives to their readers who want to extend their messages to broader audiences. Many readers of Arrahmah and Voa-Islam actively promote items from the websites by sharing the items that they like with social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. For instance, an item which became the most popular item on Arrahmah on 29 August 2014 titled ‘Apparently more than 1000 Israeli soldiers have died [Ternyata jumlah tentara ‘Israel’ yang tewas melebihi 1000 orang]’ was shared by 477 readers with their friends on various social networking sites especially Facebook and Twitter (see Figure 7.6). The promise of religious incentives
for the willingness of the readers to spread the items published by *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* suggest that both media utilise the internet as a medium of propagation (in the literal meaning) to grow the seed of Islamic ideas according to their perspective.

Figure 7.6: The most popular item in *Arrahmah* on 29 August 2014

Some readers of *Arrahmah* utilise the comments section provided on the website, but the readers of *Voa-Islam* are no longer able to make comments since the removal of this section by the publisher. The readers of *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* can make comments on the items which are published on their official Facebook page. It seems that the comments section on *Arrahmah*’s website and the comments section on both *Arrahmah*’s and *Voa-Islam*’s Facebook pages are un-moderated, because several
comments which oppose the editors’ points of view can be found in the comments section of some items. For instance, when *Arrahmah* published negative opinions about ISIS, many readers commented on the items and some of them criticised that *Arrahmah* has changed and is currently serving as the supporter of the *taghut*. In an item posted by *Arrahmah* on Facebook titled ‘Exclusive video: Uncover the lies of ISIS [Video eksklusif: membongkar kebohongan ISIS]’ several readers criticised this post with statements such as ‘You are the liar admin [Min yg suka bohong tu kamu]’, ‘What happened to you arrahmah…where was your spirit of jihad [Knk kmu arrahmah…mana ghiroh jihadmu yg dulu]’ and ‘uncover the hatred and the lies of arrahmah.com [membongkar kedengkian dan kebohongan media arrahmah.com]’ (*Arrahmah’s* Facebook page 5 January 2015). In another example, a reader posted a comment on a link to a news item published on Facebook by *Voa-Islam* on 9 September 2014 titled ‘CNN survey: The majority of the people in the US are worried about ISIS and support a military attack against it [Survey CNN: Mayoritas warga AS khawatir terhadap ISIS & dukung serangan militer melawannya]’. The reader criticised the tendency of *Voa-Islam* to support the Islamic State of Iraq and the Greater Syria (ISIS) and the reader also dubbed *Voa-Islam* as a misleading news site and the follower of the rebel group, Kharijite (see the description of Kharijite or Khawarij in Chapter 3). The reader says:

Kharijite’s sites such as *Voice of Al Islam* often twist news to mislead the readers. Twisting news is really un-Islamic. Islamic news sites should endeavour to publish the truth, especially to fellow Muslims. [Situs2 Khawarij spt Voice of Al Islam sering memelintir berita untuk menyesatkan pembacanya. Memelintir berita benar2 tidak Islami. Situs2 berita Islam harusnya selalu berusaha utk memberitakan kebenaran, terutama kpd sesama Muslim] (*Voa-Islam’s* Facebook page, September 9 2014).

There was no response found from other readers to this criticism and the editor also did not respond to this statement. Another critical opinion was posted on *Voa-Islam’s* Facebook page by a reader on 30 December 2014. The reader wrote

I have read *Voa-Islam’s* news for a long time. My impression is that the content of this media is full of defamation. Two big points that I can conclude: first, this media is clearly anti-Christian and anti-Shi’a. As a religious inspired media, this media should publish ‘healthy’ and calming information and not be spreading hatred and anger. Please note that admin. [Sejak lama saya membaca berita-berita yang diturunkan oleh voa islam ini. Kesan saya kok media ini isinya serba fitnah ya? Dua hal besar yang bisa saya simpulkan: pertama, media ini jelas anti-Kristen dan anti-Syiah. Sebagai sebuah media yang mengatasnamakan agama, seharusnya media ini bisa memberikan informasi-informasi yang ‘sehat’ dan menyejukkan, bukan sebaliknya malah mengumbat kebencian dan amarah.]

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45 The term *taghut* literally means to cross the limit or overstep boundaries, but it is commonly used by Islamist groups to identify the practice of idolatry, or rulers who disregard the rules of God.
Tolong adminnya perhatikan itu] (Voa-Islam’s Facebook page, December 30 2014).

When I checked the page on 2 January 2014 the post was no longer available and it is most likely that the editors had removed that post from Voa-Islam’s Facebook page. It seems that the editors of Voa-Islam do not want to alter their editorial position in response to comments from the readers because their purpose in using social networking sites is mainly for spreading their messages to as many people as possible and not to accommodate the different opinions of the readers.

