

NAVIGATING HERESY: THE RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS BETWEEN MUI AND MORA IN HANDLING HERETICAL GROUPS

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.)



by:

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UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

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This study focuses on the dynamics of the authority of Islamic religious institutions in Indonesia, particularly the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (MORA) and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), towards various groups considered heretical by the MUI. Therefore, this study highlights how the MUI, as a non-governmental religious authority (*Ulama*), has implications in influencing the formal and informal policies of the MORA regarding the designation and handling of groups considered heretical. There are several case selections of groups that regarded as heretics such as *Ahmadiyah*, *al-Salamullah* (Lia Eden), GAFATAR, and *Ma'had al-Zaytun*, which are the focus of this study. However, this study aims to identify several factors influencing the decision-making process of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) due to the *fatwa* of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). Additionally, it examines the extent to which MUI's influence is significant in exercising its authority through legal decision-making processes against groups regarded as heretical. However, this study uses qualitative methods to analyze the MUI authority in influencing MORA. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and documentation collection. Through in-depth interviews, data were collected from informants with backgrounds as officials and former government officials from various leadership eras at the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). This focuses on highlighting various approaches to handling groups considered heretical that emerged over the past few decades, aligning with their respective leadership eras. Furthermore, through case research on objections such as *Ahmadiyah*, *al-Salamullah* (Lia Eden), GAFATAR, and *Ma'had al-Zaytun*, this study found that *fatwas* or statements issued by the MUI regarding these groups often serve as the primary reference for the public. Consequently, a general concern that could potentially disrupt order or security leads the state, in this case the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), to also address these considered heretical groups. Then, the MUI's decisions serve as a basis for the Ministry of Religious Affairs' (MORA) legitimacy in issuing policies to restrict the activities of these groups, as outlined in joint regulations (SKB) or informal statements by the Minister of Religious Affairs. Ultimately, this study contributes to the understanding of the relationship between *ulama* and the state, particularly within the context of Islamic bureaucracy and the management of religious diversity in Indonesia. Further, it is focusing on issues related to considered heretical groups and the discourse between majority and minority internal Islamic groups.

Keywords: *Religious Authority, MUI, MORA, Policy, Fatwa, Heresy*

ملخص

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الدراسات الإسلامية

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تركز هذه الدراسة على ديناميكيات سلطة المؤسسات الدينية الإسلامية في إندونيسيا، ولا سيما وزارة الشؤون الدينية في جمهورية هرطقية. لذلك، تسلط MUI تجاه مختلف الجماعات التي يعتبرها (MUI) ومجلس العلماء الإندونيسي (MORA) إندونيسيا على السياسات (Ulama) هذه الدراسة الضوء على كيفية تأثير مجلس العلماء الإندونيسي، بصفته سلطة دينية غير حكومية الرسمية وغير الرسمية لوزارة الشؤون الدينية فيما يتعلق بتصنيف الجماعات التي تعتبرها هرطقة والتعامل معها. هناك عدة حالات مختارة ومعهد الزيتون، وهي محور هذه الدراسة. ومع GAFATAR لمجموعات تعتبر هرطقة مثل الأحمدية والسلام الله (ليا إيدن) و بسبب فتوى (MORA) ذلك، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد عدة عوامل تؤثر على عملية صنع القرار في وزارة الشؤون الدينية في ممارسة سلطتها من خلال عمليات MUI بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تبحث الدراسة مدى تأثير (MUI) مجلس العلماء الإندونيسي. صنع القرار القانوني ضد الجماعات التي تعتبر هرطقة

تم جمع البيانات من خلال MORA في التأثير على MUI ومع ذلك، تستخدم هذه الدراسة أساليب نوعية لتحليل سلطة مقابلات شبه منظمة وتحليل الوثائق وجمع الوثائق. من خلال المقابلات المتعمقة، تم جمع البيانات من مصادر ذات خلفيات كمسؤولين (MUI) ومجلس العلماء الإندونيسي (MORA) ومسؤولين حكوميين سابقين من مختلف العهود القيادية في وزارة الشؤون الدينية ويركز هذا على تسليط الضوء على مختلف الأساليب المتبعة في التعامل مع الجماعات التي تعتبر هرطقية والتي ظهرت خلال العقود القليلة الماضية، بما يتماشى مع عهود قيادتها

ومعهد الزيتون، وجدت هذه GAFATAR علاوة على ذلك، من خلال دراسة حالات مثل الأحمدية والسلام الله (ليا إيدن) و بشأن هذه الجماعات غالبًا ما تكون المرجع الأساسي للجمهور. ونتيجة لذلك MUI الدراسة أن الفتاوى أو البيانات الصادرة عن إلى (MORA) فإن القلق العام الذي قد يؤدي إلى زعزعة النظام أو الأمن يدفع الدولة، وفي هذه الحالة وزارة الشؤون الدينية (MORA) كأساس لشرعية وزارة الشؤون الدينية MUI التعامل أيضًا مع هذه الجماعات التي تعتبر هرطقة. ثم تستخدم قرارات أو البيانات غير الرسمية الصادرة (SKB) في إصدار سياسات لتقييد أنشطة هذه الجماعات، على النحو المبين في اللوائح المشتركة عن وزير الشؤون الدينية. في نهاية المطاف، تساهم هذه الدراسة في فهم العلاقة بين العلماء والدولة، لا سيما في سياق البروقراطية الإسلامية وإدارة التنوع الديني في إندونيسيا. علاوة على ذلك، تركز الدراسة على القضايا المتعلقة بالجماعات التي تعتبر هرطقة والخطاب بين الجماعات الإسلامية الداخلية الأغلبية والأقلية

السياسة، الفتوى، البدعة، MORA، MUI، الكلمات المفتاحية: السلطة الدينية

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ABBREVIATION DIRECTORY

DI/TII	: <i>Darul Islam / Tentara Islam Indonesia</i>
DSN-MUI	: <i>Dewan Syariah Nasional – Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI)</i>
FKUB	: <i>Forum Kerukunan Beragama</i>
GAFATAR	: <i>Gerakan Fajar Nusantara</i>
IMA	: <i>Instruksi Menteri Agama</i>
JAI	: <i>Jamaah Ahmadiyah Indonesia</i>
KANTIBMAS	: <i>Keamanan dan Ketertiban Masyarakat</i>
KMA	: <i>Keputusan Menteri Agama</i>
KIZ	: <i>Kantoor voor Indlandsche Zaken</i>
KNIP	: <i>Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat</i>
KUA	: <i>Kantor Urusan Agama</i>
KUII	: <i>Kongres Umat Islam Indonesia</i>
LPPOM	: <i>Lembaga Pengkajian Pangan, Obat-obatan, dan Kosmetika</i>
MORA	: <i>Ministry of Religious Affairs</i>
MUI	: <i>Majelis Ulama Indonesia</i>
NII	: <i>Negara Islam Indonesia</i>
NU	: <i>Nahdlatul Ulama</i>
OIC	: <i>Organization of Islamic Council</i>
PAKEM	: <i>Pengawasan Aliran Kepercayaan dan Aliran Keagamaan</i>
PERDIRJEN	: <i>Peraturan Direktorat Jenderal</i>
PKI	: <i>Partai Komunis Indonesia</i>
PMA	: <i>Peraturan Menteri Agama</i>
RPJMN	: <i>Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional</i>
RRI	: <i>Radio Republik Indonesia</i>
SARA	: <i>Suku, Agama, Ras, dan Antargolongan.</i>
SKB	: <i>Surat Keputusan Bersama</i>
TNI	: <i>Tentara Nasional Indonesia</i>
US	: <i>United States</i>
YDDP	: <i>Yayasan Dana Dakwah Pembangunan Yayasan Dana Dakwah Pembangunan</i>

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Discourse on religious authority has been debated among scholars regarding the impact of the relationship between religious scholars (*ulama*) and religious leaders on the Muslim community.¹ In the context of Islamic authority, it has been extended to refer to many various categories. As argued by Nico Kaptein, there are some differences when it comes to the distinction of religious authority, which he claims to be ‘ideas, texts, an individual or person, a group of people or an institution’.²

Therefore, ‘religious authority’ refers to two aspects, which are individuals and institutions, in the Indonesian context.³ The individual aspect is often associated with singular personas. For instance, *kiai*,⁴ *ulama*,⁵ *imam*,⁶ *ustadz*,⁷ *mubaligh*,⁸ *penyuluh*,⁹ *tengku*,¹⁰ *buya*,¹¹ and *guru pesantren*.¹² In the institutional aspect, it is institutionalized within a body of organization that encompasses many people. There are two types of samples of the authority organizations which are from non-state institutions such as NU, Muhammadiyah, Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI). While it is state institutions, including the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). These organizations play an essential role in guiding the larger society, which has one of the highest Muslim populations in the world.¹³ Specifically, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) and the Ministry of Religious

¹ Azyumardi Azra, Cees van Dijk, and Nicolaas Jan Gerrit Kaptein, *Varieties of Religious Authority: Changes and Challenges in 20th Century Indonesian Islam*, IIAS/ISEAS Series on Asia (Singapore: ISEAS, 2010)

² Nico J.G Kaptein, “The Voice of the ‘Ulamâ’: Fatwas and Religious Authority in Indonesia,” *Archives de Sciences Sociales Des Religions*, no. 125 (January 2004): 115–30, <https://doi.org/10.4000/assr.1038>.

³ Gudrun Krämer and Sabine Schmidtke, eds., *Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies*, Social, Economic and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia, v. 100 (Brill, 2006), 2.

⁴ *Kiai* is an honorary title in Indonesia given to Islamic religious figures, especially leaders of Islamic boarding schools or *pesantren*.

⁵ *Ulama* are people or individual who have the capacity to interpret the *Qur'an* and *hadith* as outlined in Islamic law.

⁶ *Imam* is a leader in congregational prayer and often also refers to a spiritual or religious leader in a Muslim society.

⁷ “*Ustadz*” is conferred upon individuals who spread *da'wa* or a message in Islamic teaching.

⁸ A “*Mubaligh*” is an individual engaged in *da'wah*, or the propagation of Islamic teachings to the broader community.

⁹ *Penyuluh* is an individual whose job is to provide guidance and education to the community in a particular field, such as religion in order to increase knowledge and change behavior for mutual prosperity.

¹⁰ “*Tengku*” is utilized in Aceh to denote ulama or religious leaders.

¹¹ The term “*Buya*” is employed in West Sumatra, particularly among the *Minangkabau* people, to refer to ulama.

¹² “*Guru Pesantren*” is an educator within a *pesantren* who is responsible for teaching students (*santri*).

¹³ GoodStats Data, “Indonesia Menduduki Peringkat Kedua Dengan Populasi Muslim Terbanyak Di Dunia - GoodStats Data,” accessed November 15, 2024, <https://data.goodstats.id/statistic/indonesia-menduduki-peringkat-kedua-dengan-populasi-muslim-terbanyak-di-dunia-HP1S0>.

Affairs (MORA) are two key institutions responsible for managing religious affairs in Indonesia.

MUI itself is one of highest Islamic institutional authorities in Indonesia. Therefore, it consists of *ulama*, *zu'ama*¹⁴, and Muslim scholars who produce *fatwas* for guidance to Muslim society.¹⁵ In light of this, *ulama* has been portrayed as religious authorities that have generally developed into specialized institutions to regulate wider religious life.¹⁶ It is based on claims of religious knowledge in the form of *fatwas*. According to Nathan J. Brown, *fatwa* is part of the scientific interpretation of religious law, which views the phenomena in Muslim society as being interpreted in a frame of Islamic law.¹⁷ Historically speaking, MUI is the body of a religious institute that was established in 1975 on the initiative of the New Order government. In this case, it was developed to control the expression of Islam in the public sphere under the control of the state.¹⁸

Unlike MUI, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) is a government institution that administers religious affairs in the country for the betterment of all religious life. Many people believed that the establishment of MORA on 3rd January 1946, based on Presidential Decree No.1/SD/1946, was aimed at eliminating the 'seven words' in the Jakarta Charter. In addition, the omission of Islamic terms from the 1945 Constitution. Furthermore, this institution serves as what is called the institutional principle, for the sake of the realization of '*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*' (The first principle of *Pancasila*) in public life. Besides, as Ismatu Ropi noted in his book '*Religion and Regulation in Indonesia*', MORA today can be referred to as the '*bureaucratization*' of Islam, in which the way of government has been subordinated to Islamic Affairs.¹⁹

¹⁴ *Zuama* comes from the word *za'im* which means leader or political figure. *Zuama* refers to leaders who have political and social influence, but not necessarily religious expertise like *ulama*.

¹⁵ Syafiq Hasyim, "Fatwas and Democracy: Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI, Indonesian Ulama Council) and Rising Conservatism in Indonesian Islam," *TRaNS: Trans -Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* 8, no. 1 (May 2020): 21–35, <https://doi.org/10.1017/trn.2019.13>.

¹⁶ R. Michael Feener, "Muslim Religious Authority in Modern Asia: Established Patterns and Evolving Profiles," *Asian Journal of Social Science* (Leiden, The Netherlands) 42, no. 5 (2014): 502, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685314-04205002>.

¹⁷ Nathan Brown, "Official Islam in The Arab World: The Contest For Religious Authority," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, January 1, 2017, 8.

¹⁸ Mun'im Sirry, "Fatwas and Their Controversy: The Case of the Council of Indonesian Ulama (MUI)," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 44, no. 1 (2013): 100–117, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463412000641>.

¹⁹ Ismatu Ropi, *Religion and Regulation in Indonesia* (Springer Singapore, 2017), 103, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2827-4>.

Similarly, MUI is also described as a ‘bureaucratization of Islam’ by M.B Hooker, but in its most extreme form.²⁰

However, MORA's authority is more complex than that of MUI, which is legally under the executive branch and acts as an intermediary between the religious community and the state. These institutions use different approaches and paradigms when making decisions within a religious framework. In the case of MUI and MORA, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) represents the Muslim community from “*Islamic groups*” and does not represent a state. Additionally, the two organizations have different authority dynamics when deciding on religious matters. Ultimately, one is based on fatwas and the other on state regulations and policies.

