

**NEGOTIATING RELIGIOUS IDENTITY
OF SHI'Ī WOMEN IN INDONESIA:
BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND
RESISTANCE**

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Master's Study Program of Islamic Studies at the
Faculty of Islamic Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of**

Master of Arts (M.A.)



**Universitas
Islam Internasional
Indonesia**

by:

Nur Azka Inayatussahara

01212110008

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA

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Nur Azka Inayatussahara
nur.inayatussahara@uiii.ac.id
01212110008
MA in Islamic Studies

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the experiences of Shi‘i women who are members of Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI in negotiating their religious identities. As part of a minority group, the Shi‘is have experienced discrimination, and their women are not exempt from this. Despite the unfavorable circumstances for the Shi‘i community, the positions of women in Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI are intriguing because they have the ability to empower, provide a means to do something, despite their marginalized status. Women in general still encounter obstacles in empowering other women, let alone Shi‘i women who need to negotiate their religious identity in society. They must practice their religious teachings while seeking acceptance within the community. This study aims to investigate how the members of Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI negotiate their religious identities. It also examines the influence of socio-religious conditions on the discrimination and how they navigate their activism in response to this discrimination. To achieve these objectives, this research utilizes a qualitative method with data collection techniques such as semi-structured interviews and documentation. Using snowball sampling, 24 interviewees were obtained, with 12 members from Fathimiyyah IJABI and 12 members from Muslimah ABI. The findings of this research reveal that the experiences of discrimination differ between the two groups, with Fathimiyyah IJABI being more vulnerable than Muslimah ABI due to the stigmatization associated with Jalaluddin Rakhmat and Muthahhari Foundation. This stems from the perception in society that Shi‘ism is a deviant doctrine and the visibility of Jalaluddin Rakhmat as a prominent Shi‘i figure. Furthermore, the cultural background of being descendants of the Prophet held by some Muslimah ABI members does not make them immune to discrimination, which takes the form of domestic violence and sexism associated with *mut‘a*, involving women’s specific experience. Based on these findings, this research argues that there are two religious identities among Shi‘i women in Indonesia: hidden and declared. This is influenced by socio-religious conditions that make them vulnerable. Therefore, in navigating their activism, these Shi‘i women manifest their religious identities with two different goals: resilience and resistance.

Keywords: *Shi‘i Women, Fathimiyyah IJABI, Muslimah ABI, Religious Identity, Discrimination*

تفاوض هوية النساء الشيعيات في إندونيسيا: بين الصمود والمقاومة

Nur Azka Inayatussahara
nur.inayatussahara@uiii.ac.id
01212110008
MA in Islamic Studies

ملخص البحث

تركز هذه الدراسة على تجارب النساء الشيعيات اللواتي هن أعضاء في جمعية فاطمية إجابي وجمعية مسلمة آبي في تفاوض هويتهم الدينية. كجزء من مجموعة أقلية، تعرضت الشيعة للتمييز، والنساء الشيعيات ليست مستثناة من ذلك. على الرغم من الظروف غير المواتية للمجتمع الشيعي، تثير أوضاع النساء في فاطمية إجابي ومسلمة آبي اهتماماً لأنهن لديهن القدرة على تمكين الآخرين، وتقديم وسيلة للفعل رغم وضعهن في هامش المجتمع. النساء عموماً لا تزال تواجه عقبات في تمكين نساء أخريات، ناهيك عن النساء الشيعيات اللواتي يحتاجن إلى تفاوض هويتهم الدينية في المجتمع. يجب عليهن ممارسة تعاليمهن الدينية مع السعي للقبول ضمن المجتمع. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في كيفية تفاوض أعضاء فاطمية إجابي ومسلمة آبي لهوياتهن الدينية. كما تفحص تأثير الظروف الاجتماعية والدينية على التمييز وكيفية تنقلهن نشاطهن التفاعلي كرد فعل على هذا التمييز. لتحقيق هذه الأهداف، تستخدم هذه الدراسة منهجاً نوعياً مع تقنيات جمع البيانات مثل المقابلات شبه المنظمة والوثائق. باستخدام تقنية العينة الثلجية، تم الحصول على 24 مُجَازٍ، منهم 12 عضواً من فاطمية إجابي و12 عضواً من مسلمة آبي. تكشف نتائج هذه الدراسة أن تجارب التمييز تختلف بين الفاطمية إجابي ومسلمة آبي، حيث يكون الأخير أكثر ضعفاً من الأولى بسبب التشهير المرتبط بجلال الدين رخمات ومؤسسة المطهري. وهذا يعود إلى الاعتقاد المتبادل في المجتمع بأن الشيعة هم عقيدة ضالة وبشهرة جلال الدين رخمات كشخصية شيعية بارزة. علاوة على ذلك، لا تجعل الخلفية الثقافية لكون بعض أعضاء مسلمة آبي من أحفاد النبيهم محصنين من التمييز، والذي يأخذ شكل العنف الأسري والتحرش الجنسي المرتبط بمفهوم المتعة. استناداً إلى هذه النتائج، تؤكد هذه الدراسة أن هناك هويتين دينيتين بين النساء الشيعيات في إندونيسيا: الخفية والمعلنة. ويتأثر ذلك بالظروف الاجتماعية والدينية التي تجعلهن ضعيفات. وبالتالي، عند تنقلهن لأنشطتهن، تظهر هذه النساء الشيعيات هويتهم الدينية بأهدافين مختلفين: الصمود والمقاومة.

الكلمات الرئيسية: النساء الشيعيات، فاطمية إجابي، مسلمة آبي، الهوية الدينية، التمييز

TRANSLITERATION GUIDE

IJMES TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM FOR ARABIC, PERSIAN, AND TURKISH

CONSONANTS

A = Arabic, P = Persian, OT = Ottoman Turkish, MT = Modern Turkish

	A	P	OT	MT		A	P	OT	MT		A	P	OT	MT
ع	ʿ	ʿ	ʿ	—	ز	z	z	z	z	ك	k	k or g	k or ñ	k or n
ب	b	b	b	b or p	ژ	—	zh	j	j				or y	or y
پ	—	p	p	p	س	s	s	s	s				or ğ	or ğ
ت	t	t	t	t	ش	sh	sh	ş	ş	گ	—	g	g	g
ث	th	s	s	s	ص	ş	ş	ş	s	ل	l	l	l	l
ج	j	j	c	c	ض	ḍ	z	z	z	م	m	m	m	m
چ	—	ch	ç	ç	ط	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	t	ن	n	n	n	n
ح	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	h	ظ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ	z	ه	h	h	h ¹	h ¹
خ	kh	kh	h	h	ع	ʿ	ʿ	ʿ	—	و	w	v or u	v	v
د	d	d	d	d	غ	gh	gh	g or ğ	g or ğ	ي	y	y	y	y
ذ	dh	z	z	z	ف	f	f	f	f	ة	a ²			
ر	r	r	r	r	ق	q	q	q	k	ال	a ³			

¹ When h is not final. ² In construct state: at. ³ For the article, al- and -l-.

VOWELS

	ARABIC AND PERSIAN	OTTOMAN AND MODERN TURKISH
<i>Long</i>	ا or آ ā	ā
	و ū	ū
	ي ī	ī
		words of Arabic and Persian origin only
<i>Doubled</i>	آي iy (final form ī)	iy (final form ī)
	آو uw (final form ū)	uvv
<i>Diphthongs</i>	آو au or aw	ev
	آي ai or ay	ey
<i>Short</i>	ا a	a or e
	و u	u or ü / o or ö
	ي i	i or i

For Ottoman Turkish, authors may either transliterate or use the modern Turkish orthography.

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Table 1.1 *Primary data of interviewees*

ABBREVIATION DIRECTORY

ABI	: <i>Ahlulbait Indonesia</i> (Indonesian <i>Ahlulbait</i>)
ANNAS	: <i>Aliansi Nasional Anti Syiah</i> (Anti-Shi‘a National Alliance)
BKKBN	: <i>Badan Koordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional</i> (The National Family Planning Coordinating Agency)
DDII	: <i>Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Islamic Da‘wah Council)
ICC	: Islamic Cultural Center
IJABI	: <i>Ikatan Jamaah Ahlulbait Indonesia</i> (All-Indonesian Assembly of <i>Ahlulbait</i> Association)
IPABI	: <i>Ikatan Pemuda Ahlulbait Indonesia</i> (Association of <i>Ahlulbait</i> Youth Indonesia)
KOWANI	: <i>Kongres Wanita Indonesia</i> (The Indonesian Women’s Congress)
KPT	: <i>Keluarga Pelaksana Tabut</i> (The Tabut Tradition Executing Family)
KUPI	: <i>Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Women Ulama Congress)
LPPI	: <i>Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengembangan Islam</i> (Islamic Research and Development Institute)
MUI	: <i>Majelis Ulama Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Ulama Council)
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
NU	: <i>Nahdlatul Ulama</i> (The Rise of the Islamic Scholars)
PAN	: <i>Partai Amanat Nasional</i> (National Mandate Party)
PERSIS	: <i>Persatuan Islam</i> (The Islamic Union)
PSM-GKI	: <i>Pekerja Sosial Masyarakat Gereja Kristen di Indonesia</i> (Social Workers of Indonesian Christian Church)
YAPI	: <i>Yayasan Pendidikan Islam</i> (Islamic Education Foundation)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

The arrival of Shi‘ism in Indonesia is often stated to have occurred only after the 1979 Iranian Revolution. In fact, they played roles in the dissemination of Islam in Indonesia.¹ Occupying approximately one to five million people,² the Shi‘is have been a minority in an overwhelmingly Sunni societies, enabling them to experience such different treatments from others. However, Shi‘ism has developed from time to time. Shi‘i individuals conducted *da‘wa* activities in secret from 1978 to 1979. Since the 1980s, Shi‘i foundations have begun to emerge, marking the transformation into an institutionalized *da‘wa*. These foundations serve as venues for Shi‘is to perform their religious rituals and hold gatherings, as well as places for teaching their beliefs.³

In Java, several well-known foundations of Shi‘i are Al-Hujjah (1987) in Jember, East Java; Muthahhari (1988) in Bandung, West Java; Al-Hadi (1989) in Pekalongan, Central Java; Al-Jawad (1991) in Bandung; Al-Muntazar (1992) in Jakarta; Al-Kazim (1994) in Cirebon, West Java; IPABI (1993) in Bogor, West Java; Rausyanfikir (1995) in Yogyakarta; Fatimah (1997) in Jakarta; and the Islamic Cultural Center (ICC) Al-Huda in Jakarta.⁴ In the field of education, some Shi‘i institutions include Al-Sadiq Foundation (1966), Al-Wafa Islamic Boarding School (1972), and the Islamic Education Foundation or YAPI (founded in 1973 in Bondowoso, then relocated to Bangil in 1976).⁵

Having developed over the years, the Indonesian Shi‘i community is not a single entity anymore and has a complex reality. A division in the leadership of Indonesian Shi‘is has occurred, forming two distinct groups: the intellectual/campus group and the

¹ Dicky Sofjan, “Minoritization & Criminalization of Shia Islam in Indonesia,” *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 2 (2016): 29–30.

² This statistics are general, meaning that it does not specify the sect of Shi‘ism. U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Indonesia, “2021 Report on International Religious Freedom,” U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Indonesia, 2021, <https://id.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/official-reports/2021-report-on-international-religious-freedom/>.

³ Zulkifli, *The Struggle of the Shi‘is in Indonesia* (ANU Press, 2013), 117.

⁴ Zulkifli, 113–14.

⁵ Chiara Formichi, “From Fluid Identities to Sectarian Labels: A Historical Investigation of Indonesia’s Shi‘i Communities,” *Al-Jami‘ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 52, no. 1 (June 8, 2014): 110–11.

ustadh group. According to Zulkifli, this division stemmed from the fragmented formation and development of the community, resulting in the absence of a single leader acknowledged by all Shi‘i groups in Indonesia. These two groups differ in terms of academic background, socio-religious environment, and particularly ideological orientation and *marja‘ taqlīd* (source of emulation).⁶

The intellectual/campus group comprises those who graduated from local-based secular institutions such as regular universities in Indonesia. They were young Muslim students inspired by the Iranian revolution and adopted Shi‘ism. They later became leaders of the Shi‘i community, characterized by an attitude of non-sectarian openness.⁷ Meanwhile, the *ustadh* group comprises those who graduated from religious education institutions in the Middle East, especially Egypt, Syria, and Iran. They are seen as religious teachers, some of whom are also *sayyids* or the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad,⁸ who are arguably the most well-known Shi‘i *ustadhs*.⁹ They emphasized strict Ja‘farī madhhab in proliferating Shi‘ism throughout the community.¹⁰

Following the post-Soeharto Reformasi era in 1998, which led to increased transparency among social movements, such as the Shi‘is, the gap between the intellectual and *ustadh* groups became publicly apparent. These two elite groups developed different institutions to advance their respective agendas. The intellectual group established a state-recognized organization known as IJABI (*Ikatan Jamaah Ahlul Bait Indonesia* or All-Indonesian Assembly of *Ahlulbait* Association), while the *ustadh* group, which had already set up numerous private Shi‘i foundations across the country,¹¹ including ICC in Jakarta, paved the way for the establishment of an organization similar

⁶ *Marja‘ taqlīd* or source of emulation is one of the doctrine of Shi‘ism. It is the idea of emulating and adhering to a *mujtahid* (living interpreter of Islamic law) in Shi‘i jurisprudence. All Shi‘is are required to emulate (*taqlīd*) Ayatollahs (a Shi‘i religious leader). Zulkifli, *The Struggle of the Shi‘is in Indonesia*, 49.

⁷ Umar Faruk Assegaf, “The Rise of Shi‘ism in Contemporary Indonesia: Orientation and Affiliation” (Thesis M.Phil.--Australian National University., 2012), 3.

⁸ Assegaf, 3.

⁹ Some of these prominent *ustadhs* are Sayyid Abdul Qadir Bafagih of Bangsri, Jepara, Sayyid Ahmad al-Habsyi (d. 1994), a leader of *Pesantren* ar-Riyadh in Palembang, South Sumatra, and Sayyid Husein al-Habsyi, a founder of *Pesantren* YAPI in Bangil, Pasuruan, East Java. See Zulkifli, *The Struggle of the Shi‘is in Indonesia*, 26–27.

¹⁰ Assegaf, “The Rise of Shi‘ism in Contemporary Indonesia,” 3.

¹¹ Assegaf, 3.

to IJABI, named ABI (Indonesian *Ahlulbait*).¹² The following section will provide further explanation about these organizations.

The Emergence of IJABI and ABI

In the beginning, the Shi'i leaders from the intellectual group and the *ustādh* had a desire to establish an organization. A gathering at the ICC Jakarta brought together prominent figures such as Jalaluddin Rakhmat (known as Kang Jalal), Zainal Abidin al-Muhdar, Husein Shahab, Umar Shahab, and Ahmad Baragbah, raising an agreement to form an organization called IJABI, which would oversee all *Ahlulbait* followers in Indonesia. However, a debate arose between the intellectual and the *ustadh* groups regarding certain ideological differences. Nonetheless, Kang Jalal proceeded with the inauguration of this organization.¹³

The establishment of IJABI was first declared by Kang Jalal with the support of intellectual group on July 1, 2000, in Bandung, West Java.¹⁴ IJABI's structure is like other Muslim mass organizations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama, which incorporates an Advisory Board (*Dewan Syura*) and Daily Board (*Dewan Tanfidz*). As a registered mass organization that attained its legal status in early August 2000, IJABI has a flexible role in society and operates in various regions and activities. IJABI prioritizes ethics (*akhlak*) over religious jurisprudence (*fiqh*), making it a platform for collaboration with other religious groups. This approach fosters pluralism by promoting interfaith dialogue among various religions, ethnicities, and local cultures.¹⁵

Shi'i figures who initially distanced themselves from IJABI eventually initiated meetings they called Silatnas (National Gathering), led by Hasan Dalil Alaydrus, Ahmad Hidayat, Saifudin, and several other figures. This meeting involved preachers, foundations, *da'wa* institutions, and individuals who support the preaching of *Ahlulbait*. Starting from 2004, the meeting addressed the urgent needs of the Shi'is, which were still considered to be inadequately accommodated, with communication between foundations and individuals not being properly established. Several subsequent meetings were held

¹² Formichi, "From Fluid Identities to Sectarian Labels: A Historical Investigation of Indonesia's Shi'i Communities," 115.

¹³ Zulkifli, *The Struggle of the Shi'is in Indonesia*, 199–200.

¹⁴ Umar Faruk Assegaf, "Aspect of Shi'ism in Contemporary Indonesia: A Quest for Social Recognition in the Post-Suharto Era (1998-2008)," in *Shi'ism in Southeast Asia: 'Alid Piety and Sectarian Constructions*, ed. Chiara Formichi and Feener R. Michael (London: Hurst & Company, 2015), 258.

¹⁵ Assegaf, "The Rise of Shi'ism in Contemporary Indonesia," 103.

successively in 2005, 2006, 2008, and reached a peak in 2010, resulting in an agreement to form another Shi'i organization which differs from IJABI.¹⁶

ABI was officially established on July 25, 2010, and was supported by the *ustadh* group in accordance with Shi'i foundations. This organization has a similar system as IJABI, which consists of an Advisory and Daily Board. Currently led by Ustaz Umar Shahab as the Chairman of the Advisory Board (*Ketua Dewan Syura*) and Habib Zahir Yahya as the General Chief, ABI has a vision of realizing the Indonesian *Ahlulbait* community who loves the homeland (*tanah air*), upholds humanity, maintains national unity and integrity, and upholds Islamic *ukhuwwa*. According to Umar Shahab, the difference between IJABI and ABI is that the former is modernist, while the latter is traditionalist Shi'is.¹⁷

The Women's Wings of IJABI and ABI

Both IJABI and ABI have women's wings that focus on matters related to women. IJABI's women's wing is called Fathimiyyah IJABI, while ABI's is Muslimah ABI. Fathimiyyah has existed since the first emergence of IJABI in 2000, in the form of a women's division inherent in the organizational structure. The establishment of this division was motivated by the thoughts of Kang Jalal, who maintained that the management of an organization cannot depend entirely on men since they may have limitations in certain aspects when compared to women, and the collaboration between them is urgent.¹⁸ The programs run by Fathimiyyah aim to develop critical thinking and focus on women's and children's issues from its inception until now.

In 2005, Fathimiyyah attempted to become an independent body, still related to IJABI but having its authority to manage its activities. Fathimiyyah could not carry out activities for two years and was subsequently disabled. Fortunately, Fathimiyyah was able to rejoin IJABI and is still a part of the women's division now but set up to have its management structure such as chief and head of divisions from the Central Board (*Pengurus Pusat*) until other boards in respectable area. They have the Regional Board (*Pengurus Wilayah*) in 22 provinces, the Regional Coordinator (*Koordinator Wilayah*, the

¹⁶ Muhammad Reza, "Syiah dan Nasionalisme: Studi Pemikiran dan Gerakan Ahlulbait Indonesia" (Master Thesis, Sekolah Pascasarjana UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2020), 94–95.

¹⁷ Reza, 8–9.

¹⁸ Iim Halimatusa'diyah, "Being Shi'ite Women in Indonesia's Sunni-Populated Community: Roles and Relations among Themselves and with Others," *South East Asia Research* 21, no. 1 (2013): 139.

same as the Regional Board but without decree) in 2 provinces, and the District Board (*Pengurus Daerah*) in 75 cities in Indonesia.¹⁹

On the other hand, Muslimah ABI started as the women's department of ABI when it was newly established in Jakarta. During the second congress of the Center Board of ABI in 2014, this department was highly expected to become an independent group focusing on women's issues.²⁰ The first Muslimah ABI congress was held on November 13-14, 2014, during which the women's wing was officially founded. The establishment of the women's wing was initiated to provide a means for *Ahlulbait* women to gather²¹ and work towards the betterment of society, especially women and children.²² Similar to Fathimiyyah IJABI, Muslimah ABI has a management structure based on regions, which has helped them to establish a significant presence across Indonesia. Muslimah ABI has 700 registered members in the membership system, but the actual number exceeds that when including unregistered members. The Muslimah ABI National Board (*Pimpinan Nasional*) oversees the Regional Board (*Pimpinan Wilayah*) in 11 provinces and the Branch Board (*Pimpinan Cabang*) in 59 cities in Indonesia.²³

Although Muslimah ABI was established more recently than Fathimiyyah IJABI, both organizations advocate for women's issues and humanity within the framework of the Shi'i *madhhab*. Fathimiyyah IJABI holds a position as an inherent women's wing as they are structurally within IJABI, while, Muslimah ABI can be classified as semi-independent women's wing of ABI, as it is still affiliated with its parental organizations but has its own separate structural board. Both have the independence to direct their activities, and their operations are based on a specific madhhab. They are similar to other women's wings in mainstream Muslim mass organizations such as Aisyiyah (established in 1912) of Muhammadiyah and Fatayat (established in 1950) of Nahdlatul Ulama.

¹⁹ Khadijah Khasbullah, February 7, 2023.

²⁰ *Suara Muslimah: Muslimah ABI Demi Ibu Pertiwi*, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrY-3LbPbgg>.