The ease of opportunity for users to share and make comments in these online news services suggests the development of several of the qualities of participatory culture especially by creating the sense that ‘our contributions matter’ (Jenkins et al., 2009: 6). In the case of Arrahmah and Voa-Islam this sense of participation is strengthened by the promise of religious incentives for readers to be willing to share their messages to the broader community. This type of participation is often criticised as ‘consumptive behavior by a different name’, but Green and Jenkins assert that ‘we see consumption as participation, with the understanding that participation carries multiple and perhaps even contradicting political valances’ (Green and Jenkins, 2011, p. 125). While the use of social networking sites by Arrahmah and Voa-Islam are mostly limited to the purpose of spreading the messages from the websites, rather than listening to opinions from the audiences, this endeavour still can be seen as part of the engagement of an active audience in the creation of meaning.

Republika uses its social networking sites to highlight its nationalist identity. For instance, during the commemoration of the 69th year of Indonesian independence, Republika Online changed the cover photo of its Facebook account for the Indonesian independence edition which shows the display of the Indonesian flag and a bambu runcing (sharpened bamboo) as a symbol of the struggle against colonialist power (see Figure 7.7). However, Republika Online also shows its global solidarity by keeping the text ‘Pray for Gaza’ in the profile picture of its Facebook account in its Indonesian independence edition. The combination of nationalist identity and global solidarity shown by Republika Online in its Facebook page is an example of the construction of a mixture of national and global identity of Republika, which has been discussed in Chapter 5.
On the other hand, *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* consistently use their social networking sites to promote the description of *ummah* as a global political community by highlighting the importance of the Islamic caliphate and the need of global Muslim solidarity in response to the oppression experienced by Muslims in other parts of the world. For instance, *Voa-Islam* placed a picture of a newspaper headline titled ‘Khalifah [caliphate] is coming’ in the cover photo of *Voa-Islam*’s official Facebook page in April 2014 (see Figure 7.8) and both *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* did not change their cover photos during the commemoration of the 96th year of Indonesian independence.

On 28 August 2014, *Voa-Islam* also posted a link to an item titled ‘ISIS between London, Paris and Jakarta [ISIS antara London, Paris dan Jakarta]’ which highlights that more people joined ISIS from several European countries than people who came...
from Indonesia. The portrayal of the oppression of Muslims can be seen in the example of the newest Arrahmah’s fan page on Facebook which shows a picture of destroyed homes in Gaza accompanied by a text in English ‘No one is free when others are oppressed’ (See Figure 7.9). The choice of these cover photos supports Arrahmah’s and Voa-Islam’s description of ummat as a single global political community, which has been discussed in Chapter 6.

Figure 7.9: The newest Arrahmah’s fan page on Facebook

The extension of the articulation of national identity (in the case of Republika Online) and transnational identity (in the case of Arrahmah and Voa-Islam) on Facebook indicates the operation of another form of participatory culture by creating the sense of belonging and ‘affiliation’ (Jenkins et al., 2009, p. xii). The identification of Voa-Islam and Arrahmah’s Facebook page as ‘fan pages’ also suggests the attempt to develop the culture of fandom as commonly found in the entertainment industry. As Busse and Gray argue, based on Henry Jenkins’ idea of ‘affective economics’:

New technologies have facilitated creating one’s own content at the same time as social networks provide spaces in which to easily share this content with others. Meanwhile, the increased specialization within the entertainment industry and fragmentation of the audience have required that producers follow the rules of what Jenkins calls ‘affective economics’, capitalizing on (and frequently disciplining) fan practices in order to ensure a loyal audience base (2011, p. 430).

The maintenance of Arrahmah and Voa-Islam’s pages on Twitter and Facebook indicates their awareness of the potential use of social networking sites to keep the loyalty of their audiences and especially to boost the popularity of their websites. Voa-
Islam especially uses Alexa to monitor their popularity and share the achievement with the fans on social networking sites. For instance, in 21 July 2014, Voa-Islam shared its achievement in becoming the 101st most popular websites in Indonesia based on Alexa website’s popularity ranking (see Figure 7.10).

Figure 7.10: Voa-Islam’s statement as the 101st most popular websites in Indonesia

In this post Voa-Islam celebrates its achievement in reaching the 101st most popular websites in Indonesia on 13 July 2014 and highlights its resistance identity by quoting a hadith that the ultimate jihad is to speak the truth to a despotic ruler [Jihad yang paling utama ialah mengatakan kalimat yang haq (kebenaran) kepada penguasa yang zalim] (Voa-Islam’s Facebook page, 21 July 2014).