On the one hand, the MUI *fatwa* has a significant influence on the formation and compilation of Islamic law, which encompasses regulations on marriage, inheritance, and endowments.²¹ This has also been stated by Muhammad Khalid Mas'ud, who said that MUI's *fatwa* has a special closeness to the Muslim community.²² Because there are two related elements, namely, law and society. These two elements are directly connected to the *ummah* and have a profound impact on the hearts of Muslims. On the other hand, the primary task of MORA is to administer religious life in accordance with state policy. As a government agency, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) has offices in every province, district, and sub-district to handle matters related to religious affairs, including Muslim marriages, supervising religious education or sermons, *zakat* services, and hajj.²³ These indicators are a state obligation to serve the needs of the Indonesian people who are Muslim.

These two institutions play a significant role in managing the *ummah*, or Muslim society. In fact, those institutions have successfully managed religious life based on *fatwas* and government policies. Firstly, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) has issued various *fatwas* that guide the implementation of Islamic law in Indonesia. As of July 2024, the MUI has issued 147 *fatwas*, covering various fields, including *aqidah*, *ibadah*,

²⁰ Michael B. Hooker, *Indonesian Islam: Social Change through Contemporary Fatāwā*, 1. South Asian ed, Southeast Asia Publications Series (Allen & Unwin, 2007), 60.

²¹ M. B. Hooker, *Indonesian Syariah: Defining a National School of Islamic Law* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008), 8–24.

²² Muhammad Khalid Masud, “The Significance of Istifta’ in the Fatwa Discourse,” *Islamic Studies* 48, no. 3 (2009): 341, 3, <https://doi.org/10.52541/isiri.v48i3.4143>.

²³ Martin Van Bruinessen, “The Governance of Islam in Two Secular Polities: Turkey’s Diyanet and Indonesia’s Ministry of Religious Affairs,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, no. 27 (December 2018): 7, <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejts.5964>.

muamalah, Islamic banking, halal certifications, technology, and others.²⁴ Secondly, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) is responsible for regulating religious policies that have a broad impact on various sectors of life. Based on the data from Satu Data Kemenag, by 2023, 1,163 Minister of Religious Affairs Decrees, 18 Minister of Religious Affairs Regulations, as well as several other types of legal products that support the regulation of religious life, have been issued.²⁵ Both organizations continue to adjust religious regulations and guidelines according to the needs of the people and contemporary challenges.

The dynamics of these authority institutions often exhibit both similarities and differences when they contend groups considered heretical. In the case of handling heresy, MUI could determine the term “heresy” or ‘*sesat*’ and can be accused of being heretical through a *fatwa* made by the ‘*aqidah*’ division of MUI.²⁶ In terms of heresy, what MUI often defines as heresy is *dhalla-yadhillu-dhalala/dhalalah*. This meaning is interpreted as deviating from the truth or heretical from religious guidance. In the course of issuing fatwas on heresy, MUI has divided heresy into several specific groups, which are addressed by commissions in the fields of *aqidah* and religious sects. The fatwas that have a tone of heresy include: (1) the 9th fatwa regarding the Angel Jibril accompanying humans (Lia Eden), (2) the 13th *fatwa* about the *Ahmadiyah* sect, and the 6th *fatwa* of 2016 regarding GAFATAR.²⁷ Meanwhile, the *al-Zaytun* Islamic boarding school was deemed heretical through a decree (*Surat Keputusan*) issued by the research and development commission.

Nonetheless, MORA in this case takes more of a guiding and dialogue approach towards the group are considered heresy. In addition, MORA also involves many parties, such as FKUB (*Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama*)²⁸, to mediate and supervise religious

²⁴ MUI, “DSN-MUI Sahkan Empat *Fatwa* Baru: Upaya Internalisasi Prinsip Syariah Dalam Ekonomi,” accessed January 8, 2025, <https://mui.or.id/baca/berita/dsn-mui-sahkan-empat-fatwa-baru-upaya-internalisasi-prinsip-syariah-dalam-ekonomi>

²⁵ Satudata.kemenag, “Jumlah Produk Hukum Kementerian Agama Yang Diterbitkan,” Satudata Kementerian Agama RI, accessed January 8, 2025, https://satudata.kemenag.go.id/dataset/detail/jumlah-produk-hukum-kementerian-agama-yang-diterbitkan?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

²⁶ MUI, “Ketua MUI Bidang *Fatwa* Sampaikan 10 Kriteria Aliran Sesat,” accessed January 8, 2025, <https://mui.or.id/baca/berita/ketua-mui-bidang-fatwa-sampaikan-10-kriteria-aliran-sesat>.

²⁷ Dimiyati Sajari, “Fatwa MUI Tentang Aliran Sesat Di Indonesia (1976-2010),” *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman* 39, no. 1 (2015): 45–49, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v39i1.38>.

²⁸ FKUB (Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama) is a forum established at the regional level in Indonesia to promote interfaith harmony. FKUBs usually consist of representatives of various religions in Indonesia, such as Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, as well as local religions.

activities that have the potential to disturb public order.²⁹ Unlike the MUI, which uses fatwas as its authority for legitimacy, the MORA uses formal decisions based on the state when dealing with communities that the MUI considers heretical. Some examples of decisions from the Ministry of Religious Affairs include several rulings such as the Instruction of the Minister of Religious Affairs Maftuh Basyuni regarding Lia Eden in 2006, the Joint Decree of Three Ministers including the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) regarding *Ahmadiyah*, and again, the Joint Decree of Three Ministers of Religious Affairs (MORA) regarding GAFATAR. Lastly, there is the open statement of the Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA) in 2023 regarding *al-Zaytun*. Based on these dynamics, both institutions play a role in regulating and navigating a group that is considered heterodox. This has become a distinct dynamic of authority, where their approaches differ from one another, such as a rough approach and a soft approach. The soft approach can be attributed to the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) because it prioritizes assistance and guidance and does not justify something as heretical based on the ‘*constitution*’. Meanwhile, the MUI adopts a rough approach that prioritizes justifying ‘heresy’ that could influence one another based on the decision.

On top of that, this is also stated in a Guideline book ‘*Guidelines for Handling Problematic Religious Movements and Groups in Indonesia*’.³⁰ The guidebook contains indicators, typologies, and impacts of problematic religious movements in Indonesia, identification, management, and forms of handling ‘*aliran sesat*’ by the Directorate General of Islamic Guidance (BIMAS Islam), Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (MORA). Hence, MORA often has a neutral approach towards groups that are considered ‘heretical’. Meanwhile, MUI tends to be more conservative, whose *fatwa* is often used as a tool of persecution by the extreme ones.

It should be noted that the issues of ‘heresy’ or blasphemy against the majority religion often receive a quick public response because these issues tend to be sensitive and disturbing.³¹ In the last few decades, Indonesians have often been shocked by the emergence of several religious sects labelled as heretical or ‘*aliran sesat*’. These sects

²⁹ Kemenag, “Aliran Bab Kesucian, Menag: Kemenag Verifikasi Lapangan dan Ajak Dialog,” <https://kemenag.go.id>, accessed January 20, 2025, <https://kemenag.go.id/pers-rilis/aliran-bab-kesucian-menag-kemenag-verifikasi-lapangan-dan-ajak-dialog-kox72h>.

³⁰ BIMAS Islam, *Pedoman Penanganan Aliran Dan Gerakan Keagamaan Bermasalah Di Indonesia* (2021).

³¹ Peter Richardson et al., “Blasphemy and Persecution: Positioning in an Inter-Religious Discussion,” *Text & Talk* 40, no. 1 (2020): 76, <https://doi.org/10.1515/text-2019-2049>.

include *Ahmadiyah*,³² Lia Eden,³³ GAFATAR,³⁴ and most recently, the activities deemed heretical at the *al-Zaytun*³⁵ Islamic boarding school.³⁶ Moreover, this was legitimized as ‘heretical’ directly by the *fatwa* agency Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). Unlike MUI, which is more reactive, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) responds more moderately and does not immediately condemn heresy. As a regulator, if proven heretical, it will be dealt with firmly. From this, even though Indonesia has adopted Pancasila, which supports diversity and pluralism, religious policies or fatwas often limit tolerance toward minority groups, such as those considered heretical. Additionally, there is a question of whether an approach that justifies “heresy” is effective in maintaining the purity of faith, or whether an approach of dialogue and freedom of belief following human rights principles is more appropriate.

To address this puzzle, this study analyzes the dynamics of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), which can influence the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) toward heretical groups. The case selection for this study includes groups regarded as heretical, such as *Ahmadiyah*, *al-Salamullah* (Lia Eden), GAFATAR, and *Ma’had al-Zaytun*. The selection of these heresy groups serves as an indicator of the positioning comparison between MORA and MUI, measuring the dynamics of authority within each institution regarding the considered heresy groups in Indonesia. Furthermore, this study aims to investigate how each religious authority among Muslims in Indonesia navigates groups considered heretical. Additionally, this often presents an obstacle and dilemma for policies targeting specific groups. This dilemma is reflected in two discourses between religious freedom and public order. Then, there is a discourse regarding how the two authorities interact and influence each other in making decisions regarding heretical sects.

³² *Ahmadiyah* is founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1889, *Ahmadiyah* is a religious movement that emphasizes peace, justice, and moral values. Its followers believe that Ahmad was a prophet after Muhammad, a claim that contradicts mainstream Islamic beliefs.

³³ *Al-Sallamah* is a religious movement led by Lia Eden, who claims to be a prophetess. Emerging in the late 1990s, the group combines Islamic teachings with elements from other religions and emphasizes spiritual awakening. However, its unorthodox beliefs have drawn criticism from mainstream Islamic groups, leading to accusations of heresy against Lia Eden and her followers.

³⁴ GAFATAR, or the Fajar Nusantara Movement, was founded as a continuation of Al-Qiyadah Al-Islamiyah by Ahmad Moshaddeq, Gafatar emerged in 2011 and has been characterized by its syncretic beliefs that blend elements of Islam with teachings from Christianity and Judaism.

³⁵ Pondok *Pesantren al-Zaytun* has faced significant controversy and accusations of heresy within the Indonesian Islamic community due to several key factors. Led by Panji Gumilang, this *pesantren* is criticized for its controversial teachings that diverge from mainstream Islamic doctrines.

³⁶ TEMPO, “Digeruduk Massa Karena Dinilai Sesat, Ini Deretan Kontroversi Ponpes *Al-Zaytun* | Tempo.Co,” 2023, <https://www.tempo.co/politik/digeruduk-massa-karena-dinilai-sesat-ini-deretan-kontroversi-ponpes-Al-Zaytun-176146>.

From this, the MUI has beneficial weight because it is recognized by the state, as stipulated in the constitution, and because Islamic guidance refers to Islamic scholars and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI).³⁷ Some of its *fatwas* are also not entirely a response to MORA's needs. Nonetheless, those institutions have the independent authority to handle it as a “heresy”.³⁸ Conclusively, there is a distinction between MUI and MORA. The position of MORA is neutral among the recognized six religions in Indonesia. However, in terms of internal Islamic affairs or the existence of heretical groups, the position of MUI is not neutral and has the authority to intervene.

1.2 Literature Review

In this literature review, this study adopts three multidimensional aspects of the literature concerning Islamic religious authority, the bureaucratization of Islam, the politics of heresy, as well as studies on MUI and MORA. Through these focal points, it contributes to identifying gaps and enhancing the understanding of how the discursive patterns of Islamic religious institutional authority operate within Islam itself, particularly in addressing heterodoxy.

In recent decades, the topic of religious authority has been a frequently discussed issue within the context of Islam and politics. It has the authority to interpret, enforce, and regulate religious practices in society. There are several related works have been discussed by prominent scholars, particularly on the topics of authority and religion. Wael Hallaq, in his work “*The Impossible State*,” asserts that Islamic religious authority, especially “traditional” authority, is often confronted with the logic of state sovereignty, which is contrary to the principle of *ilahiyyat*.³⁹ Accordingly, significant changes in the era have brought about challenges for religious authorities in accommodating modernization. In this regard, Asad (2003), from his perspective as a Muslim anthropologist, offers a new perspective that religious authority has transformed in the

³⁷ MUI in its journey often gets support from the government both in sub-regional and national level. I argue that although MUI is not part of the binding rules in the legislation system in Indonesia, but MUI's *fatwa* can influence the policies of government institutions. Yeni Salma Barlinti in her dissertation as cited the position of DSN MUI *fatwa* (*fatwa* of National Sharia Council of Indonesian Ulama Council) is a binding positive law. Consequently, the existence of the *fatwa* is often legitimized through legislation by the government so that it must be obeyed as part of *Sharia*.

³⁸ Bruinessen, “The Governance of Islam in Two Secular Polities,” 7.

³⁹ Wael B. Hallaq, *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament*, Paperback edition (Columbia University Press, 2014).

context of modernity and secularization.⁴⁰ This is reinforced by Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori (1996) in their monumental work namely “*Muslim Politics*,” which argues that religious authority has undergone significant transformation.⁴¹ Furthermore, the notion of “*Muslim Politics*” implies a contestation between various interpretations of symbols and the control of religious institutions. In addition, the identification of these symbols is carried out by religious authorities that were previously centralized in traditional individuals (*ulama*) and have become more distributed, involving various sectors, including religious institutions or religious bureaucracy.

Regarding Islamic bureaucracy, as analyzed by Malika Zeghal (1996) in “*Gardiens de l'Islam*”, it functions as a state mechanism to control and direct religious discourse.⁴² Again, Talal Asad (1993) also elaborated on the context of bureaucracy in relation to the concept of ‘Modern Islam’.⁴³ This term signifies that the modern era is marked by Islamic bureaucracy. Islamic bureaucracy then becomes a state interest for channeling power. Contemporarily, this is similarly explained in the article “*Benign bureaucracies? Religious affairs ministries as institutions of political control*” by Ani Sarkissian & Ann Marie Wainscott, which confirms that ministries of religious affairs are strategic tools for controlling religion, opposition, and political legitimacy.⁴⁴ The primary argument of this study is that ministries are not “*soft bureaucracies*” but rather influential institutions that aid those in power in maintaining their authority through policy.