²¹ ABI, "Dan Terbentuklah Ormas Muslimah Ahlulbait Indonesia (MAI) - Ahlulbait Indonesia," November 24, 2014, <https://www.ahlulbaitindonesia.or.id/berita/s13-berita/nasional/dan-terbentuklah-ormas-muslimah-ahlulbait-indonesia-mai/>, <https://www.ahlulbaitindonesia.or.id/berita/s13-berita/nasional/dan-terbentuklah-ormas-muslimah-ahlulbait-indonesia-mai/>.

²² "Muslimah ABI," accessed May 11, 2023, <https://muslimahabi.com/>.

²³ Endang Sri Rahayu, April 17, 2023.

Despite the legality status of the Shi'i organizations, the Shi'is have been minoritized,²⁴ including women. As a result, they experienced discrimination in Indonesia's predominantly Sunni society.²⁵ An example of this vulnerability can be observed in the communal conflict in Sampang in 2011 and 2012, where women and children were among the most susceptible groups.²⁶ The situation is further aggravated by the narratives propagated by anti-Shi'i movements led by hardliner Salafi-Takfiri groups. Phrases such as "Indonesia is in a Shi'i state of emergency" and "beware of the latent Shi'i danger" heighten tensions and hostility towards the Shi'i community. These movements also frequently denounce the practice of *mut'a* (temporary) marriage within the Shi'i tradition. In their campaign, they equate *mut'a* with prostitution, alleging promiscuous intercourse, impure sexual behavior, the commercialization of women, and the spread of sexually transmitted illnesses. Consequently, hardliner groups have successfully disseminated their intolerant message across the mainstream Indonesian Islamic discourse. This phenomenon has further marginalized and stigmatized the Shi'i community, creating an environment of discrimination and hostility against them, particularly Shi'i women (explored further in chapter 3). The impact of these narratives extends to broader social perceptions and interactions, reinforcing discriminatory practices and limiting the opportunities for the full inclusion and empowerment of the Shi'i community within Indonesian society.²⁷ Considering their situation, why is it important for Shi'i women to maintain their Shi'i identities in their lives? What role do Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI play in supporting Shi'i women's advocacy for women's issues? In what ways does discrimination from society affect Shi'i women and their existence?

The position of Shi'i women in Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI is intriguing as they have a space that gives them the freedom to advocate for Shi'i and women's issues in general, including those affecting Sunni women. However, on the other hand, they remain vulnerable to discrimination. They need to put so much effort

²⁴ Sofjan, "Minoritization & Criminalization of Shia Islam in Indonesia," 36–37.

²⁵ Chiara Formichi, "Violence, Sectarianism, and the Politics of Religion: Articulations of Anti-Shi'a Discourses in Indonesia," *Indonesia*, no. 98 (October 2014): 1–3.

²⁶ Rachmah Ida and Muhammad Saud, "The Narratives of Shia Madurese Displaced Women on Their Religious Identity and Gender Citizenship: A Study of Women and Shi'as in Indonesia," *Journal of Religion and Health* 60, no. 3 (June 1, 2021): 1960; Lifa Hestina, "Perempuan dalam Konflik Berbasis Agama (Studi Konstruksi Sosial dan Peran Perempuan Syiah dalam Konflik Sunni Syiah Sampang Madura)" (skripsi, Universitas Airlangga, 2016), 4.

²⁷ Siti Sarah Muwahidah, "National (In)Security and Identity Boundaries: The Rise of Muslim Conservative Propaganda in Indonesia," *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies* 5, no. 1 (2020): 11.

into coping with reality as it is initially challenging for women themselves to strive to empower others.²⁸ Moreover, this happens in a minority group who must balance their loyalty between their faith and societal acceptance. Therefore, this study asks the question on how Shi'i women negotiate their religious identity as a Shi'i, with the affirmation of specific cases that occurred in women, while seeking to conform to the mainstream societal system. On the one hand, they cannot neglect their Shi'i identities since those are significant in their lives. However, on the other hand, discrimination from society forces them to foster their existence.

Compared to other women's wings in mainstream organizations, Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI are less studied due to their recent emergence and limited awareness among the public. Among these two wings, Muslimah ABI has more visible *syarifah* (a female descendant of the Prophet) members than Fathimiyyah IJABI. As a part of the analysis, this study pays attention to this specific difference, given that in the Muslim traditionalist community, *habib* (a male descendant of the Prophet) and *syarifah* are perceived as privileged individuals due to their lineage, which is believed to bring blessings. Additionally, there is a notion that their Islamic *da'wa* holds more authority due to their connections with Arab culture which is the origin of Islam.²⁹ Based on this variation, this study further question what are socio-religious conditions that affect discrimination against Shi'i women and what is the difference between Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI in their reaction against discrimination.

This study aims to understand the experiences of Shi'i women in Indonesia, particularly the members of Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI. The first objective is to explore how Shi'i women utilize such ways to negotiate their religious identity within society. The second objective is to shed light on whether discrimination is affected by socio-religious conditions, and the last one is to identify the difference in how the two women's wings navigate their activism in facing discrimination against them. By achieving these research objectives, this study aims to provide a better understanding of the experiences of Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI and to identify effective strategies for facing discrimination that other marginalized communities could adopt.

²⁸ Dini Rahma Bintari, "How Muslim Women Empower Themselves through Active Participation in Islam in Indonesia?," *Jurnal Psikologi Islam* 6, no. 2 (November 29, 2019): 7.

²⁹ Syamsul Rijal, "Habaib, Markets and Traditional Islamic Authority: The Rise of Arab Preachers in Contemporary Indonesia" (2017), 3–4.

Considering a finding that the experience of discrimination faced by Shi'i women is relatively the same even though there is a difference in cultural background, this study argues that there are two religious identities of Shi'i women in Indonesia, which are hidden and declared. These classifications are affected by socio-religious conditions that engender their vulnerabilities. Shi'i women's activism of empowerment, henceforth, reflects the religious identities they have. In terms of the actual form of activism, they might be the same, but their purposes are different. The involvement of Shi'i women who exhibit a hidden religious identity, in the activism forms, a resilient tendency toward discrimination and stigmatization. In a contrary, those who demonstrate a declared religious identity, their activism endeavors to be resistant against discrimination.

B. Literature Review

In earlier studies concerning Shi'i women, the focus has primarily revolved around the exploration of rituals and religious authorities. Within the aspect of rituals, these studies have delved into the comparison of women's roles and experiences, delving into their dual roles as obedient adherents and individuals who also assert their independence. Aghaie argues that some rituals, especially Muharram, may restrict women's participation and social role, especially in gender-mixed rituals. However, women also can recognize the definition of their gender identities and enlarge their networks to gain more social acceptance.³⁰ Ghadially's argument differs from Aghaie's, uttering that the more exclusive the rituals are, the more women play an essential role.³¹ The study of Fernea and Bezirgan proposes another argument, stating that men can assist women in their religious rituals while the performers are only women, and this goes the other way around.³²

It is widely known that several factors, such as the specific context, personal preferences, religious interpretations, cultural practices, gender segregation practices, local traditions, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic status, can all impact the

³⁰ Kamran Scot Aghaie, "The Gender Dynamics of Moharram Symbols and Rituals in the Latter Years of Qajar Rule," in *The Women of Karbala: Ritual Performance and Symbolic Discourses in Modern Shi'i Islam* (University of Texas Press, 2009), 60–61.

³¹ Rehana Ghadially, "Gender and Moharram Rituals in an Isma'ili Sect of South Asian Muslims," in *The Women of Karbala: Ritual Performance and Symbolic Discourses in Modern Shi'i Islam* (University of Texas Press, 2021), 184.

³² Elizabeth Warnock Fernea and Basima Q. Bezirgan, "Women's Religious Rituals in Iraq," in *The Women of Karbala: Ritual Performance and Symbolic Discourses in Modern Shi'i Islam* (University of Texas Press, 2021), 236–38.

religious experiences of Shi'i women.³³ Thus, the experience of women may vary according to these factors. Hegland's study corroborates the validity of these various points. She contends that the rituals conducted by Irani and Pakistani Shi'i women who migrated to America are contextualized to the American conditions. This phenomenon reflects the variety of Shi'i women's religious expression, which is dynamic and unique, representing the various form of Islamic belief.³⁴

Another study on Shi'i women emphasizes their role as religious authorities, specifically in Twelver Shi'ism.³⁵ It highlights that women have opportunities and occupy respected positions as religious authorities, ranging from being sources of hadith to holding significant roles in religiopolitical institutions. The involvement of male relatives plays a crucial role in women's attainment of authority as their piety, knowledge, and access to education become more accessible. Although there are questions regarding the extent of authority women can possess compared to men and whether they can reach the same high positions, there is an increasing awareness of women's role in Shi'ism. One emerging opinion is allowing women to strive for the *marja'iyya* (the position of the source of emulation).³⁶ Those works demonstrate that discussions on Shi'i women revolve around their roles, some of which intersect with broader societal issues encompassing not only gendered religious experiences but also education, social welfare, volunteerism, and the redefinition of gender norms.³⁷

³³ Kamran Scot Aghaie, "Introduction: Gendered Aspects of the Emergence and Historical Development of Shi'i Symbols and Rituals," in *The Women of Karbala: Ritual Performance and Symbolic Discourses in Modern Shi'i Islam* (University of Texas Press, 2009), 15.

³⁴ Mary Elaine Hegland, "Women of Karbala Moving to America: Shi'i Rituals in Iran, Pakistan, and California," in *The Women of Karbala: Ritual Performance and Symbolic Discourses in Modern Shi'i Islam* (University of Texas Press, 2021), 221–23.

³⁵ Twelver Shi'ism is one of the branches of Shi'i madhhab. Its adherents believe to the twelve *Imāms*. They are Imām 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 661), Imām Ḥasan b. 'Alī (d. 680), Imām Ḥusayn b. 'Alī (d. 680), Imām 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābidīn (d. 712), Imām Muḥammad al-Baqīr (d. 732), Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 765), Imām Mūsā al-Kaẓīm (d. 799), Imām 'Alī al-Riḍā (d. 817), Imām Muḥammad al-Jawwād (d. 835), Imām 'Alī al-Hādī (d. 868), Imām Ḥasan al-'Askarī (d. 874), and Imām Muḥammad al-Mahdī (b. 868) who is well-known as al-Muntaẓar (awaited Imām). Juan Eduardo Campo, *Encyclopedia of Islam (Encyclopedia of World Religions)*, 1st ed. (Facts on File, 2009), 624–25.

³⁶ *Marja'iyya* means the situation of the source of emulation. It also describes the relationship between *marja' al-taqlīd* and the *muqallid* (lay person). Yasmin Amin et al., *Female Religious Authority in Shi'i Islam: Past and Present*, ed. Mirjam Künkler and Devin J. Stewart (Edinburgh: University Press, 2022), 9–13; Zulkifli, *The Struggle of the Shi'is in Indonesia*, xx.

³⁷ Raheleh Dayerizadeh, "Critical International Relations Feminism: The Case of American Shia Women," in *Handbook of Critical International Relations*, ed. Steven C. Roach (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020), 324–25.

However, even as these discussions delve into various facets of Shi'i women's lives, there is limited explicit mention of the challenges they encounter related to discrimination while navigating their religious identity. Studies on discrimination often encompass the entire community, both male and female, and some studies focus on cases of persecution and religious violence. Makin's study falls within the former category, where he examines a specific instance in Yogyakarta. He reveals that the persecution faced by Shi'i groups in Yogyakarta stemmed from an effort to standardize Islam in Indonesia, involving a range of actors, from those perpetrating attacks to those disseminating propaganda.³⁸ Aligned with Makin's findings about the multifaceted nature of those involved in actions against the Shi'is, Suryana's book titled *The State and Religious Violence in Indonesia: Minority Faiths and Vigilantism* addresses religious violence. Suryana's work delves into two cases of violence targeting the Shi'is and the Ahmadis in Madura and Kuningan, while also examining the state's role in these conflicts. Suryana contends that the state's reluctance to confront such violence can be attributed to its intricate connections and shared interests with vigilante groups.³⁹

In terms of specificity, studies centered around Shi'i women in Indonesia can be categorized into three distinct topics: Shi'i women as actors of *mut'a* marriage practices,⁴⁰ their involvement in the women's wing of Shi'i organizations,⁴¹ and their encounters as victims of discrimination.⁴² In the case of *mut'a* marriage, Nisa concludes that its practice is still disputable both in the internal Shi'i community and the more significant part of Muslim society. While the Shi'i adherents who practice *mut'a* marriage do not perceive it unlawful even obtain benefit from its prevention of adultery, they tend to hide their relationship as it is not largely accepted in the predominantly Sunni societies.⁴³ This statement is in line with Nurlimah's findings that those who practice *mut'a* marriage perform different attitudes in front of different groups. They hide their relationship when facing Sunni people and communicate more carefully while can freely interact to each

³⁸ Al Makin, "Homogenizing Indonesian Islam: Persecution of the Shia Group in Yogyakarta," *Studia Islamika* 24, no. 1 (April 30, 2017): 1–2.

³⁹ A'an Suryana, *The State and Religious Violence in Indonesia: Minority Faiths and Vigilantism* (Routledge, 2021), 22.

⁴⁰ Eva F. Nisa, "Mut'a Marriage among Youth in the Non-Shi'i Environment of Indonesia," in *Global Dynamics of Shi'a Marriages* (Rutgers University Press, 2021), 103–20; Nila Nurlimah, "Perilaku Komunikasi Wanita Syiah dalam Pernikahan Mut'ah," *Edutech* 13, no. 1 (August 15, 2014): 156–82.

⁴¹ Halimatusa'diyah, "Being Shi'ite Women in Indonesia's Sunni-Populated Community," 2013, 131–50.

⁴² Ida and Saud, "The Narratives of Shia Madurese Displaced Women on Their Religious Identity and Gender Citizenship: A Study of Women and Shi'as in Indonesia," 1952–68.

⁴³ Nisa, "Mut'a Marriage among Youth in the Non-Shi'i Environment of Indonesia," 115.

other as a couple in front of other Shi'i counterparts.⁴⁴ Other experiences by Shi'i women are showcased by Halimatusa'diyah. Focusing on Fathimiyyah IJABI, she argues that the community is a place where they are safe, in the sense that their presence and conducted practices get respects from each other in their internal group.⁴⁵

The last study pertains to specific case of Shi'i women as a victim of discrimination in Sampang, Madura. Ida and Saud note in their article that Shi'i women in Sampang faced obstacles in performing their religious rituals and. Despite societal displacement due to their beliefs, Shi'i women persist in adhering to Shi'ism because they believe in its teachings. The role of the *ustadh*, in this case Tajul Muluk, a Shi'i *kiai* (leader of an Islamic boarding school) who was accused of religious blasphemy in 2012, is central to the realization of the religious identity of the displaced Shi'i women. They embraced Shi'ism based on their own intentions, primarily influenced by the teachings of Tajul Muluk. They intend this conversion to showcase their independence in choosing their own belief and identity.⁴⁶ In terms of the condition of these women, Hestina argues that the patriarchal system restricts the direct involvement of Shi'i women in conflicts, rendering their participation fairly passive. They have not been involved in decision-making processes addressing conflicts or in efforts to resolve disputes, where they often face both verbal and nonverbal violence.⁴⁷

Numerous studies, as mentioned earlier, have brought to light the intricate and evolving experiences of Shi'i women within society. However, it is worth noting that research specific to Muslimah ABI remains somewhat elusive within the existing body of literature. Of note is the work undertaken by Halimatusa'diyah, which is closely related to the present study's focus. While her study underscores that Fathimiyyah IJABI does not encompass the entirety of Indonesian Shi'i women's experiences, the current study intends to fill this gap by encompassing the often overlooked Muslimah ABI group. This essential inclusion ensures a more comprehensive and diverse representation of the broader Shi'i women's experiences.

⁴⁴ Nila Nurlimah, "Perilaku Komunikasi Wanita Syiah dalam Pernikahan Mut'ah," *EduTech* 13, no. 1 (August 15, 2014): 173–76.

⁴⁵ Halimatusa'diyah, "Being Shi'ite Women in Indonesia's Sunni-Populated Community," 2013.

⁴⁶ Ida and Saud, "The Narratives of Shia Madurese Displaced Women on Their Religious Identity and Gender Citizenship: A Study of Women and Shi'as in Indonesia," 1966.

⁴⁷ Hestina, "Perempuan dalam Konflik Berbasis Agama (Studi Konstruksi Sosial dan Peran Perempuan Syiah dalam Konflik Sunni Syiah Sampang Madura)," 4–6.

A distinctive factor that sets apart the current study from its predecessors is its scope in capturing a wider spectrum of Indonesian Shi'i women. In doing so, it strives to present a rich tapestry of perspectives, thereby enriching the understanding of Shi'i women's lives and their challenges. Both organizations, Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI, share similarities with the women's wing organization of Indonesian Ahmadi called Lajnah Imaillah (established in 1992), which emphasizes the concept of 'sacrifice' as a means of showcasing agency and combating discrimination.⁴⁸ However, it is important to note that the context of these minority women's organizations cannot be separated from the majority Muslim women's organizations, such as Fatayat NU⁴⁹ and Nasyiatul Aisyiyah of Muhammadiyah.⁵⁰ While many organizations benefit from certain advantages and public recognition, it is important to note that the two organizations under examination in this study, namely Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI, do not enjoy the same level of privileges. This discrepancy in recognition and benefits forms the basis for the exploration of Shi'i women's experiences within these specific organizations. This study delves into the intricate dynamics of how Shi'i women navigate their roles and identities within the contexts of Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI, shedding light on the challenges they face in maintaining a meaningful presence within the broader societal framework.

C. Theoretical Framework

This research utilizes the theory of religious identity development by Lori Peek. According to her, there are three stages: ascribed identity, chosen identity, and declared identity. In the first stage, religion is an ascribed entity, meaning that individuals may take their religious identity for granted as an aspect of their individual and social selves, or they may even deny or downplay their religious identity.⁵¹ In the second stage, individuals consciously choose to embrace and identify with their religious identity. This decision is often made after self-reflection and may involve support from peers. In this stage, individuals prioritize their religious identity over the core identities, such as

⁴⁸ Winy Trianita, "'Sacrifice' Among Ahmadi Women," *Jurnal Indo-Islamika* 2, no. 1 (June 26, 2015): 60.

⁴⁹ M. Arnez, "Empowering Women Through Islam: Fatayat NU Between Tradition and Change," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 21, no. 1 (January 1, 2010): 59–88.

⁵⁰ Siti Syamsiyatun, "A Daughter in the Indonesian Muhammadiyah: Nasyiatul Aisyiyah Negotiates a New Status and Image," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18, no. 1 (January 1, 2007): 69–94.

⁵¹ Lori Peek, "Becoming Muslim: The Development of a Religious Identity," *Sociology of Religion* 66, no. 3 (2005): 223–26.

ethnicity or nationality.⁵² In the third stage, one determining aspect is a crisis, an occurrence that urges individuals to reenact and clarify their religious identity, for instance, the September 11, 2001 event in Peek's case. When arriving at this stage, individuals feel a strong need to assert and strengthen their religious identity to maintain a positive self-perception and counter public misconceptions. This stage involves openly declaring and asserting one's religious identity.⁵³ These stages of religious identity development involve a social and developmental process, and the time taken to progress through each stage may vary from person to person.

Additionally, this study incorporates Erving Goffman's theory of stigma. This theory revolves around the concept of stigma as any physical or social attribute that diminishes a person's social identity and leads to rejection by others.⁵⁴ Stigma sets individuals apart from others, branding them as inferior, dangerous, or weak, thereby tarnishing their overall image. Goffman categorizes stigma into three types. The first type is "abominations of the body," where stigma is linked to physical abnormalities. The second is "blemishes of individual character," associating stigma with perceived flaws in an individual's character, such as weakness, danger, or unnatural behaviour. This stigma includes individuals with mental disorders, imprisonment, addiction, alcoholism, and homosexuality. The third type is "tribal stigma," which pertains to stigmatization based on ethnicity, race, nationality, or religion.⁵⁵ Goffman contrasts stigmatized individuals with the term "the normal," referring to those who conform to socially accepted expectations without negative deviations.⁵⁶ According to Goffman, "normals" perceive those with a stigma as abnormal, while stigmatized individuals, in turn, internalize these social judgments and may view themselves as failures, measured against the standards of the larger social group. Based on this category, the Shi'is as a minority are stigmatized individuals, while the Sunnis as a majority are equal to the normals. The more aligned the stigmatized individuals are with the normals, the more they perceive themselves non-stigmatized.⁵⁷ The Shi'is hence need to apply some strategies to conform to the social system applicable and used by the normal which are the Sunnis to attain a social recognition.

⁵² Peek, 226–30.

⁵³ Peek, 230–36.

⁵⁴ Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, 1st ed. (Prentice-Hall, 1963), 3.

⁵⁵ Goffman, 4.

⁵⁶ Goffman, 5.

⁵⁷ Goffman, 107.

D. Research Significance

The current research is significant for several reasons. *First*, as a part of the study of Shi'ism, it enlarges the previous works on the dynamic development of the Shi'i community in Indonesia so it can be an addition to the historiography of the topic. *Second*, by highlighting the women who come from minority groups, the findings of this study contribute to the discussion of how minority groups adapt and maintain their existence amidst the majority. *Third*, by bringing the specific case of the Shi'i women's wings, this study provides a deeper and more diverse understanding of women's experiences. While there are some similarities and commonalities among Muslim women, there are also important differences and variations based on factors such as sect, class, ethnicity, and region.