The use of social networking sites to emphasise the editorial positions of these media can be observed in their response to the issue of ISIS. With regard to the issue of ISIS, Republika Online has shared links to several news items from the website on its Facebook page, which delegitimise the existence of ISIS. For instance, on 15 September 2014 Republika Online posted a statement ‘Islam is a peaceful religion. They (the ISIS
group) are not Muslims, they are monsters [Islam adalah agama yang damai. Mereka (kelompok ISIS) bukanlah Muslim, mereka adalah monster]’ followed by a link to an item titled ‘PM Inggris: ISIS bukan Muslim, mereka monster’. On the same day, Republika Online also posted another statement ‘Aproximately 30 ISIS fighters from the United Kingdom regretted their involvement in the military training in the Middle East [Sekitar 30 pejuang ISIS asal Inggris menyesal telah bergabung dengan latihan militer di Timur Tengah]’ followed by the link to an item titled ‘More than 500 people from the United Kingdom have joined ISIS [Lebih dari 500 warga Inggris bergabung dengan ISIS]’. On the next day (16 Spetember 2014), Republika Online posted a question to its readers ‘According to ROLers, is the attack on ISIS by the US-led coalition of 40 countries appropriate? [Menurut ROLers, apakah ISIS laik dikeroyok oleh 40 negara yang tergabung dalam koalisi yang dipimpin AS?]’ and shared links to an article titled ‘Is the attack on ISIS by 40 countries appropriate? [Laikkah ISIS dikeroyok 40 negara?]’ In this article, the author (a former editor in chief of Republika) argues that ISIS is a terrorist organisation and therefore the attack on ISIS is justified. However, the author further argues that:

…This big coalition should not only be used to destroy ISIS but also other terrorist groups which are thriving in many parts of the world.[…kekuatan keroyokan besar koalisi ini semustinya tidak hanya digunakan untuk menghabisi ISIS, tapi juga kelompok-kelompok teroris lain yang kini tumbuh subur di berbagai penjuru dunia] (Republika Online, September 15 2014).

These examples indicate Republika’s intention to highlight an editorial position to its readers that ISIS does not represent Islam and therefore Muslims in Indonesia should not support ISIS.

Arrahmah and Voa-Islam have also used their Facebook page to highlight their views about ISIS. Although both media support the establishment of a global Islamic caliphate, they have different positions in response to the issue of ISIS. As discussed in chapter 6, Arrahmah seems to have a closer connection to the Al-Qaeda global network than other jihadi groups. Arrahmah echoes Al-Qaeda’s statement that ISIS is not a legitimate Islamic caliphate and consistently posts items on Facebook which delegitimise ISIS. For instance, on 17 August 2014 Arrahmah posted a link to an item titled ‘Slaughter of Dier Ezzour’s people by the ISIS [Penyembelihan keji terhadap warga Dier Ezzour oleh ISIS]’ and on 1 September 2014 Arrahmah posted another link titled ‘A collection of photographs of mujahideen killed by ISIS [Kumpulan foto mujahidin yang dibunuh oleh ISIS]’. In contrast, Voa-Islam has used its Facebook account to show a favourable opinion towards ISIS. For instance, on 20 September 2014
Voa-Islam shared a link to an item titled ‘Many people joined Islamic State (ISIS) after Obama announces war against it [Banyak yang bergabung ke Islamic State (ISIS) setelah Obama umumkan perang melawannya]’.

The extension of the editorial position from the news websites to social networking sites indicates the tendency of these online news services to use their existence on social networking sites to highlight their editorial position for their audiences. The different representations of ISIS by Republika, Arrahmah and Voa-Islam also reflect the operation of contemporary ‘media events’ in the era of global media (Couldry et al, 2010). According to Volkmer and Deffner, the nature of centralised ‘media events’ originally introduced by Dayan and Katz in the era of broadcasting industry has shifted into decentralisation of ‘event perspectives’ because:

Media events are no longer mediated within national contexts, providing a powerful national collective “mass media” experience, but are delivered in a multi-platform environment, and are renegotiated and repositioned in a transnational sphere. These new forms of events are no longer primarily selected and “scripted” as a national collective experience but are shaping “eventspheres” (Volkmer and Deffner, 2010, p. 224).