Accordingly, the findings from Dominik M. Müller and Kerstin Steiner offer a fresh perspective on how religious decisions are formalized, as well as the dual role of the state in accommodating the interests of both religion and the state, thereby achieving balance.⁴⁵ Müller's theory, which supports the findings of this study, explains how the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) has adopted a hybrid approach in handling cases

⁴⁰ Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford University Press, 2003), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780804783095>.

⁴¹ Dale F. Eickelman et al., *Muslim Politics* (Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁴² Maurice Borrmans, Malika Zeghal, *Gardiens de l'Islam (Les Oulémas d'al-Azhar dans l'Égypte contemporaine)*. Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, Paris, 1996, Persée - Portail des revues scientifiques en SHS, 1998, https://www.persee.fr/doc/bcai_0259-7373_1998_num_14_1_969_t1_0123_0000_1.

⁴³ Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), <https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/1/monograph/book/16014>.

⁴⁴ Ani Sarkissian and Ann Marie and Wainscott, “Benign Bureaucracies? Religious Affairs Ministries as Institutions of Political Control,” *Democratization* 31, no. 6 (2024): 1160–82, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2023.2293147>.

⁴⁵ Dominik M. Müller and Kerstin Steiner, “The Bureaucratization of Islam in Southeast Asia: Transdisciplinary Perspectives,” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 37, no. 1 (2018): 3–26, <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810341803700101>.

of heterodoxy to preserve orthodoxy.⁴⁶ In the context of this research, the case illustrates how the central role of the state or bureaucracy has evolved into a hybrid agent targeting deviant or heretical groups. This is aligning state parameters with *Sharia* indicators aimed at protecting nationalism and religion.

Nevertheless, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) plays an essential role as a state institution in providing religious guidance in Indonesia. There are several studies on MORA that have been discussed. For instance, Syafiq Hasyim and Norshahril Saat discuss the dynamics of MORA under the leadership of Joko Widodo. Specifically, the article highlights the genealogy of MORA's history, from post-independence Indonesia to Jokowi's era, which is facing numerous dynamics of religious contestation.⁴⁷ However, Azra's work in "*The Origins of Islamic Reformists in Southeast Asia*" focuses on MORA, which utilizes its regulatory power to control religious activities.⁴⁸ Likewise, Azra (2004) demonstrates how the Indonesian religious bureaucracy strives to accommodate diverse interpretations of Islam. Unlike Muller's argument, the state, in relation to the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), plays a role as a buffer to accommodate the intersection of religious and state political policies.⁴⁹ Hence, the narrative about religious actors can be traced through the role of religious scholars in negotiating a teaching considered pure in a form of policy.

Compared to MORA, MUI has significant legitimacy in determining religious guidance. In the context of MUI's authority, *fatwas* then became an essential instrument to legitimize as a heresy. Islamic law academics and interdisciplinary scholars have proposed several approaches regarding the authority of an *ulama* institution and the authority of religious truth. Syafiq Hasyim (2015) in his study on the MUI and pluralism demonstrates how controversial fatwas serve not only as religious guidance. Nevertheless, it also serves as a political instruments that shape public discourse and legitimize conservative views, thereby restricting religious freedom.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, Muhammad Nur Ichwan (2013) reinforces this argument by analyzing how the MUI uses

⁴⁶ Dominik M. Müller, "Hybrid Pathways to Orthodoxy in Brunei Darussalam: Bureaucratized Exorcism, Scientisation and the Mainstreaming of Deviant-Declared Practices," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 37, no. 1 (2018): 141–83, <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810341803700106>.

⁴⁷ Syafiq Hasyim and Norshahril Saat, *Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs under Joko Widodo*, with Syafiq Hasyim and Norshahril Saat (ISEAS Publishing, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1355/9789814951241>.

⁴⁸ Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern "Ulam?" in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (University of Hawaii Press, 2004).

⁴⁹ Müller, "Hybrid Pathways to Orthodoxy in Brunei Darussalam," 141.

⁵⁰ Syafiq Hasyim, *The Council of Indonesian Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) and Religious Freedom*, 2011.

its religious authority to promote the re-Islamization of Indonesia through controversial fatwas, reflecting the contestation of authority between various Islamic groups and tensions with democratic values.⁵¹

Additionally, Muhammad Khalid Masud in “*Islamic Legal Interpretation*” demonstrated how the process of issuing fatwas involves complex negotiations between traditional religious authorities, contemporary demands, and political pressures.⁵² This is a significant and robust finding regarding the negotiation process. The latest studies by Martin Van Bruinessen (2013) also explain the legitimacy of the MUI in issuing fatwas to establish orthodox boundaries.⁵³ Related to this thesis, an article by Afif Pasuni (2018) presents a discussion that negotiates Islam, situated at the intersection between *fatwa* and state policy.⁵⁴ The results of the study show that the role of the MUI is not limited to responding, but also shapes the religious discourse polemic in Indonesia.

Accordingly, *fatwas* are not only legal instruments but also political instruments that define the boundaries of orthodoxy. Nevertheless, the concept of political heresy refers to a political process in which the boundaries between orthodoxy and heterodoxy are deliberately constructed, maintained, and defended. Several pieces of literature and theories have been discussed by previous researchers, especially about the discourse of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Shabab Ahmed (2016) in “*What is Islam?*” interestingly criticizes all forms of rigid approaches, particularly in defining orthodox Islam.⁵⁵ He argues that the history of Islam has always included a wide range of interpretations that are not dichotomized into orthodoxy and heterodoxy. In contrast, Masuzawa (2005) rejects this and offers a genealogical perspective on how the category of heresy and orthodoxy developed as a result of colonialism and modernization.⁵⁶ Additionally, the works by Zezen Zainal Mutaqin (2014) in “*Penghayat, orthodoxy and the legal politics of the state*” also add to the scholarly knowledge about the discourse of orthodoxy and

⁵¹ Moch Nur Ichwan, “Official Ulama And The Politics Of Re-Islamization: The Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama, Shar??atization And Contested Authority In Post-New Order Aceh,” *Journal Of Islamic Studies* 22, No. 2 (2011): 183–214.

⁵² Muhammad Khalid Masud et al., *Islamic Legal Interpretation: Muftis and Their Fatwas* (Harvard University Press, 2013).

⁵³ Martin van Bruinessen, ed., *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the “Conservative Turn”* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013).

⁵⁴ Afif Pasuni, “Negotiating Statist Islam: Fatwa and State Policy in Singapore,” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 37, no. 1 (2018): 57, <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810341803700103>.

⁵⁵ Shahab Ahmed, *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton University Press, 2016).

⁵⁶ Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (University of Chicago Press, 2005), <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/I/bo3534198.html>.

heterodoxy, how *Sundanese* religion (heterodoxy) faces dynamics when dealing with state officials who side with orthodoxy.⁵⁷ Conversely, this influenced the way Islamic religious authorities understood and responded to internal differences.

Furthermore, Khaled Abou el Fadl (2001) in “*Speaking in God’s Name*” provides a comprehensive understanding of how religious authorities possess numerous tools to enforce orthodoxy.⁵⁸ Moreover, Fadl developed a theory of authority related to power in interpretation in the context of “*Being in Authority and Being an Authority*”. ‘Being in Authority’ refers to formal institutions or positions that are binding. In this case, including the state government and religious ministries. Meanwhile, ‘Being an Authority’ is more often addressed to individuals, more specifically to *ulama* who have knowledge, expertise, and whose views are recognized. Thus, Khaled Abou Fadl's theory provides a valuable perspective on the relationship between religious authority and state authority, enriching the discourse of this research.

In light of this, many literature sources have also explained the relationship between the *ulama* institution and groups considered heretical. This process is alluded to in Jacqueline Hicks’s article, “*Heresy and authority: understanding the turn against Ahmadiyah in Indonesia*,” as a channelling of the legitimacy of state authority towards society to smooth out its political policies.⁵⁹ Based on Hicks' research, she is more focused on understanding authority and heresy, as exemplified in the *Ahmadiyah* case study.

Based on this extensive literature review of the discourse on religious authorities, the bureaucratization of Islam, and the politics of heresy, a significant gap remains unexplored in the literature. One of them is how the MUI and MORA only focus on a few cases, not comprehensively, especially those that have occurred in Indonesia. It is because there are hundreds of groups deemed as heretics, not explaining and justifying all the cases according to those religious institutions’ acts. By clarifying the gaps in this study, it can provide insight into the role of religious institutions in channeling their authority and power towards groups that are considered heretical.

⁵⁷ Zezen Zaenal Mutaqin, “Penghayat, Orthodoxy and the Legal Politics of the State: The Survival of Agama Djawa Sunda (Madraism) in Indonesia,” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 42, no. 122 (2014): 13–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2014.870771>.

⁵⁸ Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God’s Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* (Oneworld Publications, 2001).

⁵⁹ Jacqueline Hicks, “Heresy and Authority: Understanding the Turn against Ahmadiyah in Indonesia,” *South East Asia Research* 22, no. 3 (2014): 321–39, <https://doi.org/10.5367/sear.2014.0216>.

1.3 Research Questions

As briefly indicated above, this research aims to analyze the phenomenon of heresy by focusing on the dynamics between MORA and MUI over time in the acquisition of heresy. This study seeks to answer *how the relationship between MORA and MUI is handled toward heretical groups? Are there any influences on each other's the way of handling these groups?*

1.4 Research Significance

This research discusses how the dynamics of religious authority, specifically the state civil society organization (MUI), can influence the state (Ministry of Religious Affairs) in addressing heresy or '*aliran sesat*' in Indonesia. This research has limitations, mainly because it does not broadly discuss all the past and contemporary heretical groups that have emerged in Indonesia. However, it focuses more on the dynamics of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) in influencing the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) 's policy through several case study selections. Specifically, the heresy group samples discussed in this research are listed in the table below.

Table 1.1 Explanation of the dynamics of MUI and MORA in addressing heresy

Groups	Year	<i>Fatwa</i>	Policy
<i>Ahmadiyah</i>	1925	<i>Fatwa</i> MUI 1980 and <i>Fatwa</i> MUI NOMOR 11/MUNAS VII/MUI/15/2005	Joint Ministerial Decree (SKB 3 Menteri) Number 3 of 2008.
<i>al-Salamullah (Lia Eden)</i>	2009	<i>Fatwa</i> MUI Nomor: Kep-768/MUI/XII/1997	Minister of Religious Affair (MORA) (Maftuh Basyuni) declared <i>al-Salamullah</i> or 'Lia Eden' as a heretic.
GAFATAR	2012 and '2015	<i>Fatwa</i> MUI NOMOR 6 TAHUN 2016	Joint Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs, Attorney General, and Minister of Home Affairs Number 93 of 2016, Number KEP-

			043/A/JA/02/2016, Number 223-836 of 2016
<i>al-Zaytun</i>	2002 and 2023	The findings by Commission of Research of MUI declared <i>al-Zaytun</i> through decree or SK (<i>Surat Keputusan</i>)	Stop temporary the Islamic Boarding School activity

Some of the above samples still have persecution and persecution against groups that are considered heretical. As in the case of *Ahmadiyah*, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) implements a policy of religious moderation, but there is still persecution, hatred, and persecution toward those considered heretics. Thus, the dynamics of state authority towards groups regarded as heretical remain ambiguous.⁶⁰ It is clear that table 1, which presents the various policies of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and *the fatwa* of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), varies. My hypothesis regarding the results of this research is that the Ministry of Religious Affairs' (MORA) approach results in a more cautious attitude towards heresy in Indonesia. Furthermore, MORA is more focused on justification and more reactive to the groups that are considered to deviate from mainstream Islamic teachings. As a regulator, MORA is positioned to protect religious freedom while maintaining social order and religious harmony.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

Theoretically, this thesis draws on the theoretical frameworks of Foucault and Bourdieu. By applying Foucault's notion, it is possible to analyze how far the relations of power and domination, particularly with decisions made by Islamic authority institutions, extend to heresy. Moreover, it is related to power relations how the organization of authority works. This study proposes variables for addressing heresy as a realm of institutional dynamics to strengthen influence among Muslims, as well as to spread that influence. According to Foucault, power must be exercised to play a role in relations between individuals or groups. Especially in the group aspect, Foucault takes a sample of the Christian Church

⁶⁰ Syamsul Haq, "Ambiguity in the Implementation of Religious Moderation on Ahmadiyah and Shi'a Sects in Indonesia" *Journal of Religious Policy* 3, no. 1 (June 30, 2024): 1.

institution, which he calls ‘the pastoral power’. Its authority is too broad in managing many things, even though it is not that of a prince, a magistrate, a prophet, a fortune-teller, a benefactor, an educationalist, and so forth. Still, as only a pastor, it forms a special scheme of power.⁶¹

On the aspect of knowledge acquisition, Foucault defines power in relation to knowledge, and knowledge claimed as ‘true’ is produced and reinforced through power. In relation to this, the author argues that both engage in authority regarding heresy and claim to have authoritative knowledge in determining what is considered legitimate and heretical. Accordingly, this research also employs Foucault’s framework, referred to as ‘governmentalization’.⁶² In turn, a regime becomes obsessive in regulating and controlling the behaviour of religious people, including all aspects of religious life. Foucault’s framework is based on the logic of the power of government, which makes citizens subject to the state’s domination in regulating the behaviour of society in detail. It is clear that the role of government towards religion and religious activity is central and pervasive. In this case, the state acts as a regulator with the aim of homogenizing a similar religion that it wants to implement throughout society.⁶³ For this reason, this effort is often an extension of the state to regulate cultural differences in the name of identity.

Then, this is similarly Bourdieu’s ‘symbolic power’. In this perspective, religion emerges as essential to legitimizing, reinforcing, and reproducing social hierarchies and political formations. Accordingly to Foucault, Bourdieu also takes the Church as an example that gives divine sanction and legitimacy to the existing socio-economic system, while at the same time creating a religious bureaucracy. Societally, there is a system of structures that represent religion and various practices in the reproduction of social order. Bourdieu also refers to it as a ‘monopoly of sacred capital’. Because of this monopoly, the competition for religious power has a specific nature; the fact is that what is at stake is the monopoly on the exercise of legitimate power to transform. The practices and world of the laity are imposed and instilled in them a particular religious habitus.