E. Methods

This study utilizes a qualitative method to draw non-statistical conclusions.⁵⁸ It primarily focuses on two forms of qualitative collecting data techniques: interviews and documentation. The interviews follow a semi-structured format for a minimum of 50 minutes, while the documentation⁵⁹ aspect entails evaluating information about both Shi'i women's wings and their relational organizations from various sources, such as journals, theses, the wings' internal documents, and online sources. The interviewees are 12 members of Fathimiyyah IJABI, and 12 members of Muslimah ABI collected through snowball technic sampling. The interview was conducted according to the circumstances and conditions of the participants, both offline and online. It started in February and continued in April until June 2023. I conducted the interviews for Fathimiyyah IJABI members, mainly in Bandung, involving the members of the Central Board (*Pengurus Pusat*), the Regional Board (*Pengurus Wilayah*) of West Java, and the District Board (*Pengurus Daerah*) of Bandung, half by offline and online. In addition, I interviewed the members of Muslimah ABI offline in Depok and Bandung, and the rest was conducted online. This process involved Muslimah ABI members of the National Board (*Pimpinan Nasional*), the Regional Board (*Pimpinan Wilayah*) of West Java, the Regional Board of Central Java, and the Regional Board of East Java. The main obstacle in the interview process is making an appointment with the members due to their business. Fortunately,

⁵⁸ Moh Soehadha, *Metode Penelitian Sosial Kualitatif untuk Studi Agama*, vol. (Yogyakarta: Suka - Press, 2018), 85.

⁵⁹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*, 4th ed. (Sage Publications, 2013), 191.

they all openly answered my questions and greatly appreciated my study.

The table below contains the primary data of my interviewees (all names are pseudonyms)

No	Name	Occupation	Education	Wing	Periods of Membership ⁶⁰
1	Khadijah	Teacher	Master's Degree	Fathimiyyah IJABI	23 Years
2	Wina	Teacher	Master's Degree	Fathimiyyah IJABI	23 Years
3	Nani	Entrepreneur	Master's Degree	Fathimiyyah IJABI	23 Years
4	Uni	Private Officer	Bachelor's Degree	Fathimiyyah IJABI	23 Years
5	Elis	Private Officer	Bachelor's Degree	Fathimiyyah IJABI	10 Years
6	Rina	Teacher	Bachelor's Degree	Fathimiyyah IJABI	23 Years
7	Firda	Writer and Literacy Mentor	Master's Degree	Fathimiyyah IJABI	12 Years
8	Aliffa	Teacher	Bachelor's Degree	Fathimiyyah IJABI	10 Years
9	Nissa	Housewife	Bachelor's Degree	Fathimiyyah IJABI	23 Years
10	Salis	Housewife	Bachelor's Degree	Fathimiyyah IJABI	12 Years
11	Erika	Private Officer	Bachelor's Degree	Fathimiyyah IJABI	10 Years
12	Lilis	Teacher	Bachelor's Degree	Fathimiyyah IJABI	10 Years
13	Endang	Lecturer	Master's Degree	Muslimah ABI	13 Years
14	Husna	Housewife	Bachelor's Degree	Muslimah ABI	10 Years
15	Adibah	Teacher, Consultant	Bachelor's Degree	Muslimah ABI	12 Years
16	Nadiyya	Teacher,	Senior High	Muslimah ABI	10 Years

⁶⁰ For the periods of membership of Muslimah ABI, I count from their initial participation in ABI, since Muslimah ABI just emerged four years later.

		Preacher	School		
17	Fatimah	Housewife, Preacher	Senior High School	Muslimah ABI	12 Years
18	Damiah	Teacher, Preacher, Writer	Master's Degree	Muslimah ABI	13 Years
19	Dina	Teacher	Bachelor's Degree	Muslimah ABI	8 Years
20	Hayati	Private officer	Bachelor's Degree	Muslimah ABI	10 Years
21	Zainab	Teacher	Bachelor's Degree	Muslimah ABI	10 Years
22	Indah	Housewife	Bachelor's Degree	Muslimah ABI	3 Years
23	Yeni	Teacher	Senior High School	Muslimah ABI	3 Years
24	Yani	Housewife	Bachelor's Degree	Muslimah ABI	8 Years

Table 1.1

The instrument of interview includes questions on the initial phase of the interviewees' participation in the wings, the interviewees' experiences of discrimination, the circumstances that contribute to the construction of their religious identity, including how the individuals define themselves as a woman and a Shi'i in a larger part of society, the way how they reflect the wings' activism as a means through which they obtain and formulate the idea of resilience and resistance, and the forms of activism or advocacy that they involve in as a part of Shi'i women's wings.

Furthermore, this study analyzes data in three steps: reduction, visualisation, and conclusion.⁶¹ The first step is sorting the data, removing irrelevant material, and looking for important details so that the analysis can be more organized and focused. After collecting data on the members' opinions about the experience and activism of the Shi'i women in Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI related to their religious identity, I transcribed the recording of interview, selected the data relevant to the research questions, and eliminated unnecessary ones. The second stage is data systematization, where the data is shown. The process is to place different data in their respective logical position. In the final step, I use theoretical frameworks to arrange the sorted data methodically. The process involves interpreting the findings in light of the research questions. Since this

⁶¹ Amir Marvasti, *Qualitative Research in Sociology*, Introducing Qualitative Methods (Sage, 2003), 88.

study implements the theory of religious identity development and stigma, it delves into analysing three stages of religious identity while simultaneously considering them as a stigmatized group.

F. Thesis Outlines

This research contains several chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the study's objectives, highlighting the significance of understanding the discourse surrounding women in Shi'ism. It also outlines the structure of the thesis, including the main chapters and their respective focus areas. The second chapter delves into the discourse surrounding the historical view on discrimination against Shi'ism in Indonesia. It explores the arrival of Shi'ism in Indonesia, showing that the Shi'i identities were previously far from sectarian effects, but then contested throughout years. Furthermore, this chapter explains that upon the Iranian Revolution, the Shi'is were opposed to the Sunnis and got discriminated against, so they are already striving for their religious identities.

The third chapter delves into the several stages of the religious identity of Shi'i women and the factors affecting them to hide or declare their identities. It explores the experiences of Shi'i women living as minorities within a predominantly non-Shi'i society, examining how they navigate their religious identity and practice in such contexts. The fourth chapter explores how Shi'i women face discrimination through their activism. It sheds light on the role of two revered figures in Shi'ism, Fāṭima and Zaynab, in inspiring them against discrimination and how each wing performs their activism with their respective purposes to be resilient or resistant. The thesis's final chapter concludes with the essential findings and insights from the preceding chapters. It reflects on the significance of the study and its contribution to the existing literature on Shi'i women specifically and minority groups generally. The conclusion also highlights areas for further research and invites readers to consider the implications of the study's findings for broader discussions.

CHAPTER II

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE SHI'IS IN INDONESIA: A HISTORICAL VIEW

A. Introduction

This chapter delves into the explanation of the historical analysis of discrimination against Shi'ism in Indonesia, providing a context of how Indonesian Shi'is face discrimination throughout the existence of this madhhab since the beginning. By scrutinizing the early presence of Shi'ism in Indonesia, this chapter supports Muwahidah's (2016) argument that the sectarian identity of the Shi'is, which caused discrimination against them, began at a later stage, rather than from the moment of its introduction to Indonesia.⁶² Consequently, from this remarkable turn, the religious identity of the Shi'is has been contested and become fluctuated throughout their presence in Indonesia.

Furthermore, this chapter provides an explanation about actors behind the discrimination against the Shi'is, who are generally intolerant groups. These groups, driven by their narrow understanding of religious orthodoxy, have perpetuated discriminatory practices against the Shi'is throughout history. By examining the historical context and identifying the actors involved, this chapter seeks to establish a clear understanding of the factors contributing to the discrimination against Shi'ism in Indonesia. It sets the stage for further exploration of the socio-religious dynamics and challenges faced by Shi'i women in the subsequent chapters.

B. The Early Presence of Shi'ism

Opinions regarding how Shi'ism entered *Nusantara* has been a disputable issue among scholars. Aboebakar Atjeh, M. Yunus Jamil, and A. Hasjmi are the proponents of the view that Shi'ism has been prevailed in *Nusantara* since Islam began to spread in its area, started in the oldest Islamic kingdom in Aceh, which is Peurlak.⁶³ The kingdom was established by Arabian, Indian, and Persian merchants in 840 CE. Hasjmi argues that in

⁶² Siti Sarah Muwahidah, "For the Love of Ahl Al-Bayt: Transcending Sunni-Shi'i Sectarian Allegiance," *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* 9, no. 3 (2016): 329.

⁶³ Sofjan, "Minoritization & Criminalization of Shia Islam in Indonesia," 31.

the era of its first two kings, they adhered to Shi'ism and attempted to shi'itize people.⁶⁴ In addition, Atjeh agrees on Jamil's notes on several kings of Peurlak which show that the first, Sultan Alaidin Sayyid Maulana Abdul Aziz Syah (840-864 CE),⁶⁵ was a Shi'i sayyid.⁶⁶ In his book (1965), *Aliran Syiah di Nusantara* (Shi'i Streams in the Archipelago), Atjeh contends that Islam was originally introduced to the archipelago by way of Aceh, which at the time had already given rise to the kingdoms of Peureulak (or Perlak) and Samudera Pasai. Atjeh's argument is supported by the fact that Aceh is where Islam was first introduced. He says that Shi'ism and Shāfi'ī were among the earliest schools of thought to be accepted in Aceh. Atjeh even wrote that the past monarchs in Aceh, Palembang, Java, Kalimantan, Sarawak, Brunei, Mindanao, and other places used the titles *Sayyid*, *Syarif*, and 'Raden' (derived from the word "Rūḥuddīn", which can be translated as "Soul of Religion"). This can only be understood to refer to the prophet Muhammad's ancestry as having descended from Fāṭima and 'Alī.⁶⁷

The kingdom of Peurlak arguably remained adhering Shi'ism until the penetration of the Sunni teachings which led to a division of the territory into two parts (Shi'i and Sunni) after several civil wars among them.⁶⁸ There are some evidences of the presence of Shi'ism in the kingdom, amplifying the argument that this stream appeared along with the arrival of Islam in *Nusantara*. Sofjan (2016) alludes that the traces of Shi'ism that can be found include the presence of Shi'i symbols on the attributes of the Peurlak Kingdom. These symbols include the royal flag bearing the inscription "asadullāh" (the lion of Allah), which is associated with 'Alī, and the *Zulfiqar* sword, traditionally linked to 'Alī in Shi'ism. Additionally, the names of five individuals from the *Ahl al-Bayt*, namely Muhammad, Fāṭima, 'Alī, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn, are also significant within the kingdom.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Muwahidah, "For the Love of Ahl Al-Bayt," 331.

⁶⁵ Muwahidah, 331.

⁶⁶ It is mentioned in Atjeh's book that he was interested in the list crafted by M. Yunus Jamil which was conveyed in Aceh Cultural Week in Kutaraja, 1958, about the kings of Peurlak. Similar to Hasjmi's argument, Atjeh contends that the origin of Peurlak was the ship of Gujarati people who came to Peurlak, whose its passengers were Arabic and Indian merchants. A *Sayyid* has been able to marry a princess of Peurlak until they got children and their derivatives there. After 50 years, Peurlak Kingdom was established, but Atjeh's note is different since it is mentioned that the establishment occurred in 1078 CE. See Aboebakar Atjeh, *Sekitar Masuknya Islam ke Indonesia* (CV. Ramadhani, 1985), 51–52.

⁶⁷ Dicky Sofjan, "Kebangkitan Syiah Di Asia Tenggara?," in *Sejarah Dan Budaya Syiah Di Asia Tenggara* (Sleman: Sekolah Pascasarjana, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2013), xx.

⁶⁸ They only reunited because of the attack of Srivijaya in the tenth century. Muwahidah, "For the Love of Ahl Al-Bayt," 331.

⁶⁹ Sofjan, "Minoritization & Criminalization of Shia Islam in Indonesia," 31.

On the other hand, Azra disputes the notion that Shi'ism as an ideology has been present in Nusantara for a long time and has had a significant amount of influence ever since Islam was first brought to the region. According to him, there is not enough evidence to support this claim, and even if there is, that evidence is regarded shallow. One of them is the statement that Sunyoto (1987 and 1991) made. Azra asserted that Sunyoto's claims of the two saints from Walisongo who were dispatched to Java to propagate Shi'ism lacked precise data and criticized him for making the claim. The findings of other researchers, such as Ricklefs (2012, 2007, and 2006), made no mention of this aspect at any point. Additionally, Azra was particularly opposed to the arguments that A. Hasjmi and M. Yunus Jamil had proposed, arguing that their assertion that Shi'i people were responsible for the establishment of the Peurlak kingdom was not supported by sufficient proves. According to him, Shi'ism first became widely recognized in Indonesia not too long ago, specifically after the revolution in Iran.⁷⁰

Azra doubts Hasjmi's account of the conflict that occurred between the two groups in the Peurlak kingdom and how it led to the division of the kingdom. According to him, there were no signs of Islamic politics in the Southeast Asian region in the 9th century. In agreement with Azra, Hamka refutes the claim made by Onggang Parlindungan (n.d.) in his book, *Tuanku Rao*, describing the political intrigue that occurred between Sunnis and Shi'is in Minangkabau. The argument that was presented by Parlindungan was that the Karmatiah (Qarmatiyya Shi'i) had authority over the political and theological conditions of the Pagaruyung Kingdom for roughly 300 years, to be more specific in the 19th century before the development of the Padri movement in West Sumatra.⁷¹ This was an "imagination" according to Hamka, which Azra agrees with since the sources could not be validated. In addition, when examining the political landscape in Arabia, where Shi'ism initially emerged, it can be observed that this group was still undergoing dynamic development and has not yet achieved consolidation, as mentioned by Azra. The emergence of the Shi'is as a strong community with political influence occurred later, specifically during the establishment of the Safavid dynasty, which was after the founding of the Peurlak kingdom.⁷²

⁷⁰ Azyumardi Azra, "Kaum Syiah Di Asia Tenggara: Menuju Pemulihan Hubungan Dan Kerja Sama," in *Sejarah Dan Budaya Syiah Di Asia Tenggara* (Sleman: Sekolah Pascasarjana, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2013), 6–7.

⁷¹ In his book, Parlindungan explains several streams of Shi'ism, one of which Karmatiah. See Mangaraja Onggang Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao* (Lkis Pelangi Aksara, 2007), 105.

⁷² Azra, "Kaum Syiah Di Asia Tenggara: Menuju Pemulihan Hubungan Dan Kerja Sama," 10.

Other indications of the presence of Shi‘ism during the early days of Islam can be seen through traces of literature and religious rituals observed in various regions. Brakel (1975) discovered evidence of Shi‘ism elements in several manuscripts, particularly in his examination of *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah* (The Tale of Muḥammad Ḥanafiyya). Among the 30 manuscripts he studied, there were some variations, but the core content remained the same—fictional narratives about the deaths of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, and the struggles of Muḥammad Ḥanafiyya.⁷³ Through Brakel’s study, Muwahidah (2016) asserts the influence of Shi‘ism on Indonesian Islam during its very beginning, different with Azra’s argument that perceives Brakel’s finding as an amplifier that there was no clear evidence of the existence of Shi‘ism in the archipelago. In his study, Brakel mentioned attempts to de-shi‘itize these texts, aiming to blurring the Shi‘i traces.⁷⁴ Similarly, Wieringa suggests the presence of a Shi‘ism style in early Malay literary works that was later suppressed. These literary works, in the form of sagas (*hikayat*) adapted from Persian sources, were predominantly written during the early days of Islam, captivating the interest of those new to the religion.⁷⁵

Mukherjee (2015) also discovered the presence of literary works that incorporate elements of Shi‘ism. She noted that numerous manuscripts in Java depict the story of Fatimah, with some even referring to her as a *nabi wadon* (female prophet).⁷⁶ The image of Fāṭima in Malay and Indonesian writings originates from the Shi‘i followers who travelled to Southeast Asia via the Persians. Mukherjee contends that the presence of discourse regarding Fāṭima, as well as all of the ideal characteristics of a pious woman and wife, in these texts has existed since the beginning of the process of Islamization of the Archipelago. This, in and of itself, is a clear demonstration of the magnitude of the influence of Shi‘i thought, which has permeated the minds of Muslims in Southeast Asia. A study that was carried out by Mohammad Samsuddin Harun and Azmul Fahimi Kamaruzaman argues that Shi‘i culture has been present in the “Malay Realm” since the 12th century. This study is closely related to Mukherjee’s work. They say that this culture entered with the introduction of the *taṣawwuf* ideology, which was brought by the Shi‘i

⁷³ Muḥammad Ḥanafiyya is a son of ‘Alī from his late wife after Fāṭima, Khawla bint Ja‘far of Ḥanīfa tribe. Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi, *Ali bin Abi Thalib*, trans. Abdul Azis (Puspa Swara, 2015), 163.

⁷⁴ Muwahidah, “For the Love of Ahl Al-Bayt,” 333.

⁷⁵ Edwin Wieringa, “Does Traditional Islamic Malay Literature Contain Shi‘itic Elements? ‘Ali and Fāṭimah in Malay Hikayat Literature,” *Studia Islamika* 3, no. 4 (1996): 94.

⁷⁶ Wendy Mukherjee, “Fāṭima in Nusantara,” in *Shi‘ism In South East Asia: Alid Piety and Sectarian Constructions*, ed. Chiara Formichi and Michael Feener (Oxford University Press, 2015), 63.

preachers who descended from *Ahl al-Bayt*. They contend that the impact of Shi'ism may be seen in at least two different aspects, specifically classical Malay literatures and ceremonies.⁷⁷

Several regions in Indonesia have traditions during the Ashura or tenth day of Muḥarram that are deemed adopting Shi'i rites in commemorating the martyrdom of Ḥusayn in Karbala. This tradition includes various cultural practices, such as the commemoration of *Asan-Usen* Month in Aceh, Tabuik in West Sumatra, Tabut in Bengkulu, and Sura in Java.⁷⁸ By criticizing the previous arguments, Azra offers the view that the Persian influence seen in the traditions and literature of the Archipelago should not be equated with Shi'ism.⁷⁹ On the other hand, one may argue that the Shi'i heritage has been deeply ingrained in the political and religious culture of this region for a very long time.⁸⁰

The presence of *sayyids* affiliated with Shi'ism corroborates the belief in the long-standing existence of this school. Within the Southeast Asian region itself, the 'Alawī Shi'i group has been present in Indonesia since the late beginning of the period of Islamic development. According to the findings of several research studies on the 'Alawī people, it has been determined that the first generation of 'Alawī individuals can be traced back to the Hadhramaut region in southern Yemen. Because of the captivating nature of the Sufi teachings that they disseminated, they were successful in expanding Islamic *da'wa* throughout Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia. Due to the pressures and political intrigue against the followers of the Prophet Muhammad's family, al-Faḳīh al-Muqaddam (1176–1255) emerged as the most important figure in the 'Alawī movement who made a significant contribution to the growth of Islam in areas of the world outside Hadhramaut. In general, despite the fact that the 'Alawī are not always considered to be completely aligned with Shi'i beliefs, they have never abandoned their support and consistently held a deep reverence for *Ahl al-Bayt*.⁸¹

In line with the argument on the presence of Shi'i *sayyids*, according to Saenong, the *sayyid* group in Cikoang, South Sulawesi, have their own interpretation of how Islam was brought to their region. Sayyid Jalaluddin Aidid, a figure that Christian Pelras asserts

⁷⁷ Sofjan, "Kebangkitan Syiah Di Asia Tenggara?," xx.

⁷⁸ Muwahidah, "For the Love of Ahl Al-Bayt," 332.

⁷⁹ Azra, "Kaum Syiah Di Asia Tenggara: Menuju Pemulihan Hubungan Dan Kerja Sama," 15.

⁸⁰ Sofjan, "Kebangkitan Syiah Di Asia Tenggara?," xx.

⁸¹ Sofjan, xviii.

was influenced by the doctrines of Shi'ism, is credited by them as being the one who was responsible for the spread of the religion. The perspective of Marcinkowski and Bartel, according to which Islam was introduced to Maluku for the first time by guardians from Gujarat and Baghdad who were affiliated with the Shi'i school of thought, further supported the entrance of Shi'ism at the beginning of the advent of Islam in Indonesia.⁸² Additionally, Zulkifli mentions several names that were prominent as Shi'i *sayyids* in 19th-century Indonesia. These include Sayyid Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Muhdar (1861-1926), Ali Ahmad Shahab (1865-1944), who played a significant role in spreading Shi'ism during that period and served as the general chairman of Jami'atul Khair in 1905.⁸³ Another notable figure is Sayyid Aqil Zainal Abidin (1870-1952), who sparked controversy by publishing the book *al-Naşā'ih al-Kāfiya liman Yatawallā Mu'awiya* (Sufficient Warning for Anyone who Agrees to Pledge Allegiance to Mu'awiya) and triggered the Sunni community in Singapore, in 1907.⁸⁴

Halimatusa'diyah supports this argument regarding the existence of Sayyids, which challenges Azra's initial contention about the origins of Shi'ism as an ideology.⁸⁵ However, Azra countered by asserting that the *sayyids* of *Haḍramī* origin initially adhered to the Sunni school but later began practicing the teachings of Shi'ism after the ideology gained widespread recognition following the Iranian revolution.⁸⁶ According to Azra, not all families from the *Haḍramī* Shi'i clans mentioned by Zulkifli, such as al-Muhdar, Yahya, Shahab, al-Jufri, al-Haddad, and al-Saqqaf, follow Shi'i practices.⁸⁷ On the other hand, Jalaluddin Rakhmat, the founder and former chairman of the IJABI Advisory Board, presents four different opinions regarding the arrival of Shi'ism in Indonesia. These include the influence during the early arrival of Islam through Aceh, the presence of Qom alumni in Indonesia, the impact of the Iranian Revolution, and the development of Shi'i institutions within Indonesia. Thus, there is no consensus on the exact origins of Shi'ism in Indonesia and whether the initial streams of Islam were Sunni or Shi'i. As Muwahidah states, the initial form of Islam can be considered proto-Sunni.