In the case of the establishment of ISIS, Republika and Arrahmah consider the event as a ‘disruptive media event’ by portraying ISIS as an illegitimate Islamic state. Republika has put forward an argument that ISIS is a terrorist group in the name of Islam and Arrahmah, which initially had a favourable opinion towards ISIS, started to condemn the organisation following Al-Qaeda’s disapproval of the declaration of the Islamic State. In contrast, Voa-Islam tends to have a favourable opinion towards ISIS and considers the event as part of a ‘ritual event’ of ‘conquest’ by focusing on the victories and positive developments of ISIS.46

The use of participatory features on the internet by Republika Online, Arrahmah and Voa-Islam has started to play an important role in the construction of a sense of community and arguably has also contributed to the process of re-construction and re-imagination of the idea of Muslim ummah. Social networking sites play their role by creating a sense of social connection between readers and emphasising the importance of messages from the editors to the readers. In the case of Voa-Islam, the removal of the comment sections on the website indicates a stronger focus of Voa-Islam on the dissemination of the perceived ‘true’ voices of Islam by taking advantage of the collapsed contexts provided by the internet rather than building a social connection with the ‘local’ community.

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46 The categories of media events are based on the extended categories of media events outlined by Agnieszka Stepinska (2010, p. 207).
Personalised media and the filter bubble effect

Current online news services mostly follow the trend to offer more customised services to their readers. One popular way in developing such a customised service is by combining the use of news websites and social networking sites. The combination of the use of online news services and social networking sites has helped in the creation of semi-captive audience for their websites. This development has facilitated the stronger tendency of personalisation and the creation of the so called ‘filter bubble’ which was discussed in Chapter 2. The current trend toward engaging with the broader world through a combination of news websites and social networking sites has created a new boundary of imagined communities especially by the limited circulation of information among ‘friends’ in social networking sites and also among the followers of a particular online news services. Thurman and Schifferes (2012a: 786) identify this trend as ‘social collaborative filtering’, which is defined as ‘a form of passive personalisation in which content recommendations are made based on the behaviour of a user’s social network’.

In the case of Republika Online, Arrahmah and Voa-Islam, Facebook has played an important role in the dissemination of items which have been published on the websites. The connection between the news sites and social networking sites can be seen in the record of the unique online visiting behaviour of the readers of Republika Online, Arrahmah and Voa-Islam. The data from Alexa shows that many readers of these news sites visited Facebook immediately before and after visiting these online news services (see tables 7.2 and 7.3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Republika Online</th>
<th>Arrahmah</th>
<th>Voa-Islam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of unique</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>facebook.com</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>facebook.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>google.co.id</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>google.co.id</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>google.com</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>google.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>detik.com</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>outbrain.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>kompas.com</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>detik.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>twitter.com</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>youtube.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>viva.co.id</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>voa-islam.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>yahoo.com</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>yahoo.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>youtube.com</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>blogger.com</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.3: Downstream sites of Republika Online, Arrahmah and Voa-Islam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Percent of unique visits</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Percent of unique visits</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Percent of unique visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>facebook.com</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>facebook.com</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>facebook.com</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>google.co.id</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>google.co.id</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>google.co.id</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>google.com</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>outbrain.com</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>google.com</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>detik.com</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>google.com</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>youtube.com</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>kompas.com</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>youtube.com</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>detik.com</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>youtube.com</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>yahoo.com</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>twitter.com</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>twitter.com</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>voa-islam.com</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>yahoo.com</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>viva.co.id</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>detik.com</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>republika.co.id</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>yahoo.com</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>twitter.com</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>kompas.com</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>tribunnews.com</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>blogger.com</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>blogger.com</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Alexa.com, 29 August 2014

The tables show that Facebook has become the most popular ‘upstream site’ (the sites visited immediately before visiting a particular website) and ‘downstream site’ (the sites visited immediately after visiting a particular website) visited by the readers of these online news services. Although the data only shows less than 30% of the unique ‘upstream’ and ‘downstream’ visits, the data indicates a significant connection between the access to these online news services and access to Facebook. According to Thurman and Schifferes, the role of social networking sites to increase the traffic of news websites is still limited. However, they argue that:

> it is clear that the growing adoption of powerful mobile devices, and the increasing use of social media sites like Facebook, are forcing news web sites to adopt new forms of presentation – including personalization – at a rapid rate (Thurman and Schifferes, 2012b, p. 386).

As the number of users of social networking sites in Indonesia increases, it is likely that the connection between online news services and social networking sites will become stronger in the future.

More specifically, the operation of the idea of the ‘filter bubble’ can be observed in the personalised tendency of the ‘news feed’ on any individual Facebook page. When readers click the ‘like’ button of particular news websites, they will receive regular updates of the news items published on the websites directly to the news feed on their Facebook page. This augments the content which appears in their news feed based on
recommendations from their friends on Facebook. This recommendation works when a reader clicks the like button or makes a comment on a particular content on the websites, which have been linked to Facebook, or deliberately shares specific content with their friends on Facebook. The operation of this ‘liking’ action is explained by Facebook in its help section:

When you click **Like** on a Facebook Page, in an advertisement, or on content off of Facebook, you are making a connection. A story about your like will appear on your Timeline and may also appear in your News Feed. You may be displayed on the Page you connected to, in advertisements about that Page or in social plugins next to the content you like.