In light of these, MUI with its status as the highest authority institution in issuing *fatwas*. On the other hand, MORA is an institution that regulates religious policy in

⁶¹ Michel Foucault, *Power / Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972 - 1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (Pantheon Books, 1981), 132–33.

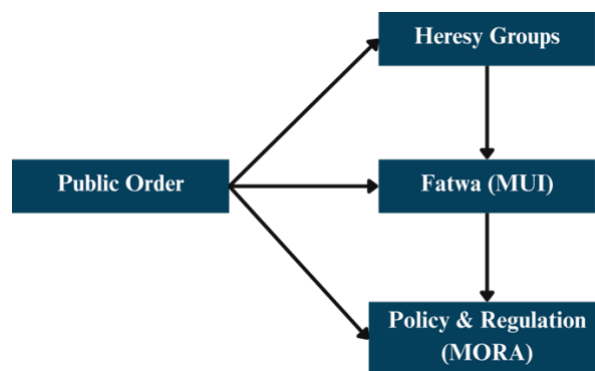
⁶² Michel Foucault et al., eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality: With Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault* (University of Chicago Press, 1991), 87–104.

⁶³ Ropi, *Religion and Regulation in Indonesia* (Springer Singapore, 2017), 141.

Indonesia. Both influence one another to control the definition of religious truth, maintain the legitimacy of what is considered legitimate, and justify what is heretical. At this point, the policy formulation process will be an intervening variable in this study. It follows a dependent variable, namely the policy from MORA and the *fatwa* from MUI. However, it precedes the dependent variable, which is the group's perception of acquiring it as a heresy. It follows that the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) has a significant influence on the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) to take a stance similar to MUI's position against heresy.

It is understood that heresy is a phenomenon that triggers a response from both institutions, as well as a result of great attention from the public.⁶⁴ The independent variables that these institutions navigate are considered heretical groups through decisions or policies. MUI's *fatwa* acts as a normative instrument that provides theological legitimacy, which is regarded as heretical. Meanwhile, MORA includes regulatory and assistance policy approaches that focus on managing harmony. The independent variable is the groups justified as heresy by MUI, which includes (*Ahmadiyah*, *al-Salamullah* (Lia Eden), GAFATAR, and *al-Zaytun*). Here is a depiction of my argument in Figure 1 to represent the causal relationship.

Figure 1.1 Theoretical framework for explaining the dynamics of Islamic Religious authority between MUI and MORA towards heresy groups



Based on this, my hypothesis is that the dynamics of religious institutional authority among Indonesian Muslims in responding to the phenomenon of heresy are always consistent. This could result in a similar outcome in policy decisions due to the

⁶⁴ Richardson et al., "Blasphemy and Persecution," 76.

influence of Islamic society organizations. Additionally, this depends on government policies, specifically the Ministry of Religious Affairs' (MORA) stance towards MUI *fatwas* or decisions. As a result, these policymakers take part in navigating and determining whether something is heresy or not in an indirect way.

1.6 Research Methodology

Methodically, this research uses a qualitative method by comparing the two largest Islamic religious institutions in defining heresy. More specifically, how the highest authority, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), can influence the state. This research aims to analyze the phenomenon of heresy by focusing on the influence of MUI on the policy of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). In qualitative research, data collection is conducted through observation, interviews, and document analysis to facilitate the analysis and interpretation of the data.⁶⁵

Moreover, it is divided into two parts of data collection, which are often called primary and secondary. Firstly, the primary data source in this research was interviewing with several relevant sources from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). In addition, it is collecting policy documents and regulations related to heresy. Further, similar data also be collected through interviews at the MORA and MUI institution, particularly in the position of the former of Secretary General of MORA 2008-2014, the former of Minister of Religious Affairs 2014-2019, the Sub-Directorate in Understanding of Islam and Managing Conflict (BIMAS Islam), and Head of Assessment, Research and Development Commission of the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI). Not only that, this thesis also collects *fatwa* manuscripts on '*aliran sesat*' or heresy as well as documents on law or policy from MORA regarding heresy groups.

The field research was conducted from May until June, collecting oral and written data from four representatives in MUI and MORA. Several informants who were interviewed face-to-face by consent were Dedi Slamet Riyadi, M.Ag, (Assoc) Prof. Firdaus Syam, Ph.D., Dr. (H.C) Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, and Bahrul Hayat, Ph.D. The selection of informants aims to obtain a comprehensive view of the groups considered heretical in Indonesia over the past two decades. Some samples in this research include *fatwas* issued by MUI and policies implemented by MORA in response to the

⁶⁵ John W Creswell and J David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 2018, 291–95.

phenomenon. Secondary data in this research are collected from previous related research literature, specifically on state and religion, religious authority, MUI, MORA, and politics related to heresy group cases.

1.7. Case Selection

In this thesis, the researcher examined four cases in the context of considering heretical sects or problematic groups in Indonesia. Studies of heretical sects in Indonesia have identified 250 sects, with 50 sects developing in Java.⁶⁶ In fact, heretical or problematic sects that emerge in public can disrupt social harmony. It is essential to note that the study of heresy encompasses a diverse range of variations, including local belief systems and cross-regional heretical groups with a global scope. Also, communities or groups that emerge due to individual recognition or acknowledgement within a community that deviates from established religious teachings. What the author offers from this study is a number of groups justified as heretics by mainstream Muslim groups, especially by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). Some examples of heretical groups that are listed include *Ahmadiyah*, *al-Salamullah* (Lia Eden), GAFATAR, and *al-Zaytun*. Researchers had specific reasons for selecting these groups, particularly in terms of aspects that had previously caused public concern and controversy in the last decades.

The author divides them into two decades: the 2000s and the 2020s. The early 2000s were marked by the emergence of a new international religious movement, *Ahmadiyah*. At the same time, a small community emerged that attracted public and national attention, notably the rise of the *al-Salamullah* religious movement led by Lia Aminuddin, also known as Lia Eden. In the 2010s–2020s, an ideological group (GAFATAR) and *Ma'had* (al-Zaytun) emerged, whose internal activities were deemed deviant. These issues became a national controversy, prompting the state and civil society organizations to take direct action to address the problem. From the various cross-temporal case groups, the author consistently selected several samples to test the authority or jurisdiction of state policies (MORA) based on decisions by civil society organizations (MUI). More specifically, the emergence of heretical sects led the MUI to exercise its authority, driven by public pressure, to influence the government to issue regulations. In relation to this study, there is a direct correlation with the dynamic of authority

⁶⁶ BIMAS Islam, *Pedoman Penanganan Aliran Dan Gerakan Keagamaan Bermasalah Di Indonesia*.

influencing other parties to issue a decision from a group of religious scholars (*Ulama*), due to the existence of heretical groups that have historically existed in Indonesia.

1.8 Thesis Structure

This thesis consists of five chapters, ranging from the introduction to the conclusion. The Introduction chapter outlines several subsections that provide an introduction to the responses of state and civil society organizations to heretical movements in Indonesia. Chapter I also provides an overview of the research background, methodology, theoretical framework, literature review, research significance, case selection, and this section (thesis structure). This is to facilitate the reader's understanding of the thesis structure and consistency with the overall chapter.

In Chapter II, the researcher also discusses the previous chapter in more detail, particularly in terms of the historical context between the two institutions: the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). The writer divides this into two phases or periods known as the Old Order (*Orde Lama*) and the New Order (*Orde Baru*). In the historical context of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), the post-independence era has been added to enrich the complexity of the Ministry's historical background. This aims to provide a deeper understanding of the roles, functions, and objectives of both institutions, as well as the reasons for their establishment. Additionally, this makes it easier to understand how the initial mechanisms of such an authority operated in the past and in the contemporary era, which is characterized by dynamic changes.

Chapter III provides a detailed explanation of how these two authoritative institutions fulfil their roles as servants of religion and the state. I divide this into two parts: the capacity of the institutions and how the authorities operate within each institution. MORA adopts a binding policy approach, regulated by the constitution and laws, while MUI issues internal decisions that also include *fatwas*. Ultimately, this chapter examines how these two authoritative institutions exercise their power and authority in addressing groups deemed heretical or problematic. Additionally, the MUI has the most significant influence in guiding the public through a *fatwa* to issue a policy from MORA.

Chapter IV provides a detailed explanation consisting of findings and discussion. The findings section emphasizes power and authority, namely the authority of religious scholars (*ulama*) in navigating public perception to influence policy. In addition, this section presents the results of interviews with several informants, including experts, officials, former officials, and religious scholars, who represent the era of government, especially MORA and MUI. In the discussion section, the author explains how they attempt to contextualise the findings from field research and supporting theories and scholarly writings. Besides, this section provides answers to the research questions posed in this thesis.

Lastly, the conclusion section in Chapter V summarizes the key aspects of this research journey and the limitation of this thesis. The author summarizes the key points from chapters I, II, III, and IV, related to the dynamics of authority between two institutions regarding heretical movements. This is intended to help readers understand the overall content of this thesis in a concise format.

CHAPTER II

THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN RELIGIOUS GOVERNANCE: HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY TOWARD HERETICAL GROUPS

2.1 Overview

The establishment of the two highest religious authority institutions in Indonesia can be traced through their history of development. MORA was the first state organization to be established in the early post-independence era, in 1946. Although MORA was already established during its journey, it was also established in the Dutch and Japanese colonial eras.⁶⁷ During the Dutch colonial period, an administrative system was established to oversee Islamic Education and the Hajj under the auspices of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Additionally, religious courts under the Ministry of Justice or *the Department of Justice* and *the Office for Dutch Affairs*, which advised the Dutch to deal with religious matters (1889-1942). Interestingly, there is an office, namely the *Kantoor voor Indlandsche Zaken* (KIZ), which is a research institute that focuses on research related to Islam in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, the Japanese colonial government (1942-1945) changed the name of the department into an institution called Islamic Affairs, which included a council of Muslim organizations. This was an attempt to gain war propaganda support from Muslim leaders.⁶⁸ Then, the abolition of the *Kantoor voor Indlandsche Zaken* (KIZ) was a policy directly implemented by the Japanese government, which replaced it with a Religious Affairs Office (KUA) or *Shumubu*. *Shumubu* was the structure of the Japanese government (*Gunseikanbu*) during the occupation of Indonesia. Meanwhile, within the scope of the regions, there were *Shumuka*, which were smaller units or offices at the regional level, that functioned as the implementation of *Shumubu* policies at the local level. This was done so that the Japanese government could oversee religious affairs in

⁶⁷ Yüksel Sezgin and Mirjam Künkler, "Regulation of 'Religion' and the 'Religious': The Politics of Judicialization and Bureaucratization in India and Indonesia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56, no. 2 (2014): 451, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417514000103>.

⁶⁸ Muhamad Ali, "Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama), Indonesia," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, by Muhamad Ali (Oxford University Press, 2023), 1–2, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.1206>.

Indonesia as well as the Muslim leader movement in Indonesia.⁶⁹ In post-independence Indonesia (1945), the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) was established, and the legalization of the official establishment of a special Ministry that takes care of the majority of Muslims was carried out when the KNIP plenary session related to the proposal to establish the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) in 1946.

Meanwhile, MUI, from its historical trajectory, is a social organization established during the New Order era in 1975. Just as the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) was established during the Soekarno era, the MUI is a legacy of Soeharto, who was responsible for establishing and sponsoring the establishment of the MUI in 1975. The authority of the state in supporting the establishment of civil society organizations is also demonstrated by the Ministry of Home Affairs' instruction to local governments to prioritize the establishment of *ulama* councils in each region nationwide. Fascinatingly, one of the preparatory committees for the National Conference of *Ulama* Councils was also developed by a senior official of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) named Kafrawi Ridwan. Henceforth, the process of developing and establishing the council is progressing well, as a relationship between *the ulama* and umara is being fostered.

In point of fact, based on Syafiq Hasyim in his book entitled *"The Shariatization of Indonesia: The Politics of the Council of Indonesian Ulama"*, the background of the establishment of MUI is that there is a tendency among many Muslims in Indonesia to want to '*shariatize*' people's lives. Also, it makes Islam the fundamental identity of the country because of the historical part of the largest Islamic majority in the world.⁷⁰ It differs from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), which oversees the administration and bureaucracy of religion in Indonesia, including marriage, religious instruction, Islamic school education, and Hajj. However, MUI was formed because Muslim society makes religion the paramount fundamental need that is inherent, so it needs an institution of *ulama* that can answer the challenges of the times and guide the behaviour of daily life. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) lacks such authority, which is limited to formulating policies and rules. Even though from time to time, there are *ulama* who are part of the institution of religious affairs.

⁶⁹ Based on the Book *Sejarah Hidup K.H. A. Wahid Hasjim*, it is explained that in each region of the Karesidenan, since April 1, 1944, a Religious Office (Shumuka) was established, and the Government essentially used the heads and Muslim leaders and ulama with great influence to bend the knee in March 1942.

⁷⁰ Syafiq Hasyim, *The Shariatization of Indonesia: The Politics of the Council of Indonesian Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI)*, Studies in Islamic Law and Society, vol. 52 (Brill, 2023), 44.

Along the establishment, comparing the historical context between the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), the founding years of both organizations are a little too far apart. The gap between the development of these organizations is about three decades, from 1946 to 1975. Hence, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) is one of the oldest compared to the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). In fact, despite the distance, both organizations were successfully developed and established by state authorities from two different periods, namely the old order and the new order. This chapter discusses the history of both MORA and MUI throughout history, along with the heretical groups and religious authority narratives that have emerged in Indonesia.

2.2 The History of the Establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA)

In this section, the author divide it into three phases or eras. MORA, since its establishment, has had three phases, following post-independence from the Dutch and Japanese colonial periods. After independence, Indonesia officially established an independent ministry that bureaucratized and served religions, not just Islam. The dynamics of the ministry are illustrated in history, especially after Indonesia's independence, with the 'Old Order' during the Soekarno era, the transitional period known as the 'New Order' under Soeharto, and the current contemporary period of Reformation and Development. This is described in three sections of time, and the leadership of the ruling regime and ministers.