⁸² Farid F. Saenong, "'Alid Piety in Bugis Texts on Proper Sexual Arts,'" in *Shi'ism in Southeast Asia: 'Alid Piety and Sectarian Constructions* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 99–100.

⁸³ Zulkifli, *The Struggle of the Shi'is in Indonesia*, 17–18.

⁸⁴ Zulkifli, 21.

⁸⁵ Iim Halimatusa'diyah, "Being Shi'ite Women in Indonesia's Sunni-Populated Community: Roles and Relations among Themselves and with Others," *South East Asia Research* 21, no. 1 (March 2013): 133.

⁸⁶ Reza, "Syiah dan Nasionalisme," 82.

⁸⁷ Azra, "Kaum Syiah Di Asia Tenggara: Menuju Pemulihan Hubungan Dan Kerja Sama," 22.

C. Shi'ism in Indonesia: A Sectarian Identity

In the early stages, there was no clear distinction or attempt to categorize the two schools of Islam in Indonesia, namely Sunni and Shi'i. The Shi'i school of thought, often associated with opposition to Sunni teachings, has only recently gained a distinct identity. Muwahidah (2016) explains that initially, the dichotomy between the two schools caused by sectarianism was not widely recognized by the general public.⁸⁸ Instead, scholars commonly used a more universal term to denote expressions of devotion or "love" for the Prophet's family, known as 'Alid piety.⁸⁹ This term encompasses the reverence for *Ahl al-Bayt* without referring to any specific movement or sect. Over time, while the concept of 'Alid piety did not disappear, the term "Shi'ism" emerged as a label attached to individuals who demonstrated their love for the Prophet's family, particularly those who followed the Ja'farī school of legal thought.⁹⁰

Shi'ism, in terms of devotion to the *Ahl al-Bayt* (the family of Prophet Muhammad), has a long-standing presence in Indonesia. In contrast to the perspectives of Brakel and Wieringa, Formichi highlights that the influence of Shi'i traditions in the archipelago did not undergo complete de-shi'itization but rather became incorporated within the Sunni tradition. During the early days, the distinction between Shi'i and Sunni was not as pronounced as it is in contemporary times, and the polarization between the two schools was not as clear. However, sectarian identities do shape how these traditions are perceived within society. Research conducted by Marhayati and Suryanto provides insights into this matter that in recent years, there has been a lack of acceptance towards Tabut rituals, despite the fact that they hold cultural significance for the local indigenous community and have received encouragement from the government. This cultural aversion can be attributed to the fact that the majority of Bengkulu society follows Sunni Islam, and they perceive the rituals associated with the tradition in a negative light.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Muwahidah explains that in Indonesia, Sunni is identical with Nahdlatul Ulama, while its antithesis is Muhammadiyah and Wahhābī. Muwahidah, "For the Love of Ahl Al-Bayt," 329, 337.

⁸⁹ The term "'Alid piety" has been a chosen reference of an edited volume discussing Shi'ism in Southeast Asia, aiming to cover various manifestations related to devotional expressions towards Ahl al-Bayt. See Chiara Formichi and R. Michael Feener (eds), *Shi'ism in Southeast Asia 'Alid Piety and Sectarian Constructions* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 18.

⁹⁰ Formichi, "From Fluid Identities to Sectarian Labels: A Historical Investigation of Indonesia's Shi'i Communities," 101.

⁹¹ Nelly Marhayati and Suryanto Suryanto, "The Acculturation Strategy of the Tabut Community in Bengkulu," *Studia Islamika* 24 (December 29, 2017): 406.

The issues surrounding the Tabut ritual have been exacerbated by the claim that it is a remnant of Shi‘i teachings. Given that the Sunni population constitutes the majority, both Sunni and Shi‘i adherents tend to view their own teachings and beliefs as the absolute truth, leading to closed-mindedness towards different interpretations within the same religion.⁹² This engenders the statement from The Tabut Tradition Executing Family (Keluarga Pelaksana Tabut/KPT)⁹³ who acknowledges that the Tabut KPT is not specific to Shi‘ism, but rather a part of the Bengkulu Malay community’s customs.⁹⁴

This noticeable distinction caused by sectarian identity became evident following the emergence of the Iranian Revolution in 1979, which brought awareness of Shi‘ism to the general public. The New Order regime, the governing body at that time, perceived Shi‘ism as a threat due to the revolutionary nature of the movement. Soeharto, the second Indonesian president, was concerned that Shi‘i ideology would infiltrate Indonesia alongside the Revolutionary wave, potentially destabilizing his government. Consequently, he imposed a travel ban on Indonesians going to Iran.⁹⁵ Moreover, the Shi‘is during that period were compelled to practice *taqiyya*, which involved concealing their identity to avoid persecution.⁹⁶ This practice of concealing one’s Shi‘i affiliation has long been observed by the Sayyids of the Shi‘i school of thought in Indonesia, as mentioned earlier.⁹⁷

Before the outbreak of the Iranian Revolution, Shi‘ism already had a presence in Indonesia as a convergence of beliefs and practices, as referred to by Formichi.⁹⁸ Following the Revolution, there was an increase in conversions, although not all

⁹² Femalia Valentine and Taufik R. Talalu, “Kontestasi Pemaknaan Ritual Tabut (Perspektif Ideologi dan Kekuasaan),” *Farabi* 19, no. 2 (December 1, 2022): 182.

⁹³ The Tabut Tradition Executing Family (KPT) or the Tabut Harmony Family (*Keluarga Kerukunan Tabut/KKT*) is an organization established in 1993 which unites people for an attempt to preserve Tabut rituals. Its members are, but not limited to, the descendants of Imam Senggolo, a figure that initiated the rituals for the first time. See Marhayati and Suryanto, “The Acculturation Strategy of the Tabut Community in Bengkulu,” 406–7.

⁹⁴ Japarudin Japarudin, “Tradisi Bulan Muharam di Indonesia,” *Tsaqofah dan Tarikh: Jurnal Kebudayaan dan Sejarah Islam* 2, no. 2 (December 29, 2017): 174.

⁹⁵ According to Formichi, there are no restrictions on traveling to Iran. People can still visit Iran, but they are not allowed to enrol in or attend *hawza* (seminaries). The number of people studying there illegally increased from a few in the 1980s to around 50 in the early 1990s. Halimatusa’diyah, “Being Shi’ite Women in Indonesia’s Sunni-Populated Community,” March 2013, 134; Formichi, “From Fluid Identities to Sectarian Labels: A Historical Investigation of Indonesia’s Shi‘i Communities,” 112.

⁹⁶ Christoph Marcinkowski, “Aspects of Shi‘ism in Contemporary Southeast Asia,” *The Muslim World* 98, no. 1 (2008): 51.

⁹⁷ Formichi, “From Fluid Identities to Sectarian Labels: A Historical Investigation of Indonesia’s Shi‘i Communities,” 109.

⁹⁸ Formichi, 110.

individuals who followed the events necessarily embraced Shi'ism. Many people started studying the ideas of Iranian scholars and intellectuals, including Shi'i discourse. Islamic study groups flourished on university campuses in the 1980s, starting with the establishment of the Salman Mosque at the Bandung Institute of Technology. Its influence extended to several other campuses, and in 1983, the Abu Dzar study group was formed at the University of Indonesia, initiated by students who had converted to Shi'ism. This influence also spread to other cities in Indonesia, such as Makassar, Palembang, Yogyakarta, and Malang. In addition to students, several lecturers were associated with Shi'ism, including Jalaluddin Rakhmat (Padjadjaran University), Dimitri Mahayana (Bandung Institute of Technology), Hadi Swastio (College of Telecommunication Science), and Yusuf Bakhtiar (National Mandate Party [PAN] political activist).⁹⁹ Among the prominent figures identified by Zulkifli as part of this "intellectual/campus group" were Muhammad al-Baqir al-Habsyi and Haidar Bagir, two individuals whom Suharto banned, along with Jalaluddin Rakhmat, from delivering lectures at the Salman Mosque, alleging that they were propagating Shi'ism.¹⁰⁰

Simultaneously with the Islamic movement on campuses, the distribution of translated works by Iranian scholars gained significant traction, although prior to that, several books on Shi'ism had already been printed and disseminated by the Embassy of the Republic of Iran in Jakarta.¹⁰¹ In 1983, Mizan, one of the publishers involved in translating the works of Iranian thinkers, emerged as a prominent publisher that Zulkifli identifies as spreading Shi'i literature,¹⁰² different with Formichi who defines Mizan as a publisher that impartially and objectively distributed works from various schools of thought. The first translated book was *al-Murāja'āt* by Sharaf al-Dīn al-Musāwī, which was given the Indonesian title *Dialog Sunnah-Syi'ah*. During this period, the government had already become sensitive to issues related to Shi'ism and Iran. The momentum of the

⁹⁹ Zulkifli, *The Struggle of the Shi'is in Indonesia*, 36–39.

¹⁰⁰ According to Zulkifli, Muhammad al-Baqir was one of the figures who had prior knowledge of and familiarity with Shi'i teachings even before the Iranian Revolution. However, he only practiced certain aspects of Shi'i alongside Sunni teachings. Additionally, Zulkifli believed that his son, Haidar Bagir, also identified as Shi'i. However, this perspective was criticized by Muwahidah, who found that Bagir did not associate himself with either school of thought. Zulkifli, 37; Muwahidah, "For the Love of Ahl Al-Bayt," 349–50.

¹⁰¹ Formichi, "From Fluid Identities to Sectarian Labels: A Historical Investigation of Indonesia's Shi'i Communities," 110.

¹⁰² Zulkifli, *The Struggle of the Shi'is in Indonesia*, 38.

massive intellectual movement has changed the standpoint of the government from neutral stance to animosity.¹⁰³

In the subsequent developments, it is crucial to note that intellectual groups have emerged as significant actors in the trajectory of Shi‘ism in Indonesia. They constitute one of the five categories of *Ahl al-Bayt* devotees identified by Formichi. These categories include: 1) the *sayyid ḥadhramī* group, 2) Javanese individuals who associate the commemoration of Ashura with their love for ‘Alī, particularly those connected to the Yogyakarta and Surakarta courts, 3) people from Bengkulu and Pariaman who have been practicing the Ashura ritual since before independence, 4) individuals who showed an interest in Shi‘ism in the 1970s-1980s, studied in Iran, and upon returning, became religious teachers (*ustadh*) and established boarding schools where Shi‘ism was taught.¹⁰⁴

D. The Emergence of Anti-Shi‘i in Indonesia

The emergence of the anti-Shi‘i idea as a political process can be traced back to the Iranian revolution, which marked the ascendancy of Islam. This movement has subsequently spread to various regions and has had a profound impact on local dynamics. This aligns with Quintan Wiktorowicz’s, assertion that the fundamental element of the Islamic movement is the political opportunity structure. The concept of the political opportunity structure of conflict suggests that the rise of social movements is frequently prompted by significant changes within the political framework. Consequently, the decline of such movements is often attributed to internal shifts within the same structure.¹⁰⁵ In Indonesia, anti-Shi‘i sentiment started to emerge following the warning letter from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to its staff members to revive their allegiance to Sunni *madhhab* and not to be influenced by Shi‘i doctrines.¹⁰⁶ Subsequently, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI)¹⁰⁷ issued a fatwa in 1984 regarding the same school of thought. The fatwa highlighted the need to be cautious due to several differences in the

¹⁰³ Formichi, “From Fluid Identities to Sectarian Labels: A Historical Investigation of Indonesia’s Shi‘i Communities,” 110–11.

¹⁰⁴ Formichi, 105–6.

¹⁰⁵ Ali Makhsum, “Stigmatisasi Dan Propaganda Anti-Syiah: Sorotan Deskriptif Gerakan ANNAS,” *Center of Middle Eastern Studies (CMES): Jurnal Studi Timur Tengah* 12, no. 2 (December 12, 2019): 187.

¹⁰⁶ Chiara Formichi, “Violence, Sectarianism, and the Politics of Religion: Articulations of Anti-Shi‘a Discourses in Indonesia,” *Indonesia*, no. 98 (2014): 7.

¹⁰⁷ This quasi-governmental institution, quoting Muwahidah, was founded by Soeharto in 1975. However, instead of releasing fatwa, MUI was often misused by Soeharto to legitimize his power through religious opinions. This fatwa was allegedly a part of his political agenda. Formichi, 8; Muwahidah, “For the Love of Ahl Al-Bayt,” 338.

discourse on hadith transmission, the concept of *ijmā'*, the role of religious leaders, and attitudes towards the three *khulafā' rāshīdūn* (rightly guided caliphs).¹⁰⁸

The Islamic Research and Development Institute (LPPD), an organization allegedly known for its puritanical stance, organized a seminar on Shi'ism in 1997. According to Latief, the speakers in the event included figures from various community organizations and Islamic institutions in Indonesia, such as Nahdlatul Ulama, Al-Bayyinah Foundation, Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Council (DDII), Islamic Association, Al-Haramain Foundation, and Panji Masyarakat Magazine. However, it should be noted that their opinions do not necessarily represent the official positions of these organizations. Supporting the fatwa issued by MUI, during the seminar, various claims were made against Shi'ism, including the alleged discrepancies in the Qur'an—the belief that Shi'ism's current verses of the Qur'an are not perfect and will be finished by the awaited *Imām*; the practice of *taqiyya*; the non-obligation of Friday prayers in the absence of an *Imām*; the difference in the creed (*shahādātayn*) with an additional declaration of the guardianship of 'Alī in Shi'ism; the practice of *mut'a* marriage; and the portrayal of the Shi'is as traitors and terrorists who do not conform to the Sunni form of state and leadership. The group subsequently appealed to the government, urging measures to prevent the spread of Shi'ism in Indonesia, including the restriction of book distribution, revocation of permits for Shi'i institutions and organizations, and the blocking of dissemination of the doctrine by the Embassy of the Republic of Iran.¹⁰⁹

The state, specifically the New Order regime mentioned earlier, appeared to have a sense of inferiority towards things originating from Iran, as the revolutionary spirit inspired many around the world, including Indonesia.¹¹⁰ It is interesting to consider Saefullah's opinion (2015) that global geopolitics played a role in fueling animosity against the Shi'is among Sunni communities. Initially, despite some narratives of animosity, the socio-religious climate in society did not exhibit hostility, as there were still dialogues conducted by academics. However, adopting the hypothesis proposed by Haddad (2011), after the incidents of 9/11 and the subsequent American invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2002 and 2003, relations between the two schools of thought deteriorated due to the political policies pursued by the United States. While the Middle

¹⁰⁸ Muwahidah, "For the Love of Ahl Al-Bayt," 338; Hilman Latief, "The Identity of Shi'a Sympathizers in Contemporary Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 2 (December 1, 2008): 324.

¹⁰⁹ Latief, "The Identity of Shi'a Sympathizers in Contemporary Indonesia," 327.

¹¹⁰ This is based on the statement of Muhammad Atho Mudzhar in Latief, 325.

Eastern countries were directly affected, Indonesia also experienced the impact of the conflict.¹¹¹

One of the actors who has contributed to the spread of hatred against the Shi'is is the Wahhabi group. Several books published in the 1980s containing anti-Shi'i sentiments serve as evidence of this phenomenon. An example is the Indonesian translation of a book by Ihsan Ilahi Zahir (d. 1987), who served as an editor for the Lahore publication, *Tarjumān al-Ḥadīth*, and Secretary General of a Wahhabi organization called Jam'iyat Ahl al-Ḥadīth. He is known for his anti-Shi'i stance and opposition to the Sunnis who support reconciliation between the Sunni and Shi'i sects, particularly the *Jam'iyāt al-Taqrīb bayn al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyya* (the Islamic Denominations' Reconciliation Society) established in Cairo in 1947. Among his many works that were translated into Indonesian, titles such as *Salah Faham Sunnah Syiah* (The Misunderstanding of Sunni Shi'i, 1983) and *Syiah Berbohong atas Nama Ahlul Bait* (The Shi's Lie in the Name of *Ahl al-Bayt*, 1987) stand out. Another work entitled *Syiah dan Sunni* (Shi'ism and Sunnism, 1984) implicitly implies support from Saudi Arabia through the Muslim World League. The distribution of this book is done free of charge because the organization covers the costs of translation and distribution, as stated by Bey Arifin, the translator.¹¹²

Another popular book is *Mengenal Pokok-Pokok Ajaran Syiah Al-Imamiyah dan Perbedaannya dengan Ahlussunnah* (Getting to Know the Principles of the Teachings of Imāmī Shi'i and Its Differences with Sunni, 1985), which is a translation of *Khuṭūṭ al-'Arīḍa* by Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khāṭib (1886-1969), a Wahhabi journalist. Other books that contribute to the anti-Shi'i sentiment include Muḥammad Mālullāh's *Syiah dan Pemalsuan Al-Qur'an* (Shi'ism and the Forgery of the Qur'an, 1983), Muḥammad al-Tunsawī's *Beberapa Kekeliruan Akidah Syiah* (Some Mistakes in Shi'i Doctrines, 1984), and al-Salus' *Ensiklopedi Sunnah Syiah* (Encyclopedia of Shi'ism and Sunnism). These works have been praised by Hidayat Nurwahid, a figure from the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS).¹¹³

After anti-Shi'i ideas appeared in the "soft" realm in the form of seminars, publications, and lectures, subsequent developments have already led to movement. Since

¹¹¹ Hikmawan Saefullah, "Ancaman Syiah, Persepsi Dan Wacana Kontra Revolusi," *Maarif* 10, no. 2 (December 2015): 26.

¹¹² Zulkifli, *The Struggle of the Shi'is in Indonesia*, 245.

¹¹³ Zulkifli, 245–46.

the stigmatization of Shi'ism began in the 1980s, the label of this school has changed to that of *Ahlulbait*.¹¹⁴ Formichi (2014) noted that the first violence that occurred against Shi'is occurred in 2000, which increased in the following year.¹¹⁵ These cases of violence occurred in several regions in Indonesia, such as in Batang (Central Java) in 2000 and 2006, Bondowoso and Bangil (East Java) in 2007, Sampang (Madura, East Java) in 2011, which became one of the most famous, Jember (East Java) in 2012, and Yogyakarta in 2013.¹¹⁶ After the Sampang case, an anti-Shi'i organization emerged called the Anti-Shi'a National Alliance (ANNAS), founded in 2011 to be exact. This organization, though not a mainstream organization like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah which support the principle of religious pluralism,¹¹⁷ played a role in spreading hatred against Shi'ism in Indonesia.¹¹⁸ One of the factors that influenced this hatred of Shi'ism was the East Java MUI fatwa issued on January 21, 2012 regarding the deviance of Shi'ism.¹¹⁹ This is a continuation of the Central MUI fatwa mentioned above regarding the call to be wary of Shi'i influence. The actors who spread hatred against the Shi'ism madhhab play a role in perpetuating the stigma and hatred of Shi'ism.

Zulkifli (2013) notes that certain individuals within Indonesia's Muslim community have displayed resistant attitudes towards Shi'is. PERSIS (Persatuan Islam or Islamic Union, established in 1923) and Al-Irsyad (established in 1914) exemplify this category, as outlined by Zulkifli.¹²⁰ The actions of these groups in opposing Shi'ism and its followers align with what Menchik (2016) terms "godly nationalism." This concept reflects a sense of ease in practicing religion, including mobilizing people, wherein the state may safeguard the actions of religious individuals as long as they remain loyal as a part of civil communities—mainly refer to organizations. This notion operates on the premise that allegiance to the state implies adherence to a specific faith, thereby deeming acts of non-conformity as false and unorthodox beliefs blasphemous. Menchik's analysis of reactions towards Indonesian Ahmadis captures this concept, but the aforementioned

¹¹⁴ Chiara Formichi, "One Big Family? Dynamics of Interaction among the 'Lovers of the Ahl Al-Bayt' in Modern Java," in *Shi'ism In South East Asia: Alid Piety and Sectarian Constructions*, ed. Chiara Formichi and Michael Feener (Oxford University Press, 2015), 269.

¹¹⁵ Formichi, "Violence, Sectarianism, and the Politics of Religion," 2014, 1.

¹¹⁶ M Khusna Amal, "Anti-Shia Mass Mobilization in Indonesia's Democracy: Godly Alliance, Militant Groups and the Politics of Exclusion," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 10, no. 1 (May 29, 2020): 28.

¹¹⁷ Gustav Brown, "Civic Islam: Muhammadiyah, NU and the Organisational Logic of Consensus-Making in Indonesia," *Asian Studies Review* 43, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 400.