You may see updates to in your feeds and the feeds of your friends from Pages you like. You may also receive messages. Your connection to the page may also be shared with apps on the Facebook Platform

(Source: https://www.facebook.com/help/452446998120360/.)

In my own experience, after I clicked the like button of Voa-Islam’s Facebook page, I regularly received links to the items published by Voa-Islam on the news feed of my Facebook account (see Figure 7.11). Pariser identifies this phenomenon as an example of the operation of ‘the filter bubble’. As he illustrates:

You click on a link, which signals an interest in something, which means you’re more likely to see articles about that topic in the future, which in turn prime the topic for you. You become trapped in a you loop, and if your identity is misrepresented, strange patterns begin to emerge, like reverb from an amplifier (Pariser, 2011, p. 125).

Figure 7.11: Links of items from Voa-Islam on the news feed of the researcher’s Facebook page
The creation of this ‘you loop’ is also influenced by individual friendship networks on Facebook. The information about my friends on Facebook shows an interesting fact. There are 56 out of 724 friends in my friend list who like the Facebook page of *Republika Online*, while only four of them like *Voa-Islam*’s Facebook page and none of them like *Arrahmah*’s Facebook page. The higher number of my friends on Facebook who like *Republika Online*’s Facebook page is arguably influenced by my friendship network which is mainly constituted by people who identify with mainstream Muslim groups in Indonesia. This friendship network also suggests that it is more likely that I will receive more links to the items which are published in *Republika Online* rather than to the items which are published on *Arrahmah* or *Voa-Islam*. This personal experience supports Pariser’s opinion that

…the average person’s Facebook friends will be much more like that person than a general interest news source. This is especially true because our physical communities are becoming more homogeneous as well—and we generally know people who live near us. Because your softball buddy lives near you, he’s likely to share many of your views. It’s ever less likely that we’ll come to close with people very different from us, online or off—and thus it’s less likely we’ll come into contact with different points of view (Pariser, 2011, p. 66).

Pariser also argues that ‘the filter bubble’ has reduced the moderating effect of the printing press by skipping the role of professional editors in determining current ‘important issues’ which are commonly placed on the front pages of the print daily newspapers (Pariser 2011). Personalisation has also undermined the existence of ‘the general audience’ and Anderson’s idea of ‘mass ceremonies’ which had became essential features determining the content of the printing press and mass media in general. The finding of this research suggests that the influence of the operation of personalised media on the construction of the sense of community is still relatively small, because the adoption of the idea of personalised media in the news services is still in a very early stage. However, it is clear from the examples mentioned above that social networking sites are playing an increasingly important role in the dissemination of information published in the online news services analysed in this research and that, in important ways, the imagined communities they support have a different structure and dynamic to those of the print media.

**Conclusion**

The development of participatory culture and the operation of personalised media can be seen in the combination of the use of news websites and social networking sites by
Islamic online news services in Indonesia. The participatory culture encouraged by such sites has facilitated a more interactive connection between the readers and the publishers and created a notion of social connection between the readers, especially by the easier possibility of the readers contributing to the publication. On the other hand, the operation of personalisation has posed an issue in the form of ‘the filter bubble effect’ which identifies the increased tendency towards information filtering within a limited network of the fans of a particular online news service. The issue of personalisation has also indicated the paradox of the notion of conviviality of the internet as both facilitating the democratisation of access to information and providing the tools for automated information filtering.

For commercial media such as Republika, the contribution and participation of their readers are important for maintaining the loyalty of the current readers and attracting new readers. Unlike Republika Online, Arrahmah and Voa-Islam utilise limited participatory features of the internet for the purpose of the propagation of their ideas. For these Salafi Jihadi sites, the filter bubble effect could help in creating a fertile ground to propagate radical ideas such as the Islamic caliphate or the support for ISIS. They create the ground through the social networks, sow the seed of radical ideas and grow these ideas further in the isolated social networks facilitated by the peer matching attributes of the internet’s architecture. This development of participatory culture and personalised media is still in a very early stage. However, it suggests the important role online media and social networking sites may play in the construction of new imagined communities and the process of re-imagination of ummat in Indonesia in the near future.
CHAPTER 8
Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined the interplay between media discourse, technology and contemporary collective identity formation. Many scholars suggest that since its early development, media have played a significant role in the construction of competing collective identities on the local, national and transnational level. This thesis particularly looks at the role of the convivial features of the internet in the shift from passive media reception culture in the era of print media to active participatory culture in the era of the internet. These current participatory features promise a new era in the expression of collective identities through cyberspace. This current development has arguably resembled the idea of ‘convivial tools’ introduced by Ivan Illich in his ideal imagination of democratic and participatory learning tools for a convivial society. I started this thesis by asking four questions in Chapter 1. As with many questions in the social sciences the questions have provided a useful framework for my investigation but have not always generated clear and definitive answers. My exploration of the answers to these questions can be found mainly in the case studies presented in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