2.2.1 Post-Independence Period of the Republic of Indonesia (1945-1966)

Historically speaking, the notion of establishing the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) was Mohammad Yamin's idea, which was put forward during the deliberation of the Indonesian Independence Investigation Board on July 11, 1944.⁷¹ According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs' website, it was explained that this background led Mohammad Yamin to propose that guarantees for the Islamic religion were insufficient with the establishment of the High Court.⁷² Shortly, an institution is needed that can accommodate the will of the people and

⁷¹ Ali, "Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama), Indonesia," 1.

⁷² Kemenag, "Sejarah," <https://kemenag.go.id>, accessed April 11, 2025, <https://kemenag.go.id/profil/sejarah>.

Islamic affairs. For example, the establishment of houses of worship, *waqf*, hajj, and marriage. Thus, all of these must be taken care of by a special ministry, known as the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA).

Before its establishment, as described in the book “*Sedjarah Hidup K.H.A Wahid Hasjim dan Karangan Tersiar*”, it is explained that there was administrative confusion regarding the concept of the separation between state and religion. On the one hand, this was because the state at that time was still in a dilemma in determining the separation between religion and the state. On the other hand, in practice, religious values are still necessary and refute the theory of secularism. Therefore, Wahid Hasyim also explained in his book that during the period after independence, religious affairs were often intertwined with the problems of every ministry.⁷³

Thus, issues of religious affairs could not be mixed in with general state issues, and there was a need for a separate department to focus on resolving religious issues within the national scope. Following the issuance of the previous proposal, the formation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) was discussed at the plenary session of the Central Indonesian National Committee (KNIP), which was part of the Indonesian Parliament from 1945 to 1950. The session was attended by 224 members, consisting of 50 Javanese (delegates from the regional National Committees).

KNIP Chairman Sutan Sjahrir chaired the session, which had an agenda that included discussing the report of the KNIP Working Committee (BP) and the formation of a new core structure and roadmap for the course of government. In the plenary session, the formation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) was submitted by the KNIP of the Banyumas Prefecture, namely K.H. Abu Dardiri, K.H.M. Saleh Suaidy, and M. Sukoso Wirjosaputro. Interestingly, these members were part of the Masyumi party delegation. The proposal to form a Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) also received approval from internal Masumi party members such as Mohammad Natsir, Dr. Muwardi, Dr. Marzuki Mahdi, and M. Kartosudarmo.

⁷³ Haji Aboebakar Atjeh, *Sedjarah Hidup K.H.A. Wahid Hasjim Dan Karangan Tersiar* (Panitia Buku Peringatan, 1957), 1.

The process of determining the decision took place quickly and was determined by acclamation. This was because the establishment was already supported by Soekarno and Mohammad Hatta, who at that time signalled their agreement regarding the idea of forming a Ministry that manage of religions. Thus, the establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) was established during the first Parliamentary Cabinet period. The establishment was from the Sjahrir II Cabinet stipulated by Government Stipulation No.1 / s.d. dated January 3, 1946 (29 Muharram 1365 H) which reads; President of the Republic of Indonesia, Considering: the proposal of the Prime Minister and the Central National Committee Working Board, decided: To establish the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). The announcement of the establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs at that time was broadcast by the government through *Radio Republik Indonesia* (RRI). Simultaneously, the appointment of Haji Mohammad Rasjidi as the First Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA) was made by President Soekarno.⁷⁴

As a matter of fact, the establishment of the institution was a consolation prize for supporters of political Islam in Indonesia. Some Muslim leaders at that time were disappointed with Soekarno-Hatta and other Indonesia's founding fathers because they refused to include the words “with the obligation to implement Islamic law” after “Belief in One God”, which is the first principle of *Pancasila*.⁷⁵ Therefore, this ministry model is the efforts of predecessors of religious leaders who made a middle path between the discourses of separating religion from the state. Rather than a separation, the emergence of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) is a solution to the application of the theory of unity between religion and the country.

⁷⁴ Kemenag, “Sejarah.”

⁷⁵ The Jakarta Post, “Religious Affairs Ministry: White Elephant or Political Necessity? - Opinion,” The Jakarta Post, accessed April 11, 2025, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2016/06/23/religious-affairs-ministry-white-elephant-or-political-necessity.html>.

2.2.2 New Order Period (1966-1998)

The New Order period marked the end of the Soekarno regime, which Soeharto replaced.⁷⁶ The dynamics of the transition of power were also characterized by political conflict between the Indonesian National Army (TNI) and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Amidst the frenzy of the 30 September Movement by the Indonesian Communist Party, Soeharto took full control of the Army and was the new holder of power. In this new order, conflicts began to arise where Islam witnessed the dissolution of communism in Indonesia. Consequently, this affected people's lives in many aspects such as politics, education, and religion.⁷⁷ The relationship between Islam and the New Order can be examined as lasting approximately three decades, from 1966 to 1998.

In the field of religion, there was a strengthening of the relationship between religion (especially Islam) and the state after the rebellion by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). In the early days of Soeharto's leadership, he appointed Mohammad Dachlan as Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA). Shortly, some of his policies were to reconcile religious communities after the G30S PKI riots. In the still-tense atmosphere, Mohammad Dachlan often hosted interfaith meetings from various religions. This was aimed at minimizing conflict, and also so that propaganda was not carried out with the aim of increasing the number of people, but only to deepen the understanding of each religion.⁷⁸

Interestingly, the mid-New Order era was also characterized by major changes in the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and a special emphasis on improving the quality of religion, particularly in the 1970s. If the 'old order' period focused on the establishment and development of institutions, in the new order, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) itself focused on building and modernizing institutions. One of them focused on strengthening education and promoting religious harmony.

⁷⁶ The New Order period itself was a self-naming of Soeharto's leadership that marked a new era and replaced the old one. In addition, Soekarno never declared the name of his leadership period. Both the old order and the new order were regime names that were carried out since Soeharto's leadership.

⁷⁷ Luci Karmiati, "Analisis Islam Pada Masa Orde Baru Tahun 1966-1998," *Tanjak: Sejarah Dan Peradaban Islam* 3, no. 1 (January 31, 2023): 81, <https://doi.org/10.19109/tanjak.v3i1.18183>.

⁷⁸ Azyumardi Azra and Saiful Umam, *Menteri-Menteri Agama RI: biografi sosial-politik* (Diterbitkan atas kerjasama Indonesian-Netherlands Cooperation in Islamic Studies (INIS), Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat [i.e. Masyarakat] (PPIM), Badan Litbang Agama, Departemen [i.e. Departemen] Agama RI, 1998), 259–60.

In the field of education, the successes of Islamic Education during the New Order cannot be separated from the role of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) in reforming education. The achievements include: (1) religious education from elementary to university level, (2) *Madrasahs* and public schools have equal status. Additionally, (3) Islamic boarding schools received attention through subsidies and guidance. (4) the establishment of MAN PK (Special Program), (5) postgraduate education for IAIN lecturers both at home and abroad, or popularly known as joint cooperation. The ministerial figure who contributed at that time was A. Mukti Ali. However, Mukti Ali led the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), and his various policies followed from the framework of the position of religion in Pancasila and the role of religion in the modernisation agenda of the New Order.

Modernization was the main focus in the structural reform of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) in solving various religious problems in Indonesia. In his early period, Mukti Ali paid great attention to efforts to bring Muslims closer to the new order regime. In addition to Islamic education, several important policies issued by Mukti Ali included efforts to maintain the spirit of harmony between religious communities.⁷⁹ In his capacity as minister, he tried to foster harmony between religions and religious communities with a concept he understood, namely '*agree in disagreement*.'⁸⁰ For Mukti Ali, the development of interfaith dialogue is the fundamental foundation for creating religious harmony, especially in Indonesia.

Finally, if the Mohammad Dahlan era had restructured the Department due to the transition of the Old Order (*Orde Lama*). However, Mukti Ali focuses on the policy of positioning in Pancasila and the New Order modernization agenda within the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), such as improving Islamic education and strengthening religious and interfaith harmony.

⁷⁹ Yusuf Aminuddin, "Kebijakan Menteri Agama A. Mukti Ali Terhadap Kemajuan Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia," *Al Hikmah Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 5, no. 2 (2015): 209–12.

⁸⁰ Derry Rizal et al., *Agama dan masyarakat: 70 tahun H.A. Mukti Ali* (IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, 1993), 13–14.

2.2.3 Reform Period (1998-2024)

The *Reformasi* period was marked by the fall of the New Order government under Soeharto in May 1998. During this period, it coincided with the opening of a wide tap for religious expression and association. In that case, many hardliner Islamic organizations were given the opportunity to exist in Indonesia. Furthermore, after the upheaval caused by the 1998 economic recession, it was also characterized by many conflicts and violence in the name of religion in various parts of Indonesia. This happened in several regions in Indonesia, such as West Kalimantan, Maluku, North Maluku, and Central Sulawesi, particularly in 1999. This fact made homework for the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) at the beginning of the reform era. Accordingly, the main focus of work by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) in the early reform era was characterized by full attention to inter and intra-religious issues aimed at resolving various conflicts.

The Reformation period itself can be divided into two decades of leadership, namely *Reformasi*, Volume One and Volume Two. *Reformasi* I (1998-2007) can be traced to reveal that there were three leaders after the transition of power from the New Order. Among the three leaders were B.J. Habibie, Abdurrahman Wahid, and Megawati. During Reformation II (2008-2024), there were two presidents who each won power for two periods, namely Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Joko Widodo.

In the book '*Sejarah Kementerian Agama pada Era Reformasi: Dari Kebijakan Agama pada Masa Transisi hingga Konsolidasi Demokrasi*' by Imam Subchi and Halid, it is explained that the priority of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) from the transition period is how to create inclusive regulations, strengthen harmonization between and among religious communities, and strengthen state integration in the Unitary Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).⁸¹ In addition, to maintaining peace, during the period of the Minister of Religious Affairs at that time, Malik Fadjar (1971-1978), also sought full attention to the Islamic education system in Indonesia. Meanwhile, during the period of Tholchah Hasan (1998-2001), who served as Minister of Religious Affairs during the

⁸¹ M. A. Drs. Imam Subchi and M. Ag Dr. Halid, *Sejarah Kementerian Agama Era Reformasi: Dari Kebijakan Agama Masa Transisi Hingga Konsolidasi Demokrasi* (Rajawali Press, 2018), 12-29, <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/51313>.

transition from Soeharto to B.J. Habibie and Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), strategic work continued in the field of strengthening tolerance and resolving horizontal conflicts in Aceh and Papua.

Then, in Megawati Soekarno Puteri era, Minister Said Agil Husein Al Munawar was appointed (2004-2009). The positive achievements that occurred in that era were not far from continuing the work program of the previous Minister. In the interfaith field, one notable development was the recognition of Confucianism as the official religion of Indonesia, following its legitimation by President Abdurrahman Wahid. In the era of Reformation Volume Two, there are several Ministers of Religion who have made significant changes. During the reign of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and President Joko Widodo, the Ministry of Religious Affairs had six ministers, namely, Muhammad Maftuh Basyuni, Suryadharma Ali, Lukman Hakim Saifudin, Fahrur Rozi, and Yaquut Cholil Qoumas. The new era of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) in the government of the last two decades presents its own challenges, stemming from the strengthening of Fundamental Islam, alongside the emergence of liberal and moderate-modernist progressive Islam.

M. Maftuh Basyuni's religious dynamics, for example, are often confronted with conflict issues in terms of the establishment of houses of worship, ethnicity, and violence in the name of religion. This happens simultaneously due to the rejection that arises from certain religious groups. Due to this, the conflict resolution is carried out by the government through the Joint Ministerial Regulation (PBM) between the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Home Affairs Number: 9 of 2006 and Number: 8 of 2006 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of the Duties of Regional Head / Deputy Regional Head in Maintaining Religious Harmony, Empowering Religious Harmony Forums, and Establishing Houses of Worship.⁸² This period is marked by the emergence of numerous new sects and religious movements in Indonesia, which are often perceived as heretical and deviant.⁸³

⁸² Ihsan Ali-Fauzi, *Disputed churches in Jakarta*, ed. Timothy Lindsey and Melissa Crouch, trans. Rebecca Lunnnon (Center for the Study of Religion and Democracy, Paramadina Foundation, 2014), 36.

⁸³ The phenomenon of the emergence of several heretical sects in Indonesia is allegedly the intervention of foreign intelligence in Indonesia which is responsible for the rise of new sects that deviate from the parent religion. Figures such as KH. Hasyim (Chairman of PBNU) Prof. Dr. Achmad Satori Ismail (Chairman of the Indonesian Dai

Based on the *Buku Sejarah Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia pada Era Reformasi*, during the period of the Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA) under Maftuh Basyuni, many new religious movements developed, with at least 250 groups considered heretical from 2001 to 2007. Some of these new religious movement groups include *Ahmadiyah*, *Al-Qiyadah Al-Islamiyah*, the Holy Quran, Lia Eden, and NII *Ma'had al-Zaytun*. According to Azyumardi Azra, the emergence of the phenomenon of new religious movements is due to socio-economic changes occurring too quickly, and also due to globalization, which causes disruption to certain circles of society.