¹¹⁸ Dede Syarif, Iskandar Zulkarnain, and Dicky Sofjan, "Anti Shi'ism in Indonesia: Genealogy, Development, and Methods," *Harmoni* 16, no. 1 (June 30, 2017): 32.

¹¹⁹ Syarif, Zulkarnain, and Sofjan, 27.

¹²⁰ Zulkifli, *The Struggle of the Shi'is in Indonesia*, 229.

groups, expressing their opposition to Shi'ism, also underscore the presence of this godly nationalism.¹²¹

E. Conclusion

Discrimination against Shi'ism has not existed in Indonesia since the founding of this madhhab. This statement is predicated on the claim that Shi'ism has lived in Indonesia since Islam first arrived. It is renowned that during this era when there is more neutral tension towards the Shi'is, they practiced *taqiyya* to conceal their religious identity. It is just that after the Iranian Revolution, Shi'ism came to the globe's attention, including Indonesia. Sectarian identities between the Sunnis and the Shi'is started to emerge at that point, drawing a strict categorization between them. In response to the Iranian Revolution's growing impact, the Indonesian government, at the time led by Soeharto, felt threatened and passed a law discriminating against Shi'ism via a fatwa issued by the MUI. Since then, anti-Shi'i ideas have proliferated in Indonesia. From the beginning, when this concept was expressed through papers, seminars, and lectures, it evolved into a movement that gave rise to violence. The Shi'is have endured a sequence of events that have caused their religious identity to be questioned and tossed around for a very long time, necessitating their efforts to negotiate this identity.

¹²¹ Jeremy Menchik, *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance without Liberalism*, Cambridge Studies in Social Theory, Religion and Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 67; Jeremy Menchik, "Productive Intolerance: Godly Nationalism in Indonesia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56, no. 3 (July 2014): 594.

CHAPTER III

OVERCOMING DISCRIMINATION: BETWEEN HIDDEN AND DECLARED IDENTITY

A. Introduction

This chapter delves into the three stages of religious identity development of Shi'i women. It sheds light on the phases in which Shi'i women follow from the beginning of their adherence to Shi'ism. Moreover, the chapter recognizes the significance of diverse backgrounds within these women's wings, highlighting how their unique religious identities and experiences of discrimination are interconnected to each other. By taking into account to women's perspectives, it unveils some discrimination experiences that only occurred on women. The chapter emphasizes that discrimination against Shi'i women is rooted in their identity as Shi'is, so that in each stage of identity, there are dynamics that Shi'i women face.

This chapter argues that discrimination against Shi'i women is not confined to cultural factors but is primarily driven by their identity as Shi'is. Therefore, some of them choose to hide their identities and some of them opt to declare. The experiences of discrimination within the members of women's wings are examined, taking into account the diverse socio-religious conditions surrounding them. By incorporating women's specific experience, the chapter also provides a nuanced understanding of the intersectionality between religious, ultimately shedding light on the multifaceted nature of discrimination faced by Shi'i women and how it affects to the navigation of their religious identity.

B. The Initial Phase: Ascribed and Chosen Identity

Of 24 Shi'i women I interviewed for this study, only one of them attains her identity by taken for granted, or what Peek categorizes as ascribed identity. Nissa, a member of Fathimiyyah IJABI, said that she acquired the Shi'i identity from their parents. In her childhood days, she often followed her parents learning from Kang Jalal, so the teaching of Shi'ism has been familiar and not new for her. Therefore, Shi'ism is an ascribed identity that she accepted by given, even though she found many things that she considered good and approved of in this school later on.

I come from a family where my father and brother have learned religious teachings with the Great Teacher (Kang Jalal) since I was young, and I have always followed their lead, so my changes did not feel so significant. At that time, I studied. When I discovered how to pray, I followed it. When I learned the correct way of reciting, I followed it as well. Afterwards, I realized that my approach was different from others. Typically, people learn first and then practice, but in my case, I practiced first, and that is when I truly understood it.¹²²

Since Nissa followed the Shi'i teachings from her childhood days, she experienced a very little critical reflection in the initial phase of her Shi'i adherence, as Peek argues, children tend to practice their religious identity by considering it as a matter of course.¹²³

Nissa's experience is different from that of other Shi'i women. They acquired their ascribed identity as Sunnis with affiliations to various mass organizations. Indah and Yeni, members of Muslimah ABI, and Salis, a member of Fathimiyyah IJABI, were initially affiliated with the Indonesian Islamic Country (NII, established in 1949). Salis recalls wearing niqab during that period and highlights the struggle she faced in discovering Shi'ism due to the differing ideologies between the two. Apart from them, most Shi'i women were initially aligned with mainstream organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah.

They share similar experiences when they first embraced Shi'ism. In this sense, converting to Shi'ism is not the same as converting to different religion which requires certain utterances or words.¹²⁴ Conversion to Shi'ism rather involves embracing the belief in the imamate and divine justice as the core tenets of the Shi'i faith, along with observing the ritual practices and following the ethical guidelines laid out in Ja'fari jurisprudence.¹²⁵ They discovered teachings that resonated with their spiritual journey and chose Shi'ism as their path to God. According to Peek, this type of religious identity acquired through seeking, learning, finding Shi'ism, and deciding to adhere to this madhhab is called chosen identity.¹²⁶ The influence of surroundings is also crucial in a chosen identity. Indah and Yeni admitted that their husbands converted to Shi'ism first. Then both began to study and eventually discovered the truth of the same teachings without pressure or obligation from their husbands. Their conversion may be generated

¹²² Nissa, February 5, 2023.

¹²³ Peek, "Becoming Muslim," 224.

¹²⁴ Indah, May 13, 2023.

¹²⁵ Zulkifli, "Conversion to Shi'ism in Indonesia," *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* 9, no. 3 (2016): 303.

¹²⁶ Peek, "Becoming Muslim," 223.

by the affective and intensive interaction between them and their husband, referred to as what Snow and Machalek imply.¹²⁷

Apart from family influence, Shi'i women depict their chosen identity as the spark of finding some illumination; thus, they embrace Shi'ism with full recognition of the importance of this teaching and their own firm conviction. Nina's depiction below represents her acknowledgement of the Shi'i teaching:

Within *Ahlulbait*, I discovered a comprehensive *fiqh* that facilitates one's faith even in the most challenging situations. So, what would you choose if you were asked to choose between a simple and a comprehensive life facility? For me, I would choose the comprehensive one. Because, in my opinion, religion should not complicate human life in any way. That is what I believe and hold on to.¹²⁸

Similar to Nina's reflections, Hayati, a member of Muslimah ABI, finds logical doctrines within Shi'ism that she would like to embrace throughout her life.¹²⁹ This process, according to Lori Peek, involves increased introspection and awareness of virtues, ambitions, and ideologies. The interviewees expressed that their chosen identity represents the reevaluation of their religious backgrounds as part of their identity exploration.¹³⁰

Despite the above criteria of Peek's theory, it is important to note a specific case outside of this categorization. Another case involves those who have a background of being a descendant of the Prophet. Some of the members of Muslimah ABI are part of this group. They share that their families did not actively practice the teachings of Shi'i madhhab. It was only during their teenage years that these members started adhering to Shi'ism. One member, Adibah, reveals that initially, she did not have any specific identity of which affiliation she adhered to. Her mom raised her with NU (Nahdlatul Ulama), but her father with Muhammadiyah. Her discovery of Shi'ism occurred in Pesantren YAPI where she studied at junior high school level.¹³¹ Other member, Nadiyya, encountered similar experience as that of Adibah. She pursued her education at YAPI for eight years and continued her service by teaching at the same institution.¹³²

¹²⁷ David A. Snow and Richard Machalek, "The Sociology of Conversion," *Annual Review of Sociology* 10 (1984): 183.

¹²⁸ Nani, May 5, 2023.

¹²⁹ Hayati, May 13, 2023.

¹³⁰ Peek, "Becoming Muslim," 226–27.

¹³¹ Adibah, June 2, 2023.

¹³² Nadiyya, June 7, 2023.

Husna, another *syarifah* member of Muslimah ABI, recounted her experience. Her discovery of the *Ahlulbait* madhhab was triggered by the seminar at Paramadina University, which she found to be remarkably different from a typical Islamic learning forum. Her father informed her that the seminar was about Shi‘ism. Intrigued, she became curious and desired to delve deeper into this teaching, to the point where she invited a Shi‘i *ustadh* to her home. Eventually, she found enlightenment and decided to embrace Shi‘ism. She admitted that, fundamentally, her father had been interested in this madhhab for a long time, but she was the one who first practiced it in her beliefs. However, Husna explicates that her identity as a *syarifah* and Shi‘i makes more sense.¹³³

Formichi (2022) emphasizes the importance for the *sayyid* and *syarifah* community belonging to the Shi‘i school to demonstrate that their present identity aligns with their historical identity. Considering Formichi’s argument that the claims of Prophet’s lineage among the *sayyids* in Java trace back to Aḥmad b. ‘Īsā al-Muhājir, the fourth son of Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, who was purportedly affiliated with the Ja‘farī school of law,¹³⁴ Husna’s statement appears to be consistent and in line. This, on the one hand, reinforces what Azra (2013) said that the *sayyids* actually went through the process of conversion.¹³⁵ However, on the other hand, Formichi’s (2014) finding on the claims of the Prophet’s lineage amplifies her argument about the descendants of the Prophet rediscovering their identities, not undergoing a conversion process.¹³⁶ Following Azra’s argument, these *syarifahs* encountered Shi‘ism in the stage of chosen identity. Conversely, according to Formichi’s contention, it can be inferred that they were in the stage of ascribed identity that was “blurred” before and then managed to be rechosen.

Shi‘i women who have undergone the stages of ascribed identity and chosen identity have fully embraced their madhhab, supported by practices that align with their beliefs. However, it is essential to recognize that not all women share the same experiences, hence, there are consequences for their chosen identity. While some women may have embraced Shi‘ism due to close interactions with their immediate family, it should be noted that others face rejection within their families, primarily due to the

¹³³ Husna, May 8, 2023.

¹³⁴ Chiara Formichi, “Performing Shi‘ism between Java and Qom: Education and Rituals,” in *Shi‘a Minorities in the Contemporary World* (Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 35.

¹³⁵ Azra, “Kaum Syiah Di Asia Tenggara: Menuju Pemulihan Hubungan Dan Kerja Sama,” 22.

¹³⁶ Formichi, “From Fluid Identities to Sectarian Labels: A Historical Investigation of Indonesia’s Shi‘i Communities,” 109.

contested identity since the emergence of the Iranian revolution, leading to stigma surrounding Shi'ism. Uni's experience represents this case.

I face obstacles within my family, particularly from my younger siblings. As the eldest child among 7 siblings, each of them follows a different madhhab, which sometimes leads to feelings of discrimination against me. I manage to maintain harmony only because they are my younger siblings. During disagreements where they question my choice, I simply state that I focus on teaching morals. I urge them not to label something as heretical if they lack sufficient knowledge. As a result, a cold war has arisen among us.¹³⁷

In addition, Elis shares another story.

What are the experiences of friends who have been victims of violence? Well, there was a child who possibly experienced violence because their family had a negative view of the *Ahlulbait* (*madhhab*). It did happen. We have a case like that here, happening to a girl. She is a follower of the *Ahlulbait* and often performs her rituals, but her family does not support them. As a result, she faced violence. Other cases within the *Ahlulbait* community involve those who are dealing with their own personal issues and experiencing depression.¹³⁸

In addition to the two cases mentioned above, another case occurred where a Muslimah ABI member experienced domestic violence. Prior to their marriage, her husband and she agreed to adhere to their respective madhhab affiliations with understanding and respect for each other. However, after getting married, it became apparent that the husband did not approve of Shi'ism. Consequently, he disapproved of his wife's participation in Shi'i activities, such as Shi'i learning circles and her practice of the faith. This led to domestic violence. The husband poured hot water on his wife due to her continued affiliation with Shi'ism.¹³⁹

This occurrence is not in accordance with Stark and Finke's (2000) contention which suggests that marriage is one of the biggest factors contributing to conversion.¹⁴⁰ The husband and the wife are agreed not to convert to one's affiliation. Additionally, this case indicates that Zulkifli's argument, that many Shi'i men marry Sunni women to increase the number of Shi'i followers,¹⁴¹ is not applicable when the opposite occurs, where women embrace Shi'ism before their male counterparts.

¹³⁷ Uni, May 6, 2023.

¹³⁸ Elis, May 7, 2023.

¹³⁹ Fatimah, May 27, 2023; Adibah, interview.

¹⁴⁰ Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*, 2000, 119.

¹⁴¹ Zulkifli, "Conversion to Shi'ism in Indonesia," 312.

Besides discrimination against Shi'i identity, the domestic violence case above comprises gender-based discrimination in the form of violence. According to Rochmaniyah (2020), this stems from various household assumptions regarding unequal roles, positions, and status. These unequal assumptions lead to power dynamics that favor men (as superior) and position women as subservient who must submit to him (as inferior), which can be referred to as subordination.¹⁴² The husband's animosity towards Shi'ism is further compounded by the existence of an unequal power relationship, resulting in multiple forms of discrimination experienced by his wife.

Adibah, a Muslimah ABI member, said that one of the challenges Shi'i women face is obtaining permission from their husbands, which can be seen as a visa for Shi'i women. Without the permission of husbands, Shi'i women cannot actualize their adherence to the madhhab. She likens the husband's consent to being the initial gateway that has the potential to unlock numerous additional possibilities.¹⁴³ Accordingly, the experiences of Shi'i women facing domestic violence are not isolated incidents, and they cannot be overlooked, as they highlight the lack of tolerance even within the domestic sphere towards Shi'ism. Furthermore, these experiences are exacerbated by the subordinate position of women, which renders them more vulnerable.¹⁴⁴

The aforementioned cases are some of the stories that reflect the realities women may encounter when they embrace Shi'ism. Apart from the phenomena involving immediate family members in discrimination, many other cases occur within Shi'i women's extended families. Despite having already declared their chosen identity to family members, their negotiations often involve not focusing on each other's religious affiliation and instead, they blend in with all family members regardless of their religious identity or ignore the expressions of rejection altogether.¹⁴⁵

C. Cancellation of Roles in Public Space: Hidden and Declared Identity

According to Lori Peek, people declare their religious identity due to the crisis. In the case of Shi'i women, the crisis takes the form of discrimination they experience when participating in public spaces. After their previous stage of ascribed and chosen identity, The first crisis is a stigma that generates cancellation of roles.

¹⁴² Inayah Rohmaniyah, *Gender dan Konstruksi Patriarki dalam Tafsir Agama* (Yogyakarta: SUKA-Press, 2020), 24–26.

¹⁴³ Adibah, interview.

¹⁴⁴ Rohmaniyah, *Gender dan Konstruksi Patriarki dalam Tafsir Agama*, 25.

¹⁴⁵ Firda, May 9, 2023; Dina, May 13, 2023.

Some members of the Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI acknowledge experiencing injustice when their religious identity as a Shi'i is revealed to others. Nani, a Fathimiyyah IJABI member, shared an incident where a client refused to continue his donation after learning about Nani's Shi'i affiliation. He discovered that Nani usually learnt religious teachings from Kang Jalal, and he was perceived as deviant. Consequently, Nina always hides her identity to avoid such similar cases.¹⁴⁶ Erika, another member who serves as a counsellor and chair of the counselling department at the Fathimiyyah IJABI Regional Board in West Java, recounted a situation where a counsellee decided to discontinue counselling upon discovering Erika's affiliation with IJABI and being a Shi'i.¹⁴⁷ Rina, also a member of the Fathimiyyah IJABI, was terminated from her teaching job due to her association with Muthahhari Plus High School, a school under the Muthahhari Foundation established by Kang Jalal.¹⁴⁸ Wina, a member of Fathimiyyah IJABI, holds an important role within a writing community for children. However, when a parent discovered that Wina shared WhatsApp statuses containing quotations from Kang Jalal's lectures, she lodged a complaint with the community and perceived Wina's devotion as a threat. Ultimately, she chose to resign from the community in order to prevent any interference with the effectiveness of their activities.¹⁴⁹

Meanwhile, other members who are primarily only involved in Shi'i organizations or institutions, such as Husna, Fatimah, Nadiyya, and Adibah, members of Muslimah ABI whose their activities are centered around Shi'i environment, have not experienced rejection like the previous members. Therefore, it can be concluded that Shi'i women who are more engaged in or active in public spheres are more vulnerable to stigma compared to women who spend most of their activities within a homogeneous Shi'i environment. This affects how these Shi'i women express their religious identity. Some believe that their Shi'i identity does not need to be openly displayed, as it is fundamentally a matter of privacy between an individual and their God. Part of this group considers it risky if their identity is known by others. They adapt their religious rituals to those around them, particularly in terms of prayer,¹⁵⁰ especially if the circumstances do not permit otherwise.

¹⁴⁶ Nani, interview.

¹⁴⁷ Erika, February 8, 2023.

¹⁴⁸ Rina, May 5, 2023.

¹⁴⁹ Wina, April 11, 2023.

¹⁵⁰ The Shi'is typically place their hands at their sides during the standing portion of the prayer (*qiyām*), as opposed to crossing them over the chest, which is a common practice in Sunni.

This group is predominantly represented by members of Fathimiyyah IJABI. They are avoiding crisis by hiding their identity, adding to Peek's category. This practice is related to the *taqiyya*, which refers to outwardly showing something different from inherent belief in the heart. According to Shi'i doctrine, *taqiyya* is permissible both in a state of danger that threatens life or property and even when not facing any immediate danger.¹⁵¹ Moreover, the value reflected from the IJABI pillar, which prioritizes morals (*akhlak*) over *fiqh*, or non-sectarianism, strongly influences Fathimiyyah IJABI members. For them, *fiqh* matters are considered highly private affairs, and in practice, they do not concern themselves with how individuals practice their *fiqh* or follow their madhhab. They may leave their *fiqh* and following other people's *fiqh* to establish solidarity,¹⁵²

On the other hand, another group does not feel the need to hide their identity. They believe that the religious atmosphere in Indonesia supports the practice of different schools of thought. In terms of rituals, such as prayer, they still follow the teachings of Shi'ism in any circumstance without trying to adapt or fit the ideology of mainstream groups. Unlike Fathimiyyah IJABI, practicing Shi'i teachings with Ja'farī *fiqh* is something fundamental to them. In their daily lives, they are accustomed to practicing their *fiqh* rituals, which differ from mainstream Sunni practices, even with some customizations. According to Peek's category, this stage is called declared identity, although it does not necessarily mean they verbally declare their religious identity whenever in public spaces. Muslimah ABI members represent this second group.

The commonality between these two groups is that in their daily lives, they carry out activities like typical Muslim women. Most of Shi'i women of both wings expressed that there are no such specific ways to challenge those discriminations individually. The most important thing is to perform good things in society. However, Muslimah ABI members tend to be more open to clarifying misunderstandings when there is stigma or accusation directed towards them. For instance, Adibah encountered a situation where two passengers on a bus were discussing misinformation about Shi'ism, and she confidently revealed her identity and refuted their baseless claims.¹⁵³ A similar case happened to Hayati. Her friend told her that Shi'ism is misguided because they only pray

Additionally, during prostration, they use *turba* (stones made from the soil of Karbala) or natural materials such as bamboo mats, marble, or tissue as mats. Hayati, May 13, 2023.

¹⁵¹ Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 183.

¹⁵² Jalaluddin Rakhmat, *Dahulukan Akhlak Di Atas Fiqih*, II (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, 2007), 21.

¹⁵³ Adibah, interview.

three times a day and allow having multiple husbands. Immediately, she clarified by saying, “Look at me, I am not like that.”¹⁵⁴

Despite the stage of the Shi‘i women’s identity and its differences among the members, socio-religious conditions contribute to the discrimination they experience. The conditions are related to the society’s misunderstandings about Shi‘ism, which lead to efforts to label someone who is indicated to be a Shi‘i, including the association of Shi‘i women with Kang Jalal. Members of Fathimiyyah IJABI are particularly vulnerable to discrimination when their connections to Kang Jalal or other things related to him, such as the Muthahhari Foundation, are revealed. This can be observed from the experiences shared by Fathimiyyah IJABI members who have faced discrimination. Aliffa, one of the members of Fathimiyyah IJABI, shared that even a non-Muslim teacher who was teaching at Muthahhari Plus High School was associated with Shi‘ism.¹⁵⁵

Considering that Shi‘ism in Indonesia has been stigmatized since the New Order era and Kang Jalal was a well-known Shi‘i leader, anything associated with him is likely to be linked to him and subjected to stereotypes. Upon the establishment of IJABI, Kang Jalal as one of its initiators got to reveal his identity to public and could not hide his adherence to Shi‘ism anymore, since he was invited in some events aimed at dialogue between Sunnis and Shi‘is. Matin (2014) noted that Rakhmat’s public appearance was firstly visible in the television show in 2003, representing an intellectual who “bridges” between Sunnism and Shi‘ism.¹⁵⁶

In addition, Kang Jalal is widely recognized for his significant contribution to Islamic discourse in Indonesia, and he is even considered on par with prominent Indonesian Islamic intellectual figures such as Abdurrahman Wahid (d. 2009) and Nurcholish Madjid (2005).¹⁵⁷ Elis, a member of the Fatimiyyah IJABI, revealed that after Rakhmat’s passing in 2021, she shared a photo on her WhatsApp status to commemorate him. Unfortunately, she received negative comments from acquaintances who expressed their disappointment. They pointed out that Kang Jalal was known for his involvement in *mut‘a* marriage and making fun of women, and Elis herself as Kang Jalal’s student had

¹⁵⁴ Hayati, interview.