This thesis asked the questions about how Islamic online news services are affecting the construction of Islamic identity in Indonesia. It attempts to do this by analysing their interpretations of the concepts of ummat and jihad and examining whether the convivial nature of the internet is leading to a more convivial or polarised construction of contemporary Islamic identity in Indonesia. The concepts of jihad and ummat were chosen in this research because both concepts are very important in the construction of Islamic identity. The period of the research from 2002 to 2014 is also crucial, because it is a period when Islam in Indonesia was undergoing fundamental changes including most importantly the fracturing of the ‘mainstream’ consensus built under the operations of the New Order ideology which subsumed all differences under a constructed Indonesian cultural cohesion. This thesis clearly demonstrates that Islamic online news services in Indonesia articulate different interpretations of jihad as one of the core missions of Islam and different imaginations of ummat as the ideal form of Muslim community. The thesis has also demonstrated that the convivial nature of the internet poses a challenge to the traditional construction of the nation as the ‘default’ imagined community. The three Islamic online news services analysed in this research, namely Republika Online, Arrahmah and Voice of Al-Islam (Voa-Islam), have utilised the participatory tools available on the internet to construct their distinct identities based
on different interpretations of the concept of jihad and ummat. While Republika Online pursues the mainstream populist and nationalistic interpretation of jihad and ummat, Voa-Islam and Arrahmah articulate far more transnational interpretations.

**Empirical contributions**

This research contributes to the study of contemporary collective Muslim identities in Indonesia through the analysis of media discourse. The research provides a detailed comparative analysis of the use of the internet in the construction of identities representing two different Muslim groups, namely the mainstream moderate Muslim group and the more radical Salafi Jihadi movement. Several previous studies on the use of the internet in the formation of Muslim identities in Indonesia were mainly focused on the study of radical Muslim groups and too little attention has been paid to the role of moderate Muslim groups in the formulation of Muslim identity in Indonesia (See for instance Brauchler, 2004; Lim, 2005a and 2005b; Hui, 2010).

In Chapter 3, I outlined the role of the media in the current understanding of ummat and Islamic religious authority in the global context and particularly in Indonesia. I also analysed the implications of the proliferation of centres of authority and the change in the holders of authority and the contribution of these changes to different imaginations of the Islamic ummat in Indonesia. The chapter suggests that the media have played an important role in the transformation of Islamic religious authority and different imaginings of Islamic ummat in Indonesia. The collapse of the New Order regime with strong control over content and ownership of media has also undermined the consensus (obviously a fragile consensus, centrally enforced rather than discursively constructed) of ‘mainstream’ Indonesian Islam challenged by stronger voices of transnational Islamic groups.

In Chapter 4, I presented a historical analysis of the representation of the term jihad in the writing of Muslim scholars and organisations in Indonesia from the early arrival of Islam to the contemporary debate in the context of democratic transition after the collapse of Soeharto’s authoritarian regime. The chapter combines both primary data and secondary data to provide a chronological account on how the doctrine of jihad is interpreted by Muslim groups in Indonesia in many different social and political contexts. The study complements previous studies which were mainly focused on a specific time frame (Ahmad, 2006; Anwar 2011; Solahudin, 2011). The chapter suggests that there is a long history of substantial minorities promoting militaristic jihad
in Indonesia against ‘enemies’ of Islam defined variously from colonial state to the Indonesian government. The promotion of militaristic jihad was undermined by the consensus of mainstream moderate and peaceful Islam developed in the middle to late years of the New Order regime. However, the promotion of militaristic jihad reappeared after the fall of the New Order authoritarian regime and was further reinforced by transnational influences.

Chapters 5 and 6 provide a comparative analysis of the construction of Muslim identity based on different interpretations of ummat and jihad. Chapter 5 presents a detailed analysis of the representation of the discourse of ummat and jihad by Republika Online, representing the mainstream moderate Muslim newspaper in Indonesia. To my knowledge, no other empirical research has analysed the representation of ummat and jihad by the mainstream moderate Muslim groups in Indonesia as the dominant players in the formation of specifically Indonesian Islamic identity. Chapter 6 looks at the representation of ummat and jihad from a different perspective, namely the Salafi Jihadi movement which has increasingly occupied the Indonesian public sphere with its transnational and revivalist perspective on ummat and jihad. The in-depth analysis of the two most popular Salafi Jihadi’s websites, namely Arrahmah and Voa-Islam, is also one of few attempts to investigate the discourse of ummat and jihad in the current development of the Salafi Jihadi movement in Indonesia. Chapters 5 and 6 answer the particular questions about how the concept of jihad is being interpreted and presented through the internet and also how the different articulations of Islamic identities on the internet have contributed to the different imaginations of Muslim ummat in contemporary Muslim communities in Indonesia (questions 1 and 2). Both chapters demonstrate the correlation between specific interpretations of jihad with particular imaginations of ummat. Republika Online’s interpretation of contextual jihad correlates with a distinct imagination of home-grown Indonesian Islamic ummat. In contrast, the Salafi Jihadi’s interpretation of jihad as a continuous struggle between Muslims and non-believers correlates with an imagination of ummat as a global political community.