In addition, the emergence of a new movement that year was due to dissatisfaction with mainstream religious ideas that were unable to accommodate their diverse religious perspectives.⁸⁴ The rise of the phenomenon of new religious sects has influenced the state to form a regulation through the Ministry of Religious Affairs No. SJ/B.V/BA. 01.2/2164/2007 concerning Vigilance Against New Religious Sects Developing in Society (*Kewaspadaan Terhadap Aliran Keagamaan Baru yang Berkembang di Masyarakat*). This letter was historically signed by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) Bahrul Hayat on behalf of the Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA) to be forwarded to various branches in the Provincial Religious Affairs Office, the rector of UIN/IAIN, the Head of STAIN, the Head of Religious Affairs in Regency/City. The letter provides an explanation of several new religious sects that deviate from the teachings of Islam in accordance with the *fatwa* issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI).⁸⁵

It can be seen that the role of civil society organizations towards the state, in this case, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in the early 2000s was very influential. Hence, contextualization in the implementation of state policies often rested on religious civil society organizations, in this case, the Indonesian *Ulama* Council. Additionally, the transition of power from the New Order to the Reformation made the then Minister of Religious Affairs, Maftuh Basyuni,

(IKADI)) and the General Secretary of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), Ichwan Syam know such signs. Read *Cults and False Prophets*, (A. Yogaswara; Maulana A.J)

⁸⁴ Azyumardi Azra, *Konteks berteologi di Indonesia: pengalaman Islam* (Paramadina, 1999), 10.

⁸⁵ Drs. Imam Subchi and Dr. Halid, *Sejarah Kementerian Agama Era Reformasi*, 89.

preoccupied with the recovery and prevention of religious conflict. To minimize this, the policy issued was the 2004-2009 RPJMN, which focused on improving the quality of services and understanding of religion and religious life. Also, improving internal and external harmony between religious communities. Moreover, religious policy during the Maftuh Basyuni era contributed more to the handling of religious conflict.

Therefore, this was also continued in the Suryadharma Ali era. As a follow-up, the Ali era has successfully designed a famous book on navigating the monitoring of deviant religious groups with the publication of Guidelines for Handling Problematic Religious Sects and Movements in Indonesia, *Pedoman Penanganan Aliran dan Gerakan Keagamaan Bermasalah di Indonesia*.⁸⁶ Therefore, the book focuses more on handling and resolving new religious movements in a fair, humane, and civilized manner. If it seen from the track record of the ministers of religion from Maftuh Basyuni to Suryadharma Ali, Religious Harmony or interfaith dialogue is a special concern. As a result, this attention to peace is continued by Lukman Hakim Saifuddin with his monumental policy known as Religious Moderation (*Moderasi Beragama*).

Therefore, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin's commitment to strengthening religious harmony is in line with the commitment to the formulation of the vision of the President of the Republic of Indonesia Number 18 of 2020 concerning the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) for 2020-2024, namely 'The realization of an advanced Indonesia that is sovereign, independent, and has a personality based on Gotong Royong' '*Terwujudnya Indonesia maju yang berdaulat, mandiri, dan berkepribadian berlandaskan Gotong Royong*'. Additionally, it was legalized through Presidential Regulation Number 58 of 2023 on Strengthening Religious Moderation.⁸⁷ The application of Religious Moderation is contained in various programs of the Ministry, Regional Office, Department of Religious Affairs, in the form of workshops, seminars,

⁸⁶ BIMAS Islam, *Pedoman Penanganan Aliran Dan Gerakan Keagamaan Bermasalah Di Indonesia*.

⁸⁷ Kemenag, "Kemenag: Perpres 58/2023 Wujudkan Moderasi Beragama Kian Kuat dan Kolaboratif," <https://kemenag.go.id>, accessed April 26, 2025, <https://kemenag.go.id/nasional/kemenag-perpres-58-2023-wujudkan-moderasi-beragama-kian-kuat-dan-kolaboratif-yUoWM>.

conferences, curriculum syllabus, cultural strengthening, and even in physical form, such as the Religious Moderation building and Islamic University.⁸⁸

Thus, problems in the era of reform transition and development in Indonesia from 1999 to 2020 often clashed with polemics over inter and intra-religious conflicts. Thus, preventive solutions from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) often focus on strengthening community unity as a result of SARA conflicts. Accordingly, the policy trail from the ministers of the B.J. Habibie era to Joko Widodo focuses on strengthening interfaith relations. The culmination of this strengthening gives rise to a new religious paradigm known as Religious Moderation in the contemporary era.

2.3 History of the Establishment of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI)

The background of the establishment of the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) is not far from the state's commitment to provide guidance or guidelines in religion, especially for Muslims, through the production of *fatwas* by *Ulamas*. The pioneer at that time was none other than the government led by Soeharto. MUI is an institution established through meetings and deliberations by *ulama*, scholars, and *zu'ama* from various regions. The meeting included delegates from twenty-six provinces in Indonesia and ten scholars representing Islamic organizations.⁸⁹ Shortly thereafter, it was agreed to establish a meeting place and a deliberation venue for *ulama* and *zuama*, based on the 'Charter of the Establishment of MUI'. The result of the meeting was signed by all participants of the deliberation, which provides guidance and advice through a *fatwa*. In addition, it is also a liaison organization between the *ulama* and the umara (government).

Furthermore, the Indonesian Ulama Council was established on 7 Rajab 1395 H, coinciding with 26 July 1975 in Jakarta after a deliberation meeting by *ulama* and *zuama*. At the end of the MUI National Conference, Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, also known as Buya Hamka, was appointed as the first Chairman of the Ulama Council.⁹⁰ Accordingly, this Council of Ulama was initiated for three major responsibilities. Firstly, to issue a *fatwa* and give guidance or advice regarding religious and social affairs for the

⁸⁸ Sri Rayani Tanjung, "Implementasi Moderasi Beragama Pada Program Kerukunan Umat Beragama Dan Layanan Kehidupan Umat Beragama," *Kompetensi* 7, no. 1 (2022): 23–26, <https://doi.org/10.47655/kompetensi.v7i1.22>.

⁸⁹ MUI, "Sejarah MUI," *Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, August 13, 2018, <https://mirror.mui.or.id/sejarah-mui>.

⁹⁰ Prof. Dr. Hamka or Buya Hamka is not only a clerical figure from West Sumatra, he is also a famous writer known for his monumental works such as "Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijk".

government as well as to the Muslim community. Secondly, to maintain the harmony or friendship of *ukhuwah Islamiah* (Muslim Brotherhood) and to maintain inter-religious harmony based on the framework to maintain unity and integrity. Thirdly, representing the Muslim community in interfaith dialogue. Finally, bridging the gap between Muslim leaders and the government.⁹¹ Interestingly, this institution is often referred to as an institution whose function is to produce *fatwas* carried out by the *fatwa* commission. Therefore, the application of a *fatwa* can often influence some policies in the government. In this case, many of MUI's *fatwa* and advice as the product of *ulama*'s thoughts in various laws and regulations in Indonesia are legalized in the form of national law.

In its history, this organization of the *ulama* association has often experienced dynamics, particularly since the middle of the New Order period from 1975 until now. From its role in influencing political elections in Indonesia, the formation of *fatwas* that are considered controversial to threats to marginality, particularly groups that are considered heretical. These dynamics are recorded in history from its formation to its journey as a civil society organization, in which there were several different regime leaders. Some of these leaders were recorded from the New Order and early Reformation eras (Soeharto, B.J. Habibie, Abdurrahman Wahid, Megawati Soekarno Putri). The development era was led by Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Joko Widodo, each of whom led for a decade or two leadership periods.

2.3.1 New Order Period: Establishment and Development

The New Order period was the result of a horizontal conflict between the Indonesian National Army and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). It also marked the transition of power from Soekarno to Soeharto due to the 30 September 1965 Movement. Historically, the early era of the New Order inherited many social, economic, and political problems that led to many problems in the government. Considering this, the government at that time initiated a new ideology focused on development and modernization to create a climate of political and economic stability. In other words, the state, in this case, had an interest in having the *ulama* and Muslims support the development of the New Order.

⁹¹ Bahrul Ulum, "Fatwa of The Council of The Indonesian Ulama On Golput (Vote Abstention): A Study of Contemporary Islamic Legal Thought in Indonesia, 2009," no. 2 (2011): 393.

The establishment of the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) was part of Soeharto's development program. According to an article by Subekty Wibowo et al., the idea of forming the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) during the Soeharto era was part of the regime's concern about the Islamic political movement at that time.⁹² Historical factors such as the resistance of DI/TII and PRRI Muslim groups are the main reasons for the political trauma of the New Order government.

In its establishment, several academics who focus on the case study of the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) agree that the establishment of MUI was Soeharto's tactical step in controlling the Islamic movement in Indonesia.⁹³ Even though, in practice, it is often denied that the establishment of the council was purely and simply the initiative of *Ulamas* in Indonesia who wanted a forum for association. Accordingly, as part of the New Order regime, Soeharto was arguably the main initiator in the establishment of the organization. This was evident after the establishment of the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) on 26 July 1975, through a National *Ulama* Congress in Jakarta, which Soeharto opened. As Soeharto said in his opening speech, MUI is an institution that is limited to giving *fatwa*, advice, and moral appeals to the government and Muslims covering religious and national issues.⁹⁴ Thus, MUI's role is only to connect ethical religious values to the development program on a practical level.

Examining the relationship between the *ulama* and the government during the New Order era, Aqib Suminto explained that the politics carried out by the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) was not far from what Snouck's theory had mentioned regarding maintaining good relations between Islam and the Indian Government. However, in the 1970s-1990s, based on Din Syamsuddin's narration in his book entitled *'Islam dan politik era Orde Baru*, the new order government's attitude towards Islam was always coloured by suspicion.⁹⁵ In addition, Islam has evolved through various active activities, such as *da'wah* and *syiar*, conducted by

⁹² Subekty Wibowo, "Peran Majelis Ulama Indonesia Pada Masa Orde Baru 1975-1998 dan Relevansinya Dalam Pembelajaran Sejarah," *Candi: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Penelitian Sejarah* 17, no. 1 (2020): 86–87, 1.

⁹³ M. Atho Mudzhar, *Fatwa-fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia: sebuah studi tentang Pemikiran Hukum Islam di Indonesia, 1975-1988* (INIS, 1993); N. Hosen, "Behind the Scenes: Fatwas of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (1975-1998)," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15, no. 2 (2004): 147–79, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/15.2.147>; Syafiq Hasyim, *The Council of Indonesian Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) and Religious Freedom*, 2011.

⁹⁴ Wibowo, "Peran Majelis Ulama Indonesia Pada Masa Orde Baru 1975-1998 dan Relevansinya Dalam Pembelajaran Sejarah," 92.

⁹⁵ M. Din Syamsuddin, *Islam dan politik era Orde Baru* (Logos Wacana Ilmu, 2001), 1–3.

different Islamic institutions. Meanwhile, between 1966 and 1976, it was an era when the state made efforts to establish good relations with Islam. Finally, from 1976 to 1986, the state experimented with internalizing Pancasila towards Islamic organizations, including MUI, which is part of the civil society.

As a forum for *fatwa* production, some of the *fatwas* issued by MUI in the new order era have what is called ‘an antagonistic *fatwa*’. What is meant by ‘an antagonistic *fatwa*’ here is the tendency of a *fatwa* that is against government policies. An example of such a *fatwa* case is the prohibition (*haram*) of Muslim participation in Christmas celebrations. The *fatwa* was released on 7 March 1981. MUI declared a *fatwa* that prohibits Muslims from attending events and even saying ‘Merry Christmas’ to Christians. The *Ulama* saw the background event as a fear of the threat of Christianisation. Although it was established to support the development of the New Order, its journey did not entirely align with government policy.

It was different in the late 1980s and 1990s, when the relationship between Islam and the New Order was more accommodative and integrative. The evidence shows that both policies supported each other with the socio-economic and political interests of Muslims. The harmonization between religion and the state saw both benefiting. On the one hand, the government is satisfied with MUI's performance, which is evident in its *fatwa*, demonstrating a supportive attitude. On the other hand, MUI and its *fatwas* are well-received by the state. Some clear examples of accommodative *fatwas* are those against Islamic groups considered heretical. Among these groups are the *Shi'i* group, the *Ahmadiyah* group, and other groups considered heretical called *Inkar as-Sunnah*.⁹⁶

In the context of a *fatwa* against heresy in the New Order era, for example, against the *Shi'a* group. Although in the history of Islam, Shia is an Islamic sect that has long been established due to the division of Muslims after *Rasulullah* died. This is not separated from the supervision of MUI with the justification of heresy due to being contrary to the principles of orthodoxy with the so-called *Ahl Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*. Some of the *Shi'a* teachings that are considered not based

⁹⁶ M. Atho Mudzhar, *Fatwa-fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia: sebuah studi tentang Pemikiran Hukum Islam di Indonesia, 1975-1988* (INIS, 1993), 132–37.

on *sharia* include the concept of *Imamate* and *mut'ah* marriage. Consequently, MUI issued a *fatwa* on 8 March 1984 at its annual meeting.⁹⁷

Likewise, another accommodating *fatwa* supported by the government is about a new religious movement called *Ahmadiyah*. The majority of Muslims often criticise *Ahmadiyah* itself because it deviates from the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, especially the concept of Imam Mahdi. MUI, in this case, is too hard on the *Ahmadiyah* group and is considered not to be from the Muslim community. Hence, MUI issued a *fatwa* on 8 March 1984 at its annual session.⁹⁸ In addition, MUI also urged the government to revoke recognition of the teachings brought by *Ahmadiyah*. Through a Decree of the Minister of Justice in 1953, it was officially revoked and issued by the government under the pretext of maintaining public order.

Accordingly, several other groups that have been considered deviant are called *inkar as-sunnah*. The MUI *fatwa* relating to heretical is for groups that do not believe in the *hadiths* of the Prophet Muhammad. The *fatwa* was issued on 27 June 1998.⁹⁹ Thus, several *fatwas* against groups considered heretical were legalized and promulgated. Through the Government, the Attorney General officially prohibits new movements or sects that are classified as *inkar as-sunnah*. The issuance of these regulations will be left to the authorities, such as the prosecutor's office and local police.

In light of this, socio-religious phenomena have influenced MUI in producing *fatwas*, especially *fatwas* that threaten the orthodoxy of the majority of Muslims in Indonesia who are *ahl sunnah wal jamaah*. Some *fatwa* policies of the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) in the New Order era were more focused on responding to pivotal issues circulating in the community. This requires certainty among some Muslims about legal certainty in Islam. However, its outputs are often controversial, as they do not align with state policy. In addition, some other *fatwas* are accommodative and supported by the state. It is inevitable because MUI, as a religious institution that accommodates *ulama*, also has its own interests

⁹⁷ Mudzhar, *Fatwa-fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (INIS, 1993), 132–33.