¹⁵⁵ Aliffa, May 4, 2023.

¹⁵⁶ Usep Abdul Matin, “Activism, Conflict, and the Islamic Public Sphere in Indonesia: The Enlightenment Project of Jalaluddin Rakhmat” (thesis, Monash University, 2017), 89.

¹⁵⁷ *Do ‘a Bersama Mengenang Kang Jalal*, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAOKyXJaT4M>.

been a subject of mockery in that context.¹⁵⁸ This demonstrates that stereotypes or stigmas are more likely to be attached to individuals who are associated with something familiar within society, thus the stage of Fathimiyah IJABI is hidden identity.

Conversely, Muslimah ABI members are not specifically identified with a particular figure or institution when facing discrimination. However, it is important to consider the different social capital possessed by various Muslimah ABI members who are descendants of the Prophet. The *syarifahs* who are members of Muslimah ABI acknowledge that they still experience discrimination due to their identity as Shi'is. Husna shared her experience of initially being an *ustazah* teaching the community how to recite the Quran, but after one resident discovered her identity, they decided to stop learning from her. The story of Zaynab mentioned earlier in this chapter also reinforces this point. Despite the privileges afforded to the descendants of the Prophet who are the *sayyids* and *syarifahs* in Indonesia due to their connection to the Prophet,¹⁵⁹ they are not immune to experiencing discrimination. As long as they identify themselves as Shi'is, they may still encounter hate or discrimination. Several attacks against *sayyids* such as those which occurred in Surakarta in September 2018, particularly during the commemoration of Ashura in Assegaf b. Husain al-Jufri's house in Metrodanan,¹⁶⁰ and 2020, during the event of *midodareni*¹⁶¹ for Umar Assegaf's daughter serve as evidence supporting this argument.¹⁶²

In the internal *sayyid* and *syarifah* community, Shi'is are perceived different with the orthodoxy. There are some *sayyids* who took actions against Shi'ism, such as *habaib* in the Albayyat (established in 1988) group, whose among the members are Habib

¹⁵⁸ Elis, interview.

¹⁵⁹ In the predominantly Sunni society of Indonesia, the descendants of the Prophet hold a considerable amount of cultural capital and enjoy privileges based on the perception that they possess baraka, which enhances their religious authority among Muslims. See Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *What Is Religious Authority?: Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia* (Princeton University Press, 2021); Rijal, "Habaib, Markets and Traditional Islamic Authority: The Rise of Arab Preachers in Contemporary Indonesia."

¹⁶⁰ Makhsum, "Stigmatisasi Dan Propaganda Anti-Syiah: Sorotan Deskriptif Gerakan ANNAS," 187.

¹⁶¹ *Midodareni* is a prayer event held before the wedding ceremony where the participants stay awake and engage in spiritual events. This aims at seeking safety for the bride and groom, families, and all the guests. See Sutikno Sutikno et al., "Java Traditional Community Wedding Ceremony Tradition in Bandar Jawa III Huta, Bandar Sub-District, Simalungun Regency," *Sosiohumaniora* 24, no. 1 (March 6, 2022): 10.

¹⁶² Bengawan News, "Kronologi Penyerangan oleh Massa Laskar di Solo yang Lukai 3 Habib," kumparan, August 9, 2020, <https://kumparan.com/bengawannews/kronologi-penyerangan-oleh-massa-laskar-di-solo-yang-lukai-3-habib-1ty9lWYVj2p>; Irwan Syambudi, "Merunut Penyerangan Kelompok Intoleran di Solo & Diskriminasi Syiah," tirta.id, August 11, 2020, <https://tirta.id/merunut-penyerangan-kelompok-intoleran-di-solo-diskriminasi-syiah-fWY2>.

Ahmad b. Zein al-Kaff, Habib Thohir b. Abdullah Al-Kaff, and Habib Abdul Qadir Al-Haddad.¹⁶³ In the case of Husna, when she began to adhere to Shi'ism, some of her family members show their disagreements, even though there is no further action against her.¹⁶⁴ Meanwhile, in Nadiyya's case, she was invited to give a sermon by a *syarifah* community, but once the organizers discovered that she was a Shi'i, they cancelled the invitation.¹⁶⁵

D. *Mut'a* as a Stigma: Hidden and Declared Identity

The second crisis faced by Shi'i women is discrimination based on *mut'a*. *Mut'a* in practice has been stigmatized to be an adultery and prostitution. In the discourse of Islamic law, *mut'a* is defined as having provisional enjoyment with women without the intention of a long-term commitment.¹⁶⁶ *Mut'a* marriage is well-known as a temporary marriage in which a couple agreed for a limited-time relationship with the payment of dower (*mahr*) for sexual aim. After the agreed duration of the relationship, the husband and wife are automatically separated without the need for a formal divorce.¹⁶⁷ ABI has written an explanation on this issue in *Syiah menurut Syiah* (Shi'ism according to the Shi'is), a book they composed to provide a brief guidance about Shi'ism, especially in Indonesian context. The writers discuss some of the reasons why *mut'a* is legitimately permissible and why it is not adultery, stating that both ulama, Sunni and Shi'i, agree that the Prophet has ever once legalized *mut'a*, despite the fact that they disagree on whether the law is still in force.¹⁶⁸

In reality, the accusation towards the Shi'is because of *mut'a* spreads largely in Indonesia. It is because in some regions, people use this practice as an excuse to legitimate misconduct behavior. *Mut'a* marriage, also known as contract marriage in Indonesia, is often exploited as a means to legitimize prostitution. A study conducted by Arivia and Abby (2015) in Cisarua, West Java, revealed that local residents in that area treated contract marriages as a sex commodity. Those who involve in such arrangements consider sexual relations to be permissible as long as they had undergone a prior marriage

¹⁶³ Rijal, "Habaib, Markets and Traditional Islamic Authority: The Rise of Arab Preachers in Contemporary Indonesia," 54.

¹⁶⁴ Husna, interview.

¹⁶⁵ Nadiyya, interview.

¹⁶⁶ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān Al-'Arab*, vol. 8 (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1414), 329.

¹⁶⁷ Nayel A. Badareen, "Shī'ī Marriage Law in the Pre-Modern Period: Who Decides for Women?," *Islamic Law and Society* 23, no. 4 (2016): 377.

¹⁶⁸ Ahlulbait Indonesia, ed., *Syiah Menurut Syiah*, Cetakan II (Jakarta: Dewan Pengurus Pusat, Ahlulbait Indonesia, 2014), 172.

under a contract (*mut'a*) or secretly (*siri*).¹⁶⁹ Society perceive *mut'a* as a convenient practice, which leads to its frequent use as an excuse to avoid complications in permanent marriages.¹⁷⁰ The Supreme Court (*Mahkamah Agung*) asserted that *mut'a* marriage constitute clandestine prostitution. This statement was made because according to them, *mut'a* does not always have a positive impact, even it tends to be detrimental to women. It was based on research conducted by the Center for Research and Development (*Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan*) of the Supreme Court in which among the interviewees are several female actors of *mut'a* whose motives are related to economic considerations. They concluded that *mut'a* was utilized by its doers to obtain material gain while attempting to conceal the behaviour of marriage violations under the Islamic-based (*shar'ī*) term.¹⁷¹

The prevalence of certain negative cases has resulted in an unfavorable perception and prejudice of practices or doctrines that, despite being debated, have religious legitimacy. This has led to generalizations about the entire doctrine, labeling anything related to contract marriage or *mut'a* as prostitution and calling for its prohibition. This case is often found in other similar “controversial” Islamic teachings such as polygamy, where its ideal form is practiced differently even abused by several people.¹⁷² Tajfel (1981) in Condor (1990) explains this phenomenon as stereotypes in which people tend to generalize something due to their cognitive process of categorizing. It involves the simplification and systematization of complex and rich information obtained from the circumstances.¹⁷³ The social construction of contract marriages is often narrowed down to mere physical gratification. Consequently, women and children become vulnerable to manipulation.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, the image of women involved in *mut'a* is prone to stigmatization, such as a stereotype of being a ‘slut’.

¹⁶⁹ Gadis Arivia and Abby Gina, “Culture, Sex and Religion: A Study of Contract-Marriage in Cisarua and Jakarta,” *Jurnal Perempuan* 20, no. 1 (February 2015): 60–62.

¹⁷⁰ Eko Handoyo and Heri Rohayuningsih, “Kawin Kontrak: Latar Belakang, Keabsahan Hukum Dan Dampaknya (Studi Kasus Di Kabupaten Jepara),” *Forum Ilmu Sosial* 40, no. 2 (June 11, 2013): 231–32.

¹⁷¹ Yulistyo Pratomo, “Mahkamah Agung: Kawin Kontrak Itu Prostitusi Terselubung,” *merdeka.com*, September 20, 2016, <https://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/mahkamah-agung-kawin-kontrak-itu-prostitusi-terselubung.html>.

¹⁷² Polygamy is often associated with injustice attitudes towards women; thus its practice is frequently criticised. To elaborate more on this issue, see Nina Nurmila, *Women, Islam and Everyday Life: Renegotiating Polygamy in Indonesia* (Routledge, 2009).

¹⁷³ Susan Condor, “Social Stereotypes and Social Identity,” in *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances*, 1990, 230.

¹⁷⁴ Bagus Haryono, “Kawin Kontrak Di Indonesia: Fungsional Bagi Siapa,” *Dilema: Jurnal Sosiologi* 26, no. 1 (2011): 3.

It was this *mut'a* case that led to MUI issuing fatwa No. Kep-B-679/MUI/XI/1997, declaring *mut'a* as illegal and stipulating that the perpetrators should be punished according to applicable laws.¹⁷⁵ The image of *mut'a* has been further worsened by the propaganda spread by the hardliner Islamist movements.¹⁷⁶ The Shi'is, in particular, have been targeted with hateful sentiments regarding the issue of *mut'a*. Jalaluddin Rakhmat once stated that IJABI prohibits *mut'a* marriage,¹⁷⁷ a sentiment that was later agreed upon by Wina, a member of Fathimiyyah IJABI. The organization explicitly prohibits the practice of *mut'a* marriage among its administrators, and it is certain that no IJABI administrators engage in *mut'a*. However, the sentiment and hatred persist to this day.

The media plays a role in perpetuating this stigma. An online media framed Shi'ism as a sect that justifies prostitution. They spread an understanding of its term that a man may only marry a woman for one night, but may marry up to four women and it is a peculiar Shi'i wedding procession.¹⁷⁸ *Mut'a* is equated as or even worse than fornication. It is deemed to cause damage in religion and society. Due to the belief that the legality of *mut'a* has been abrogated, one of Islamic media in Indonesia, Asyariah, perceive *mut'a* as a form of heresy (*bid'a*) so that they associate it with adultery which every Muslim acknowledges it as a vile, filthy, and abhorrent conduct.¹⁷⁹ Another Islamic media, which is Republika, reported a quotation from an Indonesian scholar that instead of *mut'a* marriage, the correct term is *mut'a* adultery, thus he believed that what the Shi'is have performed is wrong.¹⁸⁰

Shi'i women, in particular, have been severely affected by the issue of *mut'a*. Once their Shi'i identity is revealed, they become targets of the *mut'a* stigma. They are subjected to stigmatizing remarks, such as "Oh, you are Shi'i, that means you want to engage in *mut'a*, right?" Elis, one of Fathimiyyah IJABI members, mentioned that this

¹⁷⁵ Haryono, 2–3; Muwahidah, "For the Love of Ahl Al-Bayt," 337.

¹⁷⁶ Muwahidah, "National (In)Security and Identity Boundaries," 11.

¹⁷⁷ Fahmi Firdaus, "Organisasi Syiah Indonesia Bantah Bolehkan Nikah Mut'ah," <https://nasional.okezone.com/>, December 31, 2011, <https://nasional.okezone.com/read/2011/12/31/337/549808/organisasi-syiah-indonesia-bantah-bolehkan-nikah-mut-ah>.

¹⁷⁸ Redaksi Annur2, "Nikah Mut'ah: Prostitusi Legal Bernama Pernikahan Ala Syiah," *Pondok Pesantren Wisata An-Nur II Al-Murtadlo* (blog), March 1, 2023, <https://annur2.net/nikah-mutah-prostitusi-legal-bernama-pernikahan-ala-syiah/>.

¹⁷⁹ Admin, "Nikah Mut'ah Lebih Keji daripada Zina," *Majalah Islam Asy-Syariah*, January 5, 2022, <https://asyariah.com/nikah-mutah-lebih-keji-daripada-zina/>.

¹⁸⁰ Irwan Kelana, "Zina Sejenis dan Zina Mut'ah," *Republika Online*, February 5, 2016, <https://republika.co.id/berita/dunia-islam/islam-nusantara/16/02/05/o21ycz374-zina-sejenis-dan-zina-mutah>.

narrative has even escalated to verbal harassment. By associating the *mut'a* narrative with Shi'i women, they perpetuate the stigmatization that Shi'i women are *murahan*¹⁸¹ who have a low moral character.¹⁸² As Elis stated, Adibah, one of Muslimah ABI members, also shared a story. She mentioned that on a particular occasion, some Shi'i women were walking in the town square. Based on their appearance, Adibah guessed that one could assume that they were the Shi'is. In response to this, someone approached them and remarked, "Hey, you are Shi'i, are not you? Let's engage in *mut'a* marriage." They then went on to suggest, "We can take turns having sexual intercourse with you, right?"¹⁸³ Husna, one of Muslimah ABI members, experienced the same story as well. In her WhatsApp group of her high school alumni, one of her friends harassed her by directing the stigma towards her, saying, "Hey, now that you are Shi'i, it means you are *gampang*¹⁸⁴ to *mt (mut'a)* as well as your sisters, right? You should recite the Shahada again."¹⁸⁵

Stigmatization can even occur through social media. Khadijah, the head of Fathimiyyah IJABI, shared the experience of her daughter as a victim. She got suggestive comments on her social media accounts, such as "Are you ready for *mut'a*?" which Khadijah finds very demeaning.¹⁸⁶ Salis, another Fathimiyyah IJABI member, often receives phone calls inviting her to engage in *mut'a* marriage, "Hey you, do you want to marry *mut'a* or not?" For her, it is a major slander, but she has come to consider it as something normal that cannot shake her.¹⁸⁷

The remarks directed at Shi'i women were not only a 'form' of discrimination towards minority groups but also a form of discrimination against women because it contains sexist elements—which are understood as a discrimination against one specific sex, either female or male, but Schaefer (2012) contends that it mainly refers to how men

¹⁸¹ In this context, *murahan* is a pejorative term towards women. According to Indonesia Dictionary (KBBI), the meaning of *murahan* is "easily persuaded or easily tempted to engage in adultery and so on". See "Hasil Pencarian - KBBI Daring," accessed June 25, 2023, <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/murahan>.

¹⁸² Elis, interview.

¹⁸³ Adibah, interview.

¹⁸⁴ In KBBI, *gampang* means "does not require many conditions to be fulfilled". However, in this context, *gampang* has a similar connotation to *murahan*. See "Hasil Pencarian - KBBI Daring," accessed June 25, 2023, <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/gampang>.

¹⁸⁵ Husna, interview.

¹⁸⁶ Khasbullah, interview.

¹⁸⁷ Salis, February 9, 2023.

stigmatize women¹⁸⁸—that subjected women to harassment. By making such statements, individuals perpetuate the negative stigma associated with *mut‘a* and unjustly associate it with women. This is in line with Manegatti and Rubini (2017), that someone’s choices of words in everyday communication reflects what kind of gender stereotypes spreads in the society.¹⁸⁹ Since there is a stigma that *mut‘a* is a prostitution, women in that cases are vulnerable to be embedded with such negative images.¹⁹⁰ Thus, those utterances directed to Shi‘i women imply the hidden message of associating them with the actors of prostitution. Furthermore, as Mills (2008) pointed out, sexist remarks are often driven by the detractors’ intention to undermine their legitimacy in the public sphere.¹⁹¹ As a result, those insults have the potential to restrict the actions of Shi‘i women because the stigma tends to obscure the positive contributions they made to society.

Discriminatory treatment towards women, including verbal violence, continues to persist in Indonesia, partly due to the prevailing patriarchal culture. According to a survey conducted by Lentera Sintas Indonesia, an organization that supports survivors of sexual violence, in 2016, verbal abuse emerged as one of the most prevalent forms of sexual violence. The survey revealed that 84 percent of female respondents had experienced verbal sexual violence.¹⁹² Similarly, in 2019, a survey conducted by the Coalition for Safe Public Spaces (KRPA), an institution focused on women and marginalized groups, indicated that 60 percent of reported harassment incidents were verbal, encompassing racist/sexist remarks and sexual comments.¹⁹³

Contrary to society’s opinion that *mut‘a* marriage is highly detrimental to women, Shi‘i women believe that this practice actually empowers women. They argue that all aspects of the marriage, including the decision to enter into a *mut‘a* agreement, the duration of the marriage, the dowry, and the agreement on what is permissible and what is not, are in the hands of women. However, Khadijah emphasizes that intelligent and

¹⁸⁸ Richard T. Schaefer, *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*, 10th ed. (McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages, 2012), 267.

¹⁸⁹ Michela Menegatti and Monica Rubini, “Gender Bias and Sexism in Language,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*, 2017, 12.

¹⁹⁰ Muh. Irfan Syuhudi, “Pelacuran Dan ‘Penjaga Moralitas,’”

Blamakassar.Kemenag.Go.Id (blog), accessed June 27, 2023, <https://blamakassar.kemenag.go.id/berita/pelacuran-dan-penjaga-moralitas>.

¹⁹¹ Sara Mills, *Language and Sexism*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 40.

¹⁹² Endro Priherdityo, “Pelecehan Seksual Verbal Dianggap Lumrah di Indonesia,” *gaya hidup*, accessed June 28, 2023, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/gaya-hidup/20160722103508-277-146296/pelecehan-seksual-verbal-dianggap-lumrah-di-indonesia>.

¹⁹³ Koalisi Ruang Publik Aman (The Coalition for Safe Public Spaces), “Survei Pelecehan Di Ruang Publik (2019) – Koalisi Ruang Publik Aman,” accessed June 28, 2023, <http://ruangaman.org/survei2019/>.

independent women are not solely interested in *mut'a* marriages.¹⁹⁴ Most of Shi'i women are reluctant to do such practices, because they are not suitable in the context of Indonesia, like what Rina experienced.

“I was once a single parent, and the person I loved asked me for *mut'a*. I firmly replied, “No, absolutely not.” I had no interest in engaging in *mut'a*. He then made a remark like, “How come a Shi'i does not want to do *mut'a*?” It was precisely because of my Shi'i identity that I rejected the idea of *mut'a*.”¹⁹⁵

Rina's answer reflects her disagreement to do *mut'a*. However, on the other hand, some Shi'i women suffer from depression due to their husbands seeking to remarry, opt for *mut'a* or *siri* (secret) marriages¹⁹⁶ without the knowledge or consent of their wives. Elis emphasizes that such practices are not aligned with the teachings of *mut'a* as understood by Shi'i women. This type of *mut'a* marriage has negative repercussions for women, including those who are already within the institution of marriage.¹⁹⁷

The belief held by Shi'i women, whether they are members of Fathimiyyah IJABI or Muslimah ABI, is that the perception of *mut'a* held by people is not the same with the ideal *mut'a* that exists in Shi'ism. Wina said that those practices should refer to and are perceived according to the ulama.¹⁹⁸ Shi'i jurists enact several differences on the concept of *mut'a* and *mutlaq* (permanent) marriage.¹⁹⁹ The inheritance and the *'idda* period distinguish it from a permanent marriage. If in a permanent marriage the husband and wife inherit automatically, then in *mut'a* marriage this issue is adjusted according to the agreement reached by both parties. In *mut'a* marriage, the *'idda* lasts for two menstrual periods or forty-five days, whereas in a permanent marriage, it lasts for three menstrual periods.²⁰⁰ In addition, the exact period of time must be specified in *mut'a* marriage as well as dower.²⁰¹ If the dower is not stated explicitly in a specific amount, the marriage could not be legalized, different from permanent marriage in which the bride can be paid by a standard *mahr* (*mahr al-misl*).²⁰²

¹⁹⁴ Khasbullah, interview.

¹⁹⁵ Rina, interview.

¹⁹⁶ *Siri* or secret marriage is a marriage that is not registered officially in the government's institution, or not recognized by the state. See Eva F. Nisa, “The Bureaucratization of Muslim Marriage in Indonesia,” *Journal of Law and Religion* 33, no. 2 (August 2018): 291.

¹⁹⁷ Elis, interview.

¹⁹⁸ Wina, interview.

¹⁹⁹ Badareen, “Shi'i Marriage Law in the Pre-Modern Period,” 376.

²⁰⁰ Ahlulbait Indonesia, *Syah Menurut Syiah*, 174.

²⁰¹ Badareen, “Shi'i Marriage Law in the Pre-Modern Period,” 376–77.

²⁰² Ahlulbait Indonesia, *Syah Menurut Syiah*, 174.