These different interpretations of ummat and jihad have facilitated different constructions of collective identities. As the largest Islamic media in Indonesia, Republika has played a significant role in exerting a moderating force in the construction of Islamic identity in Indonesia. This moderating force mainly operates by legitimising the discourse of a distinctly Indonesian version of Islam. This moderating force has arguably helped the survival of Republika as a commercial entity compared to the more ideologically oriented news services such as Arrahmah and Voa-Islam.
The content analysis and textual analysis in chapters 5 and 6 was followed by an online ethnographic study of the way news websites studied combine with social networking sites to construct a sense of community among online news readers in Chapter 7. I specifically drew on recent ideas of participatory culture, personalised media and the ‘filter bubble’ as the conceptual frameworks for analysis in this chapter. The analysis suggests that Indonesian Islamic online news services analysed in this research have followed the global trend of the use of participatory and personalised features offered by big internet companies such as Google and Facebook. This trend has presented new ways of constructing imagined communities through these online news services. On the one hand, participatory culture has facilitated more convivial exchange of information which has supported the emergence of media for marginal and resistant groups, but on the other hand, personalisation has created a level of isolation between social networks which reinforces the boundaries between particular virtual participatory communities. To my knowledge, this study is the first research of its kind to study the implications of personalised media on community identity formation in Indonesia.

Theoretical contributions

The thesis sought to explain the relationship between the current use of the internet and contemporary collective identity formation. The analysis of the current use of the internet focuses on the notion of conviviality of the internet which has facilitated the development of participatory culture in cyberspace. The conviviality of the internet can be seen mainly in characteristics such as user friendliness, users’ autonomy, and egalitarianism. This current practice differentiates the role of the internet in facilitating collective identity formation compared to other more conventional media and in some ways this practice also make the internet ideal for constructing a project identity. The analysis of contemporary identity formation focuses on the shift from the political and geographical based imagined community in the era of print media to the new networked publics in the era of Web 2.0.

Conviviality, participatory culture and collective identity formation

The notion of ‘convivial tools’ in a learning society as conceptualised by Ivan Illich has been further expanded by the idea of participatory culture in the era of Web 2.0 developed by Henry Jenkins and colleagues. Merlyna Lim’s previous study suggests
that the conviviality of the internet provides ‘technological affordance’ for contemporary political activism. Following Jenkins’ idea of ‘participatory culture’, my study suggests that the internet’s conviviality not only provides ‘technological affordance’ for the users but also facilitates the development of social connections in cyberspace and therefore enhances the potential use of the internet as an affordable outlet in the expression of various collective identities either by the mainstream or non-mainstream groups in society.

The study of Republika Online in Chapter 5 suggests the use of the internet to construct a ‘legitimising identity’ by the dominant group in the society and the preservation of the nation state based idea of imagined community. This chapter shows the process of negotiating mainstream Muslim identity in Indonesia by preserving the old ‘legitimising identity’ developed during the Soeharto’s authoritarian regime and contextualising this old identity within the new wave of ‘reformation’ during the democratic transition after the collapse of Soeharto’s regime. However, Republika Online’s support of un-moderated discussion on its website and its corresponding accounts in social networking sites offers the possibility that it may also be developing a ‘project identity’ for contemporary Islamic identity in Indonesia. The case of Republika challenges Castells’ opinion that nation state based ‘legitimizing identity’ has slowly declined. In contrast to Castells’ outlook, my study shows that the idea of the nation state still has the cultural power to be a moderating influence on radical discourses and it can be strengthened by identifying new threats or challenges to the process of building national identity.

In contrast, the study of Arrahmah and Voa-Islam in Chapter 6 shows the use of the internet in the articulation of global jihad as a transnational ‘resistance identity’ in response to the perceived global conspiracy against Islam. This ‘resistance identity’ could not be expressed freely during the Soeharto’s regime but has increasingly occupied the newly developed democratic and digital Indonesian public sphere.