⁹⁸ Mudzhar, *Fatwa-fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (INIS, 1993), 134.

⁹⁹ Mudzhar, *Fatwa-fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (INIS, 1993), 135.

in the name of *amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar*. Hence, this also produces some dynamics between Islam and the state.

2.3.2 Reform Period: The Advance of Authority

The *Reformasi* era marked the fall of the New Order government under President Soeharto. This period had a major impact on Indonesia's political, economic, and social landscape. Nevertheless, the peak of this institution's development was to become the most authoritative religious institution after 1998. Hence, the role of MUI strengthened into an institution that takes care of the nation's morals. After Hasan Basri's death, Ali Yafie, a prominent Sulawesi cleric, became the Chairman of the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) during the transition from the New Order to the Reformation. During his two years at the MUI, Ali Yafie emerged as a key figure, serving as a liaison between the state and the *ulama*. Interestingly, Ali Yafie was also the one who advised Soeharto to resign from his position as President of the Republic of Indonesia at that time.

Following Soeharto's resignation, the MUI has become more proactive in utilizing its authority to monitor the state. One of them is in using its authority in issuing conservative *fatwa* policies. In a thesis entitled "*Ulama Dan Politik: Analisis Fatwa dan Peran Politik Dewan Ulama Indonesia (MUI) pada Era Reformasi*" by Ahmad Fajri explained that, it cannot be denied that MUI with its authority has the right to issue a policy of *haram* or *halal* because they are the scholars who have the most capacity of knowledge about it, not the government let independently to the public.¹⁰⁰

For example, some *fatwas* that became issues of public concern during the Reformation period, such as the *haram* of not exercising the right to vote, the issue of leadership that must be in accordance with Islamic principles, and the concept of democracy in Indonesia that must be subject to the MUI.¹⁰¹ In addition, as explained in Syafiq Hasyim's book entitled '*The Shariatization of Indonesia: The Politics of the Council of Indonesian Ulama*', MUI explained that in the transition era of the new order, its tendency was more prominent and appeared on the surface

¹⁰⁰ Ahmad Fajri, "Ulama & Politik : Analisis *Fatwa* Dan Peran Politik Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Era Reformasi" (Sekolah Pascasarjana UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2014), 80.

¹⁰¹ Fajri, "ULAMA & POLITIK : Analisis *Fatwa* Dan Peran Politik Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Era Reformasi," 80.

because it was engaged in interfering in public affairs. One of these has occurred in the event of the Indonesian Muslim Congress (KUII, the Indonesian Muslim Community Congress) on November 3-7, 1998, in Jakarta, for example. It has released several decisions and recommendations *Sharia* must include in the article of the 1945 Basic Constitution and to remove Pancasila as the sole ideology of mass-based religious and social organizations in Indonesia.¹⁰² Additionally, MUI also rejected leaders from non-Muslims and even from women. It has been proven that MUI's recommendation became a reference in the political arena during the Presidential election between Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati Soekarno Putri.

On top of that, in another recommendation, KUII 1999 also suggested eliminating indigenous beliefs from the content of the Guidelines of National Development and banning some Islamic groups such as *Ahmadiyah*, *Inkar Sunnah*, and many others. This was strengthened in the article of SKB 3 Minister in 1965, which includes limiting the activities of the *Ahmadiyah* congregation, because it is considered deviant and heretical.

Institutionally speaking, this era saw the reform and establishment of organizational structures. This is evidenced by the strengthening and enhancement of the functions of commissions and institutions. For example, the establishment of eleven commissions and autonomous institutions or bodies. The commissions in question include: Islamic Brotherhood and organizational relations, Islamic propagation and development, education, social and cultural affairs, *fatwa* (legal opinion), law and legislation, study and research. Additionally, these include religious harmony, the economy, women's rights, foreign affairs, and information and mass media. In fact, the autonomous institutions are as follows: LPPOM (Institute for the Assessment of Food, Drugs, and Cosmetics), DSN (National Sharia Council), Sharia National Arbitration Board, MUI Publishing Agency, and YDDP (Foundation for *Dakwah* and Development Fund).

After a decade of reformation, the development period was then famous in the era of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who had served for two leadership periods and continued the relay leadership of Joko Widodo in 2014. During this period, MUI is more dynamic in addressing the phenomena that have become

¹⁰² Hasyim, *The Shariatisation of Indonesia*, 79.

society's concerns. There is a significant difference when comparing MUI in the new order era and the reform era that affects the working attitude of MUI. Muhammad As'ad explained in his thesis that MUI in the New Order was always under the government's control, despite a dynamic relationship between the two. In the development reform era, MUI is not directly related to the government. Nevertheless, MUI changed its position from supporting the government to sympathizing with and supporting Islamic parties.¹⁰³

Subsequently, MUI observed that the government's power at that time was weak, so it prioritised establishing closeness with Islamic parties. Additionally, this makes the opportunity for MUI to play its role in the political aspect look effective in the era of Joko Widodo's leadership. In an article entitled "*Legitimasi Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Dalam Kontestasi Islam Politik Mutakhir*" by Mohamad Baihaqi, it is explained that MUI, as an organization engaged in religio-socio movements, can even influence the political constellation in Indonesia because MUI appears as a semi-governmental organization.¹⁰⁴ Some MUI decisions can affect the political constellation through *fatwas* and appeals. This was proven in the 2017 Jakarta Governor election. It appears that the power of MUI is rising at that time to mobilize the Muslim community to obey every decision by the *ulama*.

2.4 The History of Heretical Groups in Indonesia

In the discourse on heretical sects in Indonesia, numerous variations and groups claiming to be new religious movements have been identified. In Indonesia itself, there are six officially recognized religions: Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Additionally, there are several local belief systems in each region that are identified as indigenous beliefs and spiritual movements. According to data from the Ministry of Education and Culture, there are 187 groups of belief systems and spiritual movements.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, data

¹⁰³ Muhammad As'ad, "Religion and Politics in Indonesia Attitudes and Influences of The Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) on the General Election," *Netherland: Thesis Leiden University*, 2010.

¹⁰⁴ Mohamad Baihaqi Alkawy, "Legitimasi Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Dalam Kontestasi Islam Politik Mutakhir," *AL MA'ARIEF : Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Dan Budaya* 1, no. 2 (January 2, 2020): 68, <https://doi.org/10.35905/almaarief.v1i2.1046>.

¹⁰⁵ Kompas, "Ada 187 Kelompok Penghayat Kepercayaan Yang Terdaftar Di Pemerintah," accessed July 28, 2025, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2017/11/09/12190141/ada-187-kelompok-penghayat-kepercayaan-yang-terdaftar-di-pemerintah?page=all>.

compiled by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) itself lists 250 belief groups that have developed in Indonesia.¹⁰⁶ Globally, David Barret and Todd Johnson, in statistics on religion published by the International Bulletin of Missionary Research, cite that believers outside the official religious categories worldwide number 237,386,000, one percent of the total number of mainstream religious believers worldwide.¹⁰⁷

Based on this data, several teachings and sects have emerged that deviate from the mainstream interpretation of religion, both nationally and in terms of imported teachings. Moreover, the history of faith in Indonesia is inextricably linked to a previous religious cultural transition (Hindu-Buddhist), supernatural beliefs, and local idiosyncrasies.¹⁰⁸ In addition, according to Ricklefs, this resulted from the syncretism of ancient Javanese culture and Islam, creating unique religious variants. As a result, various interpretations of Islam emerged from a complex syncretism between Islam and Hindu-Buddhism, as well as local beliefs that were considered deviant by orthodox groups. In Indonesian history, this diversity of beliefs can be traced back further, making the discourse of heterodoxy a battle for authority. Hence, discourse on the history of heretical sects in Indonesian Islam cannot be separated from the process of Islamization and the political dynamics that followed.

Back in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the process of Islamization occurred in Indonesia. One important piece of literature that describes the battle for authority against heretical sects is narrated in the manuscript (*Babat Tanah Jawi*).¹⁰⁹ The script recounts the story of the *Wali Songo* (nine saints) in their early efforts to spread Islam in Indonesia.¹¹⁰ Historically, each *Wali* had teachings that blended mysticism and orthodoxy in spreading their beliefs. Interestingly, there was internal conflict among the *Wali* themselves, particularly between the *Wali*

¹⁰⁶ BIMAS Islam, *Pedoman Penanganan Aliran Dan Gerakan Keagamaan Bermasalah Di Indonesia*.

¹⁰⁷ David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2003," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 27, no. 1 (2003): 24–25, <https://doi.org/10.1177/239693930302700106>.

¹⁰⁸ M.C. Ricklefs, "Efforts to Impose Conformity of Islamic Belief," in *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java, A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History, c. 1930 to Present* (NUS Press, 2012), 318, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1qv3fh.17>.

¹⁰⁹ *Babad Tanah Jawi* is one of the most renowned works of traditional Javanese historiography. In brief, it is a historical manuscript that narrates the origins, genealogy of kings, and development of kingdoms on the island of Java, particularly from the Hindu-Buddhist era to the Islamic period, especially the Mataram Sultanate.

¹¹⁰ Georg Stauth and Samuli Schielke, *Dimensions of Locality: Muslim Saints, Their Place and Space*, Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam 8 (Transcript, 2008), 34.

Songo and Sunan Siti Jenar, who was accused of teaching heresy and subsequently executed. Zoetmulder (1995) argued that Syekh Siti Jenar was considered heretical by the *Walisongo* because of his extreme understanding of “*wahdatul wujud*”.¹¹¹ The conflict represents an attempt by orthodox forces to control religious interpretations that are considered disruptive to the social order.¹¹²

Similarly, there was a conflict between Sufis, and accusations of heresy occurred with Nuruddin ar-Raniri against two other Sufis, namely Hamzah and Shams al-Din, in the mid-seventeenth century. ar-Raniri, as the king's advisor, won the debate between the two Sufis in front of the king on the ‘interpretation between Allah and His Manifestation’, resulting in their execution along with their followers.¹¹³ Furthermore, ar-Raniry's model of heresy politics became a model for subsequent *ulama*. Ar-Raniry used a combination of *naqli* and *aqli* arguments and *fatwas* from Middle Eastern scholars to legitimize his actions.¹¹⁴ From those cases, these became the beginning of authority to preserve orthodox teachings through political heresy in the context of internal Islam.

In the Dutch colonial era (between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), the Dutch government exploited the issue of heresy to divide Islamic movements that had subversive potential.¹¹⁵ Consequently, in the last decade of Dutch rule, the government campaigned for what was called local innovation or *bid'ah*, which was aimed at certain groups to quell mass (Islamic) resistance.¹¹⁶ Interestingly, during the post-colonial era (1945-1965), Soekarno used the notion of NASAKOM to accommodate various ideological movements, including local beliefs.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ *Wahdatul Wujud* is a Sufi concept in Islam, meaning “Unity of Existence,” emphasizing that only Allah SWT has true existence. Everything in the universe, including humans, is a manifestation or appearance of the One God, not a separate existence.

¹¹² P. J. (Petrus Josephus) Zoetmulder, *Pantheism and Monism in Javanese Suluk Literature : Islamic and Indian Mysticism in an Indonesian Setting*, with Internet Archive (Leiden : KITLV Press, 1995), <http://archive.org/details/pantheismmonismi0000zoet>.

¹¹³ Peter G. Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses* (University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 124.

¹¹⁴ Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia*.

¹¹⁵ Sartono Kartodirdjo and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, *Protest Movements in Rural Java: A Study of Agrarian Unrest in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Oxford University Press, 1973); Staught and Schielke, *Dimensions of Locality*.

¹¹⁶ Roger K. Paget, “Daniel S. Lev. Islamic Courts in Indonesia: A Study in the Political Bases of Legal Institutions. Pp. ix, 281. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972. \$11.75,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 411, no. 1 (1974): 87, <https://doi.org/10.1177/000271627441100126>.

¹¹⁷ Herbert Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* (Equinox Publishing, 2006).

Conversely, the New Order era, Suharto established a government partner organization called the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) to oversee Islamic religious life in Indonesia, including the phenomenon of heretical sects. The establishment of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) itself became the forerunner of political control by the organization of the community over sects considered heretical. The Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) has issued several recommendations and fatwas targeting groups such as the *Ahmadiyah* (1925), *Shi'ism* (1980s), *Islam Jamaah* (1972), *Darul Arqam* (1976), *Inkar Sunnah* (1980s), *Al-Salamullah* (2000s), NII (*Negara Islam Indonesia*) (1949), *Gerakan Fajar Nusantara* (GAFATAR) (2012), and *Pondok Pesantren Al-Zaytun* (2023) since the establishment of the MUI.¹¹⁸

From these patterns, Indonesia has experienced fluctuations in its history of religious turmoil, confronting conflicting authorities and competition among internal sects of Islam. These forces have influenced each other in eliminating other groups through a political framework of heresy, as defined by religious authority, which can declare heresy or not.

2.5 The Authorities of MUI and MORA toward Heretical Groups

Previously, two religious authorities (MORA and MUI), were explained in terms of their genealogy, authority, roles, and responsibilities, particularly regarding Islamic affairs in Indonesia. The Indonesian religious governance system often involves complex interactions between state institutions (MORA) and non-state institutions (MUI), either directly or indirectly. Although both operate in the religious domain, they have different bases of authority and legitimacy.

The MUI has full authority to regulate religious matters based on the traditions of Islamic scholars (*ulama*) and the recognition of Muslims in Indonesia.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, *Ulama* have significant moral and social power, even though it is not binding. Meanwhile, MORA is a representative of religious communities, including Islam, in the form of a religious bureaucratic structure, including the handling of considered heretical sects. Crouch (2012) also notes that

¹¹⁸ Hicks, "Heresy and Authority," 327.

¹¹⁹ M. B. Hooker, *Indonesian Islam: Social Change Through Contemporary Fatawa* (2003), <http://archive.org/details/m-b-hooker-indonesian-islam>.