In terms of other components, same with the permanent marriage (*dā'im* or *muṭlaq*), *mut'a* marriage needs the statement of contract (*'aqd*) to have it lawful, in which the woman is responsible in the declaration by saying “permission” or a “legitimacy”, while the man is in the acceptance, stating literal words of satisfaction and compliance.²⁰³ A couple could have a lawful contract if both of them are Muslims. Should a woman be non-Muslim, the contract would only be permissible if she is part of *Ahl al-Kitāb*, not disbeliever or the enemy of *Ahl al-Bayt*. The Imams advise to have a woman who has never committed fornication as a *mut'a* partner. They also suggest asking her marital status and whether or not she has engaged in adultery previously, even though these are not a prerequisite for the contract.²⁰⁴

Muslimah ABI differs from Fathimiyyah IJABI in that the latter prohibits the practice of *mut'a*. While the former and its affiliated organization, ABI, do not officially forbid their members from engaging in *mut'a*, Muslimah ABI members occasionally share stories and engage in discussions about *mut'a*, including plans related to it, even though not all members proceed to engage in it. According to their perspective, the correct practice of *mut'a* serves as a “bridge” to permanent marriage, without involving sexual intercourse and not being of a very short duration, such as one or two months. Fatimah, a member of Muslimah ABI, describes the practice that they consider to be acceptable. For example, if a female and male student intend to marry after their graduation, they may choose to conduct *mut'a* to avoid engaging in non-marital relationships. After graduation, they continue their relationship within the framework of a formal marriage. Another scenario involves a couple busy preparing for their wedding, who engage in *mut'a* prior to their *dā'im* marriage to ensure their interactions are within legal boundaries. Conversely, Muslimah ABI condemns those who misuse *mut'a* for casual purposes and not taking it seriously, thus, the members will disagree and express their disapproval for those who commit “wrong” *mut'a*.²⁰⁵

Finally, it can be concluded that Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI members have been subjected by stigma which is not only against their religious identity as Shi'is but also against their identity as women. However, the actions taken by the two groups are different, reflected by their own stage of religious identity. Fathimiyyah IJABI who own the stage of a hidden identity is trying to conform to mainstream's perception that

²⁰³ Al-Syaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan Al-Najafī, *Jawāhir Al-Kalām*, vol. 31 (Qum: Mu'assasa al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1433), 267–71.

²⁰⁴ Al-Najafī, 31:274–78.

²⁰⁵ Fatimah, interview.

mut'a is forbidden, so that they forbid its practice for their administrators due to harmful conditions. Conversely, Muslimah ABI who has a stage of declared identity does not have specific regulations regarding the issue of *mut'a*. In fact, as mentioned at the beginning of the section, through a book compiled by ABI, there is an effort to clarify misconceptions about the concept of *mut'a*.

E. Conclusion

The development of religious identity among Shi'i women is closely intertwined with their experiences of discrimination. As they progress through the stages of ascribed and chosen identity, the consequences of their choices are often faced within their family circles. As a consequence of not gaining support from family, some women experienced rejection and even domestic violence. To negotiate their identities, they display good behavior and avoid confrontation with family members of different beliefs.

However, as they venture into public spaces, new challenges emerge in the form of discrimination. This crisis is particularly evident for members of Fathimiyyah IJABI, who often choose to conceal their identity to protect themselves from socio-religious conditions that makes them more vulnerable to discrimination in public, namely their association with entities that people stigmatize, which are Kang Jalal and Muthahhari. On the other hand, members of Muslimah ABI take a different approach, confidently declaring their religious identity as they are less vulnerable to discrimination compared to Fathimiyyah IJABI members, even though their cultural factors such as being a descendant of the Prophet cannot avoid them from discrimination.

These stages and strategies highlight the complexities faced by Shi'i women in Indonesia as they navigate their religious identities in a predominantly Sunni society. The experiences of discrimination, which are cancellation of public space and, especially, pertaining to their identity as women such as being stigmatized by *mut'a*, and the choices made to cope with them underscore the ongoing struggle for acceptance and understanding within their religious community and society at large.

CHAPTER IV

BEING RESILIENT OR RESISTANT: SHI'I WOMEN'S ACTIVISM

A. Introduction

This chapter delves into several significant aspects of Shi'i women's efforts to be resilient or resistant to discrimination. It explores the influential female role models within the Shi'i faith, namely Fāṭima al-Zahrā' and Zaynab, who hold immense importance in the spiritual and psychological development of Shi'i women,²⁰⁶ examining how members of Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI deeply respect, admire, and view these two revered figures as symbols of ideal women whose virtues they aspire to embody. These role models inspire them to participate actively in the public sphere and empower them to challenge discrimination, formulating what Fraser describes as subaltern counter-public in which the members of the two groups invent their own interpretation on themselves as counter-discourses from mainstream group realms.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, this chapter explores Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI's activism on several issues, such as education, women and family, and religious inclusivity.

These attempts serve as a means for Shi'i women to overcoming adversity caused by discrimination. As Goffman argues, minorities foster their existence by undertaking and following how mainstream communities act. Hence, this chapter will capture the activities of Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI in the frame of Goffman's (2009) theory of stigma,²⁰⁸ which places Shi'i women as victims of stigma who seek acceptance from society by accommodating such universal ways. I argue that the form of resilience and resistance of Shi'i women lies in their attempts to be good in society, which is manifested in their activism in women's wings.

B. Fāṭima and Zaynab as a Symbol of Resilience and Resistance

For the Shi'is, more than a pious and respected woman, Fāṭima holds a special status as one of those immune from sin or *ma'sūmūn*. She is seen as a uniquely

²⁰⁶ Bridget Blomfield, "Women in Shi'ism," in *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion*, ed. David A. Leeming (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 2525–28.

²⁰⁷ Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (MIT Press, 1993), 123.

²⁰⁸ Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Simon and Schuster, 2009), 3–4.

remarkable woman of heavenly nature who is not subject to the impurity of menstrual periods. Fāṭima holds significance as a role model of womanhood and is considered an extraordinary being in Shi‘i belief more than in Sunni tradition, in which she is recognized as a well-known pious female figure among others.²⁰⁹ Fāṭima is portrayed as a resilient martyr in Shi‘i tradition due to her and the *Ahl al-Bayt*’s suffering.²¹⁰ She conducted *jihād* in knowledge, observance, and politics, including oratorical speech.²¹¹ The prophet enthusiastically welcomed Fāṭima and bestowed her the nickname al-Zahrā’ (the Radiant One).²¹² She was also well-known for the *kunya Umm Abīhā* (the mother of her father), which some Shi‘i literature interpret as the transcendental role of Fāṭima, which reflects the emanation of the lineages of the Prophet and Imams.²¹³

Another role model of Shi‘i women, Zaynab, exemplifies the extraordinary qualities passed down from her mother. She not only pioneered the mourning rituals of *Muḥarram* but also fiercely advocated for her family and the authentic teachings of Islam. Zaynab’s influential roles as a sister, mother, and daughter defied the societal and religious limitations imposed on her, resisting political agendas and surpassing gender expectations.²¹⁴ She was a martyr in terms of her political movements and oratorical speech.²¹⁵ Her sermon at the court of Yazīd I (d. 683 CE) in Damascus was perceived powerful as she represented an empowered woman. Upon the sentence of death sanctioned to ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (the son of Imām Ḥusayn), she bravely challenged the Governor of Kufa at that time to murder her first before his nephew. This attitude enables her to be respected and perceived higher than man.²¹⁶

²⁰⁹ Vinay Khetia, “Fatima as a Motif of Contention and Suffering in Islamic Sources” (masters, Concordia University, 2013), 2.

²¹⁰ Denise Louise Soufi, “The Image of Fatima in Classical Muslim Thought” (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1997), 81–87; Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, “Who Is Fatima: Gender, Culture, and Representation in Islam” 1, no. 2 (2005): 3.

²¹¹ Rawand Osman, *Female Personalities in the Qur’an and Sunna: Examining the Major Sources of Imami Shi‘i Islam* (Routledge, 2014), 106.

²¹² Jalaluddin Rakhmat and M. Taufiq Ali Yahya, trans., “Shāhifah Fāthimiyah,” in *Shahifah Fathimiyah: Doa-Doa Suci Putri Nabi* (Muthahhari Press, 2002), 7.

²¹³ Karen Ruffle, “May You Learn from Their Model: The Exemplary Father-Daughter Relationship of Mohammad and Fatima in South Asian Shiism,” *Journal of Persianate Studies* 4, no. 1 (2011): 14.

²¹⁴ Blomfield, “Women in Shi’ism,” 2525.

²¹⁵ Osman, *Female Personalities in the Qur’an and Sunna*, 106.

²¹⁶ Zayn Kassam and Bridget Blomfield, “Remembering Fatima and Zaynab: Gender in Perspective,” in *The Shi‘i World: Pathways in Tradition and Modernity* (London ; New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2015), 215–16.

The good personalities of Fāṭima and Zaynab are mostly echoed by Ali Shariati,²¹⁷ an Iranian scholar who is well-known as the ideologue of Iranian Revolution.²¹⁸ His depiction truly influences how Shi‘i women nowadays perceive the two ideal figures, that they strive for her own self, not because of their relatives, even the Prophet. Shariati encouraged women in Iran to do likewise, saying that they ought to stand up for their goods not for others but for themselves. As a result, Iranian women frequently point to Zaynab as an example of how they should live their lives. Zaynab’s figure has become a source of energy and motivation for these women as they fight for their rights in the post-revolutionary Iran’s public sphere. In the rituals, the representation of both figures can be perceived in the annual Karbala commemoration.²¹⁹ In Karachi, Pakistan, for instance, the Ashura rituals (first ten days of Muḥarram) often include the narration of Zaynab as a survivor amidst sorrows.²²⁰ This also happened in Lebanon in which Shi‘i women reflect and reinterpret Zaynab’s actions and behaviour in their *majales* (ritual circles) led by female. Zaynab was depicted as a courageous woman who stood against tyranny, managed to handle all chaos instead of drowning in grievances.²²¹

In the annually-held ritual of Ashura in Indonesia, the Shi‘is gather together in a specific building, reciting and mourning the suffering of Ḥusayn in Karbala. Similar to that of present in other regions, Shi‘i women remember Zaynab as a part of *Ahl al-Bayt* who had to experience hardships in their lives but epitomized the embodiment of women’s power, piety, fortitude, and courage. Muslimah ABI members, along with other Shi‘i women counterparts, join together to pay their respects to Sayyida Zaynab—who was also killed in the same attack as Ashura—on a gathering held in one of the 10 days that are set aside to hold the ritual of Ashura.²²² The women of Muslimah ABI gather together in an atmosphere of mourning. Supported by dim red lights and somber decorations, they sit amidst mannequins that symbolize the figures who fell during the events of Karbala. They engage in a series of activities, including recitations of *ma’tam*

²¹⁷ Ali Shariati, *Fatima Is Fatima* (Shariati Foundation, 2001), 6.

²¹⁸ Ervand Abrahamian, “‘Ali Shari’ati: Ideologue of the Iranian Revolution,” in *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements*, ed. Edmund Burke, Ira Marvin Lapidus, and Ervand Abrahamian, Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies 5. (University of California Press, 1988), 289.

²¹⁹ Kassam and Blomfield, “Remembering Fatima and Zaynab: Gender in Perspective,” 224.

²²⁰ Syed Akbar Hyder, “Sayyedah Zaynab: The Conqueror of Damascus and Beyond,” in *The Women of Karbala: Ritual Performance and Symbolic Discourses in Modern Shi‘i Islam* (University of Texas Press, 2021), 163.

²²¹ Lara Z. Deeb, “From Mourning to Activism: Sayyedah Zaynab, Lebanese Shi‘i Women, and the Transformation of Ashura,” in *The Women of Karbala Ritual Performance and Symbolic Discourses in Modern Shi‘i Islam* (University of Texas Press, 2009), 255–56.

²²² Husna, interview.

(poetic laments) and *maqal* (narratives of the events of Karbala). They draw inspiration from Zaynab as a strong and courageous woman who resisted injustice.

The members of Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI live up to Fāṭima and Zaynab by studying these figures, getting used to behaving like what they both exemplified, such as being an independent woman who has strong endurance to oppression, promoting knowledge about them, and manifesting their holy characters by contributing to social development. Whenever their birthdays, especially Fatima's, come every year, the members commemorate them by holding various events, such as seminars and social services events. This aims to disseminate Fāṭima's and Zaynab's traits and thoughts so that many people will be more aware of their existence.²²³

The Regional Board of Muslimah ABI West Java (*Pimpinan Wilayah Muslimah ABI Jawa Barat*), for instance, on January 21, 2023, held a commemoration of *Sayyida* Fāṭima's anniversary (*Wiladah Sayyidah Fatimah*) at the Branch Board of Muslimah ABI Cirebon (*Pimpinan Cabang Muslimah ABI Cirebon*). In a separate activity, the Branch Board of Muslimah ABI Bandung conducted social service activities in which the members gave gifts with the theme "a gift from *Sayyida* Fāṭima" to the wider community, such as the chiefs of the *majelis taklim* (a group of women in Islamic learning circles) and influential women in the local area.²²⁴ This event involved the disclosure of their wing's identity, aiming to gain better public recognition. Meanwhile, Fathimiyyah IJABI held a discussion, on January 14, 2023, about the story of Fāṭima and the virtues behind her name as an exemplar for the Muslim community.²²⁵ Fāṭima's influence extends to individuals and families within Fathimiyyah IJABI, who strive to emulate her teachings and principles in their daily lives.²²⁶ The two wings bring to the table issues that people may overlook, thereby creating a counter-discourse against dominant perspectives and expanding the scope of discursive contestation.²²⁷

Members of both organizations aspire to follow the examples set by Fāṭima and Zaynab in their behavior and speech. Uni, a member of Fathimiyyah IJABI, acknowledges that within the *Ahlulbait* madhhab, the exemplary female figure to emulate

²²³ Husna; Wina, interview.

²²⁴ Dina, interview; Rahayu, interview.

²²⁵ *EPS 58. Rahasia Dibalik Nama Sang Putri Nabi*, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3NBaxAZmzOk>.

²²⁶ Erika, interview.

²²⁷ Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," 125.

is Fāṭima, even though she personally finds it challenging.²²⁸ Additionally, Wina, expressed her desire for all Shi‘i women to possess intelligence, kindness, independence, and the ability to advocate for women’s rights. She emphasized the importance of embodying the courage of Zaynab, who fearlessly stands for the truth, as well as the intelligence of Fāṭima, who excels as a mother and sets an exemplary standard as a wife.²²⁹ The comments made by the members, drawing inspiration from the actions of the two female figures, Fāṭima and Zaynab, reflect their desires to establish their own identities. This suggests that the ideal woman’s character that they are aiming for is important to them and that they are still working toward achieving it.

While women in other Shi‘i communities demonstrate their agency through rituals, such as self-flagellation among Shirazi women,²³⁰ Indonesian Shi‘i women express their empowerment through social contributions provided by organizations. Their programs aim not only to benefit Shi‘i women but also Indonesian women in general. Khadijah Khasbullah, the Chief of Fathimiyyah IJABI, highlights that the organization’s activities should reflect the name of the Prophet’s daughter which becomes their name.²³¹ Similarly, Endang Sri Rahayu, the Chief of Muslimah ABI, emphasizes the intention to develop society as a manifestation of Fāṭima’s characters.²³² On the Second Congress of Muslimah ABI held in February 12, 2020, the theme of the event centralized Fāṭima as an Inspiration to build family in Indonesia.²³³ These actions align with Ruffle’s argument that women’s contributions to society and justice are deeply rooted in the Shi‘i tradition. Inspired by the noble qualities of the women from *Ahl al-Bayt*, their aspiration to embody the ideal characteristics of Fāṭima and Zaynab allows them to freely engage in the public sphere while preserving their femininity.²³⁴ The following chapter will explain about the activism Shi‘i women undertake in order to challenge discrimination and preserve their existence in society.

²²⁸ Uni, interview.

²²⁹ Wina, interview.

²³⁰ Yafa Shanneik, *The Art of Resistance in Islam: The Performance of Politics among Shi‘i Women in the Middle East and Beyond*, Cambridge Middle East Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 7.

²³¹ Khasbullah, interview.

²³² Rahayu, interview.

²³³ Andi, “Kongres Muslimah ABI II: Sayidah Fathimah, Inspirasi Membangun Keluarga Dan Bangsa Indonesia - Ahlulbait Indonesia,” February 21, 2020, <https://www.ahlulbaitindonesia.or.id/berita/s13-berita/kongres-mai-ii-sayidah-fathimah-inspirasi-membangun-keluarga-dan-bangsa-indonesia/>, <https://www.ahlulbaitindonesia.or.id/berita/s13-berita/kongres-mai-ii-sayidah-fathimah-inspirasi-membangun-keluarga-dan-bangsa-indonesia/>.

²³⁴ Karen G. Ruffle, *Gender, Sainthood, and Everyday Practice in South Asian Shi‘ism* (University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 63.

C. Fathimiyyah IJABI: Embracing Resilience through Social Engagement

Social resilience is often associated with social entities (individuals, organizations, and communities) and their ability to tolerate, endure, overcome, and adapt to various types of environmental and social threats.²³⁵ In the case of Fathimiyyah IJABI, they manifest the resilience in their intention or purpose to contribute to society even without revealing their religious identities, since it perhaps raises to the danger. An incident occurred to Fathimiyyah IJABI when they were organizing a seminar on children's issues. The seminar themed "Fulfilling Children's Needs", which took place on October 6, 2018, experienced rejection from local residents propagated by intolerant groups. The event faced societal backlash solely due to the IJABI name.²³⁶

To avoid similar cases, Fathimiyyah IJABI has implemented a specific strategy to mitigate the discrimination and rejection they encounter. Due to their widespread recognition as part of IJABI which is stigmatized, they have made the decision not to use the name Fathimiyyah IJABI when organizing events if they believe that the local circumstances may impede the event's progress. Instead, they occasionally adopt the name Mutti Institute (a name for an NGO aligned with Fathimiyyah IJABI) to minimize the risk of unwarranted attacks. Fathimiyyah IJABI's guiding principle is to serve and perform acts of kindness, making their own identity a secondary concern. This showcases the processes of resilience through which a system can adjust and accommodate not only the current challenges it faces but also unforeseen and unfamiliar ones.²³⁷

For further analysis, since the form of Shi'i women's wings resembles mainstream women's organizations, I will examine how activism and approaches used by mainstream women's organizations are also reflected in Shi'i women's wings. This confirms Goffman's statement about adopting the ways of normal groups to sustain existence. The indicators I use as references are activism in women's issues, including social service initiatives and involvement in digital spaces.

Qibtiyah (2009) classifies women's movements in Indonesia into several groups. Using the standard of Wieringa (2002), Qibtiyah argues that women's movements comprise any women's group that aims to advocate for the rights of women and

²³⁵ Markus Keck and Patrick Sakdapolrak, "What Is Social Resilience? Lessons Learned and Ways Forward," *Erdkunde* 67, no. 1 (2013): 8.

²³⁶ Rina, interview.

²³⁷ Keck and Sakdapolrak, "What Is Social Resilience? Lessons Learned and Ways Forward," 9.

encourage their activities. Qibtiyah distinguishes between the organization ‘of’ and ‘for’ women, where the former refers to women advocating for themselves, while the latter involves other actors establishing organizations for their own interests. Based on this distinction, Fathimiyyah IJABI can be categorized as organization ‘of’ women. Qibtiyah further divides between the religious and nonreligious organizations, placing each organization based on whether they utilize religious teachings as the foundation of their movements. There are several women’s organizations based on Islam such as ‘Aisyiyah (established in 1917) and Muslimat NU (established in 1950), and Catholic such as Wanita Katolik (Catholic Women, established in 1924), as well as non-religious or ‘secular’ organizations like Putri Mardika (established in 1912), Wanita Taman Siswa (established in 1922), and Darma Wanita (established in 1999).

Within Islamic organizations, Qibtiyah identifies three categories: dependent/subsidiary, semi-autonomous, and fully independent. The dependent organizations are inherently tied to the main organization, such as Siti Fatimah (now Syarikat Islam Women) with Sarekat Islam (established in 1918) and Muslimat with Masjumi (established in 1945). The semi-autonomous organizations operate independently but maintain a close relationship with their main organizations, such as ‘Aisyiyah with Muhammadiyah and Muslimat NU and Fatayat NU with Nahdlatul Ulama. The last category consists of fully independent organizations not affiliated with any specific organization as their home base, including Rifka Annisa (established in 1993), Rahima (established in 2000), and Alimat (established in 2009).²³⁸

Based on this categorization, Fathimiyyah IJABI is classified as a dependent/subsidiary religious organization as it is closely tied to and part of IJABI, even though it has its own structural board. Fathimiyyah IJABI operates as the women’s division within IJABI, which also has other divisions as its own structural board, namely education division, *da’wa* and media division, organization and cadres division, preaching and intellectual division, research institution division, organization benchmarking and networking division, women’s empowerment division, and economic division.