The comparative study of identity construction in chapters 5, 6 and 7 answer the question of whether the internet facilitate a convivial ‘project’ discourse for Islam in Indonesia, or it is tied to ‘legitimising’ or ‘resistance’ discourses (question 4). The chapters suggest that Castells’ classification of identity construction can not be strictly applied in continuously changing societies. In addition to the operation of ‘legitimising identity’ and ‘resistance identity’, each site has also offered a project in imagining the ideal form of ummat from different perspectives. The utilisation of many current
participatory features by these online news services facilitates new possibilities in the formation of new imagined communities.

**The internet and new imagined communities**

The research contributes to the contemporary study of imagined communities as an extension of Benedict Anderson’s original idea of the nation state as the imagined community. The development of these new imagined communities has been shaped by the dynamic interactions between global and local identities and authorities. The multimodal and cosmopolitan character of the internet has played an important role in the process of imagining these new communities.

Chapters 5 and 6 show the different constructions of the ideal form of Islamic community as an imagined communion. *Republika Online* represents a construction of the conventional imagined community which is bounded by an awareness of nation but also contains a global dimension of Muslim solidarity. *Republika’s* imagined community is close to the one that Anderson described, developed by the dominant use of a common language and national sources of Islamic religious authority. On the other hand, *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* represent a construction of new imagined community based on the restoration of an old idea of transnational Islamic community, namely the caliphate. However, as established by Lim (2012), the re-imagination of transnational *ummat* does not necessarily lead to transnational interactions because of the national language barrier. This new imagined community has been developed mainly by the reliance on transnational sources of Islamic religious authority and partial use of English and Arabic in the publications. The re-imagination of this old idea does not create a global unity, instead it has created more diverse interpretations of the ideal form of new Islamic caliphate. Further to Lim’s argument, my thesis suggests that the growing existence of transnational Islamic online news services in Indonesia has increased the influence of transnational authority and challenged the mainstream understanding of a distinct Indonesian Islam which has developed since the midpoint of the New Order era. Further analysis in Chapter 7 suggests that these new imagined communities have undermined the traditional structures of authority such as nation state and local religious authority and developed mainly through the new networked publics established on the internet.

*Networked publics, personalised media and the paradox of conviviality*
The development of the networked publics facilitated by social networking sites has contributed to the emergence of various forms of imagined communities through the blurring boundaries between the global and the local, the producer and the consumer, the private and the public. These new imagined communities are sometimes linked with the local context but sometimes detached from the context. This research demonstrates the paradox of the notion of conviviality in the current practices of the internet. While conviviality is commonly associated with democratisation of the access of information, many internet companies apparently facilitate automated filtering of information through the operation of personalised media.

Further analysis of the combination of the use of news websites and social networking sites in Chapter 7 suggests new forces in the construction of a sense of community in the cyberspace. My analysis in this chapter provides the answer to the question of how the idea of participatory culture and the operation of personalised media on the internet have contributed to the construction of the sense of community (question 3). Many online news services have developed various degrees of engagement with their active audiences by utilising participatory features on the internet and connecting their websites to social networking sites. While the dominant Muslim organisations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdhatul Ulama still dominate the public mind, these practices suggest that religious authority and subsequently community could be increasingly be oriented around more ‘charismatic’ leadership of individual preachers because of the social nature of sharing and filtering news. Unfortunately, the operation of personalised media offered by these online news services has also facilitated the creation of isolated communities by the reliance of the readers on their news feeds on Facebook and friends’ recommendations in accessing information. This thesis demonstrates that these isolated communities have become a potential fertile ground for the propagation of ‘radical’ Islamic ideas. This emerging phenomenon where paradoxically conviviality and barriers to open communication are both fundamental to the current usage of the internet, is a challenge to those who have been heavily invested in the notion of the internet as a tool of open, democratic communication.

This study focuses on three Islamic online news services in Indonesia. Further studies on a larger scale, different media categories or comparative studies with the media in other countries will enrich the understanding of the change in the formation of Islamic identity in Indonesia. More detailed study of the paradox of conviviality in the
development of collective identity in Indonesia is particularly important in examining the operation of the filter bubble in online interactions.
References


Yasmeen, S. (2008). *Understanding Muslim identities: From perceived relative exclusion to inclusion*, Crawley; Centre for Muslim State and Societies.


**Quoted items from Republika Online**


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**Quoted items from Arrahmah**


Senyum dan wangi para syuhada, bukti karomah Allah SWT kepada mujahidin [The Smile and fragrant of the martyrs are the evidence of Allah’s special gift to the Mujahidin]. Retrieved from http://arrahmah.com/index.php/blog/read/2595/senyum_dan_wangi_para_syuahada_bukti_karomah_allah.swt_kepada_mujahidin


Quoted items from Voa-Islam