Women’s movements in Indonesia have been developing into better recognition, accomplished to solve several problems pertaining to the rights of women in society such

²³⁸ Alimatul Qibtiyah, “Indonesian Muslim Women and the Gender Equality Movement,” *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 3, no. 1 (2009): 170–73.

as education and equal opportunity in works, the recent development of women's movement in Indonesia is indicated by its support for issues threatening women, such as sexual and domestic violence, and extremism and radicalism. Women's activists dedicate their efforts to finding solutions to the actual problems faced by women, and one of the platforms for their engagement is the Indonesian Women Ulama Congress (KUPI). This significant event has been successfully organized twice, first in 2017 and second in 2022. According to Nisa (2019), KUPI serves as a platform to amplify the voices of civil Islam and provides a new perspective on women in religious leadership.²³⁹ The first KUPI event recommended several fatwas pertaining to issues such as sexual violence, child marriage, and environmental degradation,²⁴⁰ while in the second KUPI generated a solution to the issue of religious violence, proper waste management practices, forced marriages, pregnancies resulting from rape, and the harmful practice of female genital mutilation.²⁴¹

The experience of Fathimiyyah IJABI reflects that they are in line with the KUPI agenda.

That is correct. I participated in the Second Indonesian Women's Ulama Congress (KUPI 2). The topics discussed included early marriages and sexual violence. The events also addressed issues such as female circumcision, tolerance for women, and radicalism among women, which we actively implemented. When it comes to tolerance, the essence of radicalism lies in the mindset of individuals who think in an intolerant manner. Intolerance can gradually lead to radicalization over time.²⁴²

Fathimiyyah IJABI actively engages in advocating for issues concerning women and children. The organization strongly believes in the importance of women's intelligence and independence, encouraging them to utilize their full potential. This commitment reflects the broader mission of Fathimiyyah IJABI within the framework of IJABI, which is the enlightenment of thoughts and the empowerment of the weak and oppressed. According to Khadijah's account, Fathimiyyah IJABI lays a greater emphasis on education-based preventive measures. She contends that bright thought serves as a "gateway" for women to become aware of other aspects such as independence and agency.

²³⁹ Eva F. Nisa, "Muslim Women in Contemporary Indonesia: Online Conflicting Narratives behind the Women Ulama Congress," *Asian Studies Review* 43, no. 3 (2019): 434.

²⁴⁰ KUPI, "Hasil Kongres," Kupipedia, May 5, 2023, https://kupipedia.id/index.php/Hasil_Kongres.

²⁴¹ KUPI, "Hasil Kongres 2," Kupipedia, June 12, 2023, https://kupipedia.id/index.php/Hasil_Kongres_2.

²⁴² Khasbullah, interview.

In addition, Fathimiyyah has a counselling department that deals with issues pertaining to women's mental health and is directed both to the Fathimiyyah IJABI members and to the public. When doing the counselling, the counsellor does not expose her Shi'i identity due to the vulnerabilities it may engender. In initiating a seminar on psychology, Fathimiyyah IJABI often uses Mutti Institute name and broadcast it through Institutite522 YouTube channel. Fathimiyyah IJABI is also a protective home for women who have experienced violence, including those who are victims of violence based on their Shi'i identity within their families. For its partnership with other organizations, Fathimiyyah IJABI has built networks with various organizations and institutions, such as Fatayat NU, Aisyiyah, Komnas Perempuan (National Commission on Violence Against Women), advocacy networks, and other non-governmental organizations.

As a subsidiary organization of IJABI, Fathimiyyah IJABI owns the same mission as the former, namely enlightenment project and the empowerment of *mustadh'afin* (those in need). The members of Fathimiyyah IJABI realize this principle by organizing several programs, most of which were organized in conjunction with IJABI. A Social Service in health was conducted through a fruitful collaboration between various communities. The Regional Board of Fathimiyyah IJABI West Java, PSM-GKI (Social Workers of Indonesian Christian Church), and Relawan Cinta joined hands on Saturday, January 11, 2020, in Pangalengan, Bandung. The event included doctor's examinations and free medication for approximately 350 residents, acupuncture and massage therapy, counselling for parents on early child marriage, reproductive health counselling for adolescents, Posyandu (integrated healthcare centre) services, and a consumable goods bazaar.²⁴³

On Saturday, August 13, 2022, Fathimiyyah, IJABI, and PSM-GKI organized the same agenda in Sumedang, West Java to commemorate Ashura and the Independence Day of Indonesia.²⁴⁴ These events are also a means for Fathimiyyah IJABI to promote religious inclusivity. Another event is a celebration day of Eid al-Fitr 2023, in which some interfaith guests were coming. They are Leaders from Orthodox Christians, Catholics, Protestants, Hindus, Sunni and Shi'i Muslims, adherents of the Baha'i faith

²⁴³ Farida T. Sudjana, "Baksos Pengobatan Gratis," Instagram, January 12, 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/B7NEzKxh9g0/>.

²⁴⁴ Sukardi and Farida T. Sudjana, "Peringatan Asyura IJABI Jawa Barat, Tangisan Itu Terwujud Dalam Kepedulian Dan Perkhidmatan.," Majulah IJABI, August 15, 2022, <http://www.majulah-ijabi.org/17/post/2022/08/peringatan-asyura-ijabi-jawa-barat-tangisan-itu-terwujud-dalam-kepedulian-dan-perkhidmatan.html>.

and Sunda Wiwitan, and other guests including a Pastor from Switzerland who had deliberately come to Indonesia to conduct research on Eid al-Fitr.²⁴⁵

On the question of Fathimiyyah IJABI's existence in digital spaces, Lilis, a member of Fathimiyyah IJABI, reflects on the consequence of being active in an online sphere. As an organization existing in the era of digital media, Fathimiyyah IJABI maintains its presence by uploading their contents on social media. The implementation of utilizing social media for an organization is significant since it will enlarge the engagement of its community. Fathimiyyah IJABI adopts a unique strategy in this regard. They actively organize seminars and discussions on women's issues, broadcasting them through their YouTube platform, and further sharing the content on their Instagram account. However, instead of using their actual names, Fathimiyyah IJABI operates under the name Seroja TV.²⁴⁶ Nevertheless, since they are still a part of the IJABI, all their activities are disseminated and documented through the IJABI platform. This includes their websites (majulah-ijabi.org) and social media accounts on Twitter (@ijabipp) and Instagram (@majulah.ijabi).

D. Muslimah ABI: Manifesting Resistance through Public Devotion

There has been a prevailing stigma associated with Shi'i women, often portraying them as individuals who predominantly wear black attire and long headscarves. However, Endang Sri Rahayu, the Chief of the National Board (*Pimpinan Nasional*) of Muslimah ABI Indonesia, shared an anecdote highlighting a different perspective. During the second Congress of Muslimah ABI, the invited resource person, who happened to be the Chief of the Indonesian Women's Congress (Kongres Wanita Indonesia/KOWANI), expressed surprise upon seeing the members dressed in *kebaya*, a traditional Indonesian outfit. Rahayu alludes that it is a reality from the community, that they wear modest clothes and usual colourful hijab, same with other Muslimas wear. There is no difference in their appearance. In terms of activities, they can be anything as well, including housewives, businesswoman, teacher, and other occupations that need them work outside the home.

²⁴⁵ Iis Wardhana, "Lebaran Bersama Saudara Lintas Iman," *Majulah IJABI*, April 23, 2023, <http://www.majulah-ijabi.org/17/post/2023/04/lebaran-bersama-saudara-lintas-iman.html>.

²⁴⁶ Seroja TV is an abbreviation of "*Serunya Obrolan Wanoja*" (the Fun of *Wanoja* Chat). *Wanoja* is a Sundanese term meaning "young woman". The deliberate naming of Fathimiyyah IJABI's YouTube channel as Seroja TV aims to overcome the stigma associated with women engaging in chat, which often carries a negative connotation of "gossiping". As a result, the content presented on Seroja TV focuses on scientific topics related to women, such as fiqh, morals, children's issues, and more. Wina, interview.

Through this event, Rahayu contends that Muslimah ABI wants to showcase the true identity of Shi'i women and remove stigma. This resonates with their stage in declared identity as they want to clarify misunderstandings in society. Being actively solving misconceptions is a way of how Muslimah ABI foster its existence in society. This attempt mediates the resistance toward discrimination. Resistance is defined as an act of opposing or challenging something perceived as unjust. Drawing from historical events, organized collective actions are part of the forms of everyday resistance that are carried out gradually but possess significant strength.²⁴⁷ The actions that Muslimah ABI members reflect in their activism imply the active attempts to challenge discrimination, but with everyday forms that is processing gradually.

The members acknowledge their involvement in the organization based on the belief that each organization shares a vision and mission that resonates with them. Within these organizations, they find like-minded colleagues who provide mutual support and share the common objective of promoting goodness. They perceive fellow members of Muslimah ABI as friends who share a common vision and mission, fostering an environment conducive to sharing. They believe that there is no need to conceal their identity among their group members.

Based on Qibtiyah's (2009) categorization, Muslimah ABI falls into the semi-autonomous religious organization category as its board is separate from its main organization, ABI. The board includes division of cadres and organization; education; research and development; secretariat; public relations; social, economic, and legal; and women, children, and family. Muslimah ABI has one special program as a means of its resistance. This program aims to enhance the organization's acceptability, with the expected output being a better understanding of the organization by outsiders.

Similar to Fathimiyyah IJABI, Muslimah ABI has been involved in the broader discourse of women's movement by its participation in KUPI since the inception of that event. During the second KUPI event, Muslimah ABI distributed "*Buku Putih Mazhab Syiah*" (The White Book of Shi'ism), a book aimed at enlightening people about the Shi'i madhhab and promoting a better understanding of Shi'ism. Endang Sri Rahayu, the Chief of Muslimah ABI, shared how her presence as a representative of the organization attracted the attention of attendees during a panel discussion on women's protection from

²⁴⁷ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (Yale University Press, 1990), 195.

pregnancies caused by rape at KUPI.²⁴⁸ She recommended an opinion based on Shi'i scholars, stating that abortion is only allowed if there is a danger to the mother's life, in line with the fatwa issued by KUPI.

Yes, during the KUPI event, I was in the center, so when I introduced myself, the people in front immediately turned their attention towards me, *Mbak*. At that moment, I realized that based on this, we must foster good relationships with others, come together, and actively advocate for women's rights while also providing clear protection for children. Additionally, it is crucial to establish well-defined structures.²⁴⁹

As the agenda of Muslimah ABI is to strengthen the role of the family, particularly women, and their contribution to society, it is important to address the rights of all parties involved when there are issues or problems within a family, including the rights of the wife, children, and husband. Endang believes that as an institution, Muslimah ABI has the capacity to make a significant impact in this area. Strengthening families is of utmost importance, and Muslimah ABI is actively involved in such attempts, similar to other women's organizations in Indonesia. The ultimate goal of Muslimah ABI is to empower women, as women play a vital role in all aspects of life. These motivations drive Muslimah ABI to actively engage with their community, with a general aim of aiding those who are still marginalized and in need.

Muslimah ABI undertook several programs to realize their main agenda. They organized a webinar titled 'Strengthening Indonesian Families Facing the New Normal Era' on Friday, July 17, 2020. The event was conducted in collaboration with KOWANI, the National Family Planning Coordinating Agency (BKKBN), and the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection. Furthermore, Muslimah ABI has established strategic partnerships with other women's organizations, including Women Catholic RI and Fatayat NU. In commemoration of Kartini Day, a webinar was held on April 23, 2021, with the theme "Reflections on Commemoration of Kartini Day: Women and Literacy." Additionally, they composed several pocket books, such as the ideal family and parenting pocket books that originated from the thoughts of Ayatollah Ali Khamene'i, the current holder of *marja'* in Iran.

²⁴⁸ Panels held in KUPI 2 comprises religious deliberation on waste management for environmental sustainability and women's safety, the role of women in protecting the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) from religious extremism, the protection of women's lives from the dangers of pregnancy resulting from rape, the protection of women from the dangers of female genital mutilation without medical reasons, and the protection of women from forced marriages. KUPI, "Proses Kongres 2," Kupipedia, June 26, 2023, https://kupipedia.id/index.php/Proses_Kongres_2.

²⁴⁹ Rahayu, interview.

As the part of the women's wings' agenda for the advocacy of the rights of women, they advocate the rights of their own members who are victims of discrimination. In the case of domestic violence, which is mentioned in the previous chapter, Muslimah ABI serves as a safe space for women to survive during and after experiencing discrimination. In the Regional Board of Muslimah ABI East Java, there is an advocacy from paralegals served to those affected either by discrimination because of the Shi'i identity or discrimination based on gender.²⁵⁰

Muslimah ABI, along with Fathimiyyah IJABI, share the same view that a perfect woman fulfils an optimal role both in the domestic and public spheres. The two organizations were established in the era when gender awareness has already improved in society. Additionally, they do not encounter hardships as what another Muslim women's organization faced, such as Muslimat NU which attained their opportunity to establish a women's organization through internal contestation and obstacles within the Nahdlatul Ulama.²⁵¹ Fathimiyyah IJABI has already got support from the beginning. At the same time, Muslimah ABI spent 4 years after the establishment of ABI to finally gain their own authority in a semi-autonomous women's wing. Through the years, they developed the social impact provided by both IJABI and ABI to society, especially to women. Both of these Shi'i women's wings also benefit from the positive reception of other organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, as both share similar beliefs in religious pluralism. However, given that they are regionalized civic organizations, there may be differences in perspectives between central leadership and local branches.²⁵²

In terms of social services, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Muslimah ABI and ABI provided aids for the affected families through a program called "Responsive ABI". Last year, precisely on August 20 until September 7, 2022, Muslimah ABI held an Orphan Care program, aiming to provide financial supports for *Ahlulbait* orphan boys and girls within their community.²⁵³ With regard to the presence of Muslimah ABI in digital sphere, Muslimah ABI, as a semi-autonomous religious organization, has its own website (muslimahabi.com), Twitter (@MuslimahABI), and Instagram account (@muslimahahlulbaitindonesia). However, Instagram is the most frequently used platform to share its activities and thoughts, including expressing its political thoughts,

²⁵⁰ Adibah, interview.

²⁵¹ Pieternella van Doorn-Harder, *Women Shaping Islam: Reading the Qu'ran in Indonesia* (University of Illinois Press, 2010), 208.

²⁵² Brown, "Civic Islam," 409; Zulkifli, *The Struggle of the Shi'is in Indonesia*, 233–34.

²⁵³ Rahayu, interview.

such as the campaign of Quds Day²⁵⁴ and the rejection of the Israel U-20 football team coming to Indonesia. The rest of information such as news or video contents are shared inherently in the account of ABI, either on website (ahlulbaitindonesia.or.id), Twitter (@infoahlulbait), Instagram (@infoahlulbait), or YouTube (Ahlulbait Indonesia TV).

The online platforms of the Muslimah ABI, along with Fathimiyyah IJABI, disseminate various webinars on women's issues, further advancing the mission of women's rights advocacy established by these organizations. While it cannot be claimed that they are entirely free from discrimination in the digital sphere, as mentioned by Lilis,²⁵⁵ digital media provides an opportunity for marginalized groups, such as Shi'is, to assert their presence and exercise freedom of speech. It creates a new space for advocacy actors and marginalized groups to engage with one another and have their voices heard. This contributes to an improvement in their quality of life, representing a positive impact for the marginalized group.²⁵⁶

E. Conclusion

Shi'i women affirm social standard of being "normal" by adopting various strategies, mainly to be resilient and resistant in order to face discrimination within Indonesian society. One of the primary approaches they employ is engaging in acts of kindness and service within their communities. By actively participating in these organizations, Shi'i women not only challenge stereotypes and discrimination, but they also become agents of social change, especially in advocating women issues. These organizations serve as a platform for Shi'i women to mediate their identities, indicating either resilience or resistance.

The first was represented by Fathimiyyah IJABI. They consistently contribute to society without exposing their identity. The networks they have built over time serve as their capital to survive amidst the existence of society, where they engage with mainstream groups that have tolerant views. The consistency of their efforts for goodness is also reflected in their digital activism. Without explicitly mentioning Fathimiyyah IJABI's identity, they present content that supports women's empowerment. On the other

²⁵⁴ Siavash Ardalan, "Iran's 'Jerusalem Day': Behind the Rallies and Rhetoric," *BBC News*, August 1, 2013, sec. Middle East, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-23448932>.

²⁵⁵ Lilis, February 9, 2023.

²⁵⁶ Jose Ortiz et al., "Giving Voice to the Voiceless: The Use of Digital Technologies by Marginalized Groups," *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, March 8, 2019, 21.

hand, Muslimah ABI appears as a resistant women's wing, explicitly showing their intention to challenge deeply rooted stigmas in society. This is a continuation of their negotiation of religious identity, which has reached the stage of declared identity. Additionally, they openly express their political views, strengthening the resistance efforts they undertake.

Moreover, these organizations provide Shi'i women with opportunities to transcend communal piety and expand their impact beyond their religious community. Through their involvement, Shi'i women are able to make meaningful contributions to broader societal issues and advocate for positive transformations. By utilizing these platforms, inspired by the figure of Fāṭima and Zaynab, Shi'i women demonstrate their commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable society, where discrimination based on religious identity is challenged and overcome.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A. Concluding Remarks

The religious identity of the Shi'is in Indonesia holds significant importance as they endeavor to gain acceptance within society. Over the years, the Shi'is have encountered discrimination due to their non-mainstream madhhab being perceived as contrary to orthodoxy and even deviant. Initially, historical discrimination against Shi'ism in Indonesia was absent. However, with the global spotlight on Shi'ism following the Iranian Revolution, sectarian divisions between Sunnis and Shi'is emerged. The state has played a significant role in marginalizing this madhhab, resulting in the propagation of ideologies hostile to Shi'ism. This reality is further compounded by intolerant groups that actively campaign against the perceived anomaly of Shi'is. The concept of Shi'ism's alleged "deviance" has become deeply rooted in society, leading to the acquisition of a "normalized" stigma and a contested identity.

Shi'i women of Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI negotiate their religious identity to, *on the one hand*, consist in adhering to their beliefs and practices according to Shi'i madhhab, and *on the other hand*, attain an acceptance and preserve their roles and existence within society. While discrimination against Shi'i individuals has been a recurrent theme, the experiences faced by Shi'i women diverge from those of their male counterparts due to their distinct gendered position. Their challenges extend beyond religious differences, encapsulating the alarming reality of being victimized by domestic violence and encountering sexist harassment. These unjust situations stem from the social stigma associated with their adherence to Shi'ism, which is unfavorable by their families, and their connection to *mut'a* practices. Within this complex socio-religious landscape, several underlying conditions intricately influence the formulation of religious identities within these women's wings. The dynamics of acceptance and vulnerability intertwine to create unique pathways for the negotiation of identity. It is evident that the acceptance or rejection of these women's wings within society significantly shapes their strategies to adapt to their realities.

Fathimiyyah IJABI is the women's wing associated with the hidden identity. This aspect of their identity is brought to life by their religious principles that emphasize inclusivity, fluidity, and flexibility in the practice of their faith. Nonetheless, their

vulnerability to discrimination is heightened by socio-religious conditions intertwined with public awareness of IJABI's name, Muthahhari, and Jalaluddin Rakhmat as figures within this faction, some of whom have been unfairly characterized as deviant. Consequently, the women affiliated with this group opt to veil their religious association, avoiding potential negative consequences. While actively participating in various social undertakings and advocacy, their foremost objective revolves around maintaining resilience and discretion regarding their Shi'i beliefs. Their main focus remains centered on contributing to the common good while upholding their faith. By keeping their identities concealed, they strive to deftly navigate potential challenges and preconceptions, all the while standing firm in their convictions.

On the other hand, Muslimah ABI embodies the women's faction aligned with the declared identity. Women within this group willingly reveal their Shi'i religious affiliation, irrespective of the potential risks that may ensue. Their commitment to strictly upholding Shi'i teachings, particularly in *fiqh*, and their belief in the society's inclusivity drive them to openly acknowledge their religious identity. This stage of identity is accompanied by a shift in their activism strategy, where their focus centers on resisting discrimination and fostering awareness and comprehension of their faith. By unabashedly embracing their religious identity, their intent is to challenge and dispel the stigmas and misconceptions enshrouding Shi'ism within the broader societal context. A prevailing sense of urgency fuels their determination to unveil their religious affiliation, for they understand that should their true identity remain concealed from society, the burden of stigma will forever weigh upon them.

Despite the distinct approaches adopted by these women's wings, both Fathimiyyah IJABI and Muslimah ABI actively contribute to various social initiatives and charitable endeavors, spanning from advocating for women's rights to engaging in public service activities. Their unwavering commitment to community service remains resolute, and they assume pivotal roles in fostering an inclusive and tolerant society within Indonesia. However, the two groups diverge in their strategies, as one chooses resilience through discretion, while the other pursues resistance through open acknowledgment. Nevertheless, both are driven by the common objective of preserving their religious identity and striving for acceptance and comprehension within a diverse societal milieu.

B. Implication

This thesis enables the readers to understand more about how minority groups persist in engaging in society, adapting to how majority groups have conducted their religious and social activities. It contributes to the field of study of minority affairs, specifically Muslim minorities, where the groups get discriminated against in society. As with any other work, this thesis renounces another space for further studies. I write this thesis as a preliminary study of Shi'i women in Indonesia, discussing their specific experience of discrimination as a religious and gender minority, their activities as the means of resistance or resilience, and finally, their religious identities as their responses to foster their presence in society.

Other studies may take into account and explore several aspects related to Shi'i women, such as gender construction that is embedded in their women's wings, their thoughts on contemporary issues about gender and sexuality, such as feminism and LGBTQIA+ issues, and the impact of the rise of intolerant groups towards their activism. Additionally, since the two women's wings in this study have several representations in Indonesian regions, other studies may take a specific case from a particular regional branch of these women's wings to attain a unique experience.

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