MORA plays a role in formulating religious regulations, which are then implemented through the state's legal system.¹²⁰

The comparison between the roles of MUI and MORA is also measured through the legitimacy and working mechanisms of both institutions. MORA has legal, institutional, and administrative legitimacy. In contrast, MUI's legitimacy is limited to religious, social, and moral legitimacy. The working mechanisms of MUI and MORA also vary, particularly in cases involving groups deemed heretical. MORA operates through regulations, supervision, coordination, and policy-making. Meanwhile, MUI is limited to issuing fatwas, giving admonitions, and providing religious recommendations.

In cases involving the handling of regarded heretical groups, there is a clear contrast between the two approaches: one is soft and the other is rough. The MUI prioritizes fatwas against deviant sects and often acts as a quasi-political entity that places subversive emphasis on groups deemed deviant. In contrast, the MORA prioritizes guidance and relies on positive political decisions to regulate and maintain national stability. As a result, instead of being disbanded, deviant groups are regulated through restrictions on their activities.

2.6 Conclusion

The history of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (MORA) and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) has a primary reason for their establishment. Besides, the Ministry of Religion is a post-independence institution with authority over all religions and also related to Islam in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the MUI, established during the New Order era (Soeharto), serves as a supervisory body and producer of *fatwas* as references for Muslims to address contemporary religious issues.

Historically, both institutions have had their own dynamics in each era. Since its establishment, MORA has achieved significant milestones in the field of education, particularly in Islamic boarding schools, extending to the university level. In the social and religious sphere, it has also provided extensive religious guidance while managing administrative matters related to marriage, *zakat*, places

¹²⁰ Melissa A. Crouch, "Law and Religion in Indonesia: The Constitutional Court and the Blasphemy Law," *Asian Journal of Comparative Law* 7 (2011): 29–30, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2194607800000582>.

of worship, and pilgrimage. Additionally, religious harmony is the core of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), whose objective is to prevent horizontal conflicts between religions, segregation, and unrest in religious life. Similarly, the MUI, as the government's partner, is tasked with promoting religious harmony and unity. Nevertheless, Indonesia's religious history has been marked by divisions, both within and between religions. The emergence of many groups considered heretical has enriched the diversity of beliefs in Indonesia since ancient, colonial, old order, new order and current times.

Further, this section describes the genealogy and themes of the establishment and origins of the religious institutions (MORA and MUI) that have been developed. To understand the intricacies of their authority, a socio-historical study of their establishment is necessary. Overall, this chapter has discussed the dynamics of the development of a ministry and organization, examined from the perspective of era, ministerial leadership, civil society organizations, state leadership, and the socio-historical context that has unfolded up to the present day.

CHAPTER III

BETWEEN POLICY AND *FATWA*: THE AUTHORITY OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN HANDLING HERETICAL GROUPS IN INDONESIA

3.1 Overview

This chapter explains how a regulatory mechanism from an institution is issued. This chapter also analyzes the two largest religious authority institutions in Indonesia, namely the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI). Additionally, it also describes how a *fatwa* or regulation mechanism is issued as a response to groups that are considered heretical. The two main focuses that were previously discussed play an essential role in maintaining religious harmony.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), in its position, is a moderator party or a third party that protects all religions in Indonesia. According to Ismatu Ropi's book, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) prioritizes what is called “neutrality” and “fairness.” In this regard, the components of the MORA rules have variations in the form of policies that have their own hierarchy of rules. For example, Statutes (*Peraturan Perundang-undangan*), Decrees (*Keputusan Presiden*), Joint Decrees (*Keputusan Bersama*), Instructions (*Instruksi*), Circulars (*Surat Edaran*), Guidance signed by the President (*Pedoman yang ditandatangani oleh Presiden*), Ministers (*Menteri*), the Attorney General (*Jaksa Agung*), as well as Provincial Governors (*Gubernur Provinsi*). Besides, all of these rules apply and are applied from the national level up to the sub-district level.

As discussed previously, the regime has the authority to provide guidance, administer, and control. In contrast to MORA, MUI itself has its paradigm in determining heresy. Meanwhile, MORA does not have authority in terms of legitimacy and justification for labelling certain groups as ‘heretical’, even though MORA has division namely BIMAS (*Bimbingan Masyarakat Islam*). The MUI institution itself has a division that takes care of the *aqidah* of Muslims who are considered the majority (mainstream groups) and have the right to decide heresy or not. The decision regarding the heretics taken by the *aqidah* Commission will be submitted to the MUI Fatwa Commission, which consists of *ulama*, Islamic scholars, and legal advisors to make a decision. From this, MUI has a mechanism for deciding on a case in the form of *fatwas*, *tadzkirah*, *taudziyah*,

recommendation, religious guidance, and statements of position. Overall, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) have their respective roles and mechanisms for addressing problems faced by the community. The following sections explain the structure between MORA and MUI.

3.2 Type of MORA's Paradigm (Policy and Regulatory System): Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (MORA)

This subchapter outlines several variations of policies or regulations within the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (MORA) that influence case decisions. The Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) itself has policies and types of regulatory decisions that are regulated by the constitution. The handling of heretical groups has also been regulated in several Joint Decrees (*Surat Keputusan Bersama*) issued in recent decades. The following are several types of regulations and rules concerning groups considered heretical.

3.2.1 Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation (*Peraturan Menteri Agama*)

Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation (PMA) is a type of legislation issued by the Minister of Religious Affairs. PMA itself has binding force and applies generally. Its function is to implement laws, government regulations, and presidential regulations that are all related to religious affairs. For example, the Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation (PMA) relates to the Organization of the Work Procedure of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the PMA relates to the Madrasah Curriculum, and the PMA regulates the guidelines for the Implementation of Hajj and *Umrah*.

3.2.2 Joint Decree or SKB (*Surat Keputusan Bersama*)

A Joint Decree (SKB) is a policy product or decision issued jointly by two or more ministerial-level officials or heads of other state/government institutions related to the authority issuing it. In the context of MORA, the Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA) himself is often involved in signing SKB with other ministers or heads of ministerial institutions. Some examples include the Three Ministerial Decree on National Holidays and Collective Leave, and the Four Ministerial Decree on Guidelines for Implementing Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Lastly, the most controversial is the Joint Decree of 3 Ministers of

Religious Affairs (MORA), Attorney General, and Minister of Home Affairs regarding *Ahmadiyah* Congregation and GAFATAR movement.

3.3.3 Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs (*Keputusan Menteri Agama*)

A Minister of Religious Affairs Decree (KMA) is a legal product that is concrete, individual, and final. KMA is typically used to determine a specific policy or decision to be applied to a particular case study, or to form a team or committee. KMA is not general like a PMA but is binding on the intended parties, such as the KMA on the Determination of the Hajj Quota for a certain year. KMA on the Appointment of Structural Officials in the Ministry and KMA that grants operational licenses for religious education institutions.

3.3.4 Instruction of the Minister of Religious Affairs (*Instruksi Menteri Agama*)

The Instruction of the Minister of Religious Affairs (IMA) includes several appeals that contain orders or directions to the ranks below to carry out a certain action instructed by subordinates. For instances, the instruction to the Directorate General of Islamic Guidance, Religious Research and Development, Head of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). It aims to carry out tasks according to internal guidelines that are not publicly bound. It aims to carry out tasks through internal guidelines that are not bound by the public. The legal force of the Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA) Instruction is below the regulations and decisions.

3.3.5 Regulation of the Directorate General (*Peraturan Direktorat Jenderal*)

A Director General Regulation (*Perdirjen*) is a legal product issued by a Director General within the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). The Regulation of the Directorate General (*Perdirjen*) serves to implement an order or provision of a higher authority (such as PMA) within the scope of duties and functions of each Directorate General (Education, The Guidance of Islamic, Christian, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Hajj). In terms of legal force, the law is under the PMA. For examples of *Perdirjen* include *Perdirjen* on Technical Guidelines for *Madrasah* Examinations, and *Perdirjen* of Islamic Guidance on Guidelines for *Sakinah* Family Development.

3.3. The Paradigm of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA)' *'Aliran Sesat'* or *'Kelompok Bermasalah'* Policy

In 2014, as a measure to anticipate grassroots conflicts related to religious issues and the emergence of groups considered heretical, the government issued guidelines and indicators for handling groups considered heretical. Interestingly, the research conducted by the Research and Development of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), as outlined in the book “Guidelines for Handling Problematic Religious Sects and Movements in Indonesia” is often referred to as the term ‘problematic’ in relation to groups considered heretical. The Religious Movement in question has two typical dimensions. 1) Religious movements that are obviously against the law and constitution, treason, social conflicts, and riots. 2) Religious movements that, to mobilize followers and funding, management, and struggle programs, use strategies that utilize manipulative or brainwashing, threats, and coercion.

Therefore, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) views a problematic religious group as classified based on the law. Judging from the rules and constitutions, the indicators of a religious sect or movement are considered problematic if:

1. Endangering public order, such as the interpretation and dissemination of religious teachings that are obviously deviant, misleading, stirring up trouble, and encouraging chaos or riots in the community.
2. Endangering the safety of life, such as teaching followers to harm themselves and or others.
3. Disrupting public morals, such as teachings that allow free sex and adultery.
4. Harming public health, such as teachings that allow the use of illegal drugs.
5. Violating the basic rights of others, such as the conception and interpretation of religious teachings, which in its spread impose brainwashing of others either directly or indirectly (brainwashing); mobilizing funding manipulatively from the community.
6. Spreading hatred and hostility in the community, such as oral and written proclamations that justify the blood of others, even biological parents, or encourage others to commit physical violence and terror.

7. Advocating treason against the legitimate government and not recognizing Pancasila and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).¹²¹

In addition to indicators based on the law and the constitution, according to the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Research and Development Agency of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (*Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI*), problematic religious sects and movements have a typology. Therefore, religious sects and movements that are not problematic are those that develop within the framework of religious teachings that are considered in accordance with the mainstream understanding of Islamic teachings.

Moreover, MORA, in its role as part of the government, only provides guidance and assistance. Groups that are considered heretical within the scope of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) often regard themselves as 'victims' because the majority spectrum confronts them. As a result, the handling is often limited to re-education, mediation, therapy, and advocacy. This approach prioritizes psychological and religious aspects in providing assistance to victims who are considered to be followers of problematic groups. Moreover, prohibition and termination also mark the journey of various groups that are considered problematic in Indonesia. Here are some of the policies implemented by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) regarding the considered heretical groups.

3.3.1 Joint Decree of Three Ministers (Minister of Religious Affairs, Attorney General, and Minister of Home Affairs) against *Ahmadiyah*

In this context, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) contributes to it together with other Ministries. In minimizing a domestic problem, the state often recommends making a decision that is made by merging between ministries. The Joint Decree itself is closely related to the activities of the '*Ahmadiyah*' group. In order to maintain the stability of national security, the New Order at that time issued the first SKB involving the Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Minister of Home Affairs.¹²² This is stated in the Joint Decree of the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Home Affairs Number 1 of 1979 concerning the

¹²¹ *Pedoman penanganan aliran dan gerakan keagamaan bermasalah di Indonesia*, Cetakan IV, with Ahmad Syafii Mufid (Kementerian Agama RI, Badan Litbang dan Diklat, Puslitbang Kehidupan Keagamaan, 2017), 19–24.

¹²² Mahbib Khoiron, "Negara Vis-À-Vis Jemaat *Ahmadiyah*: Dominasi Yang Tak Konstan," *Jurnal Socius: Journal of Sociology Research and Education* 5, no. 2 (December 21, 2018): 65–66, <https://doi.org/10.24036/scs.v5i2.124>.

Implementation of the Duties of Government Apparatus in Ensuring Order and Smoothness of Implementation. Development and Religious Worship by its adherents. Ultimately, in 2008, a Joint Decree (SKB) was also issued, which is a reinforcement of the previous one.

This Joint Statement (SKB) includes the Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA), the Minister of Home Affairs, and the Attorney General. The reason for public order and guaranteeing security stability, this SKB is also a reference for stakeholders such as the Government, Community organizations, and parties from *Ahmadiyah* groups. The goal is to minimize conflicts that can trigger horizontal friction between mainstream Islam adherents and *Ahmadiyah* itself.

Furthermore, the SKB, which contains about *Ahmadiyah* itself, is explained to have given orders, warnings, and guidelines for many parties not to do or not to do something to create peace in society. Again, the culmination point of the state's efforts in resolving the problems of JAI (*Jamaah Ahmadiyah Indonesia*), is contained in the considerations created on June 9, 2008 by issuing a joint decree (SKB) of the Minister of Religion, Attorney General, and Minister of Home Affairs Number: 3 Year 2008, Number 199 Year 2008. The decree explicitly mentions the Warning and Order to Adherents, Members, and/or Members of the Structure of the Indonesian *Ahmadiyah* Congregation and Community Citizens.¹²³ Therefore, the content of the decision, in addition to the prohibition of followers, also prohibits the followers of the *Ahmadiyah* Congregation from spreading the religion that deviates from the central teachings of *Ahmadiyah* itself, which is considered heretical. In addition, there is also a suggestion not to commit illegal acts such as violence against *Ahmadiyah* groups.

From this review, it is clear that scrutinizing the Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA) policy towards *Ahmadiyah* groups is not very effective. Even from *Ahmadiyah* itself, it is considered that the SKB is often a reference for the permissibility of disrupting and dissolving activities such as internal *da'wah*, prayer, events, or other activities. Further, it is frequently interspersed with violence. Based on this, the effectiveness of this SKB is not very well applied. In

¹²³ Abdul Jamil Wahab, "Menakar Efektivitas SKB tentang *Ahmadiyah* dan Faktor Penyebabnya: Studi Kasus Konflik *Ahmadiyah* Di Desa Gereneng Lombok Timur" 17, No. 2 (2018): 445.

its capacity as a religious authority and as a representative of the government or state, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), along with stakeholders at the highest and lowest levels. It has a role in monitoring and providing understanding related to the SKB. However, the problem that occurs in the field is usually the attitude of the mainstream Muslim community to view the absolute *Ahmadiyah* as something different and considered deviant. Consequently, this understanding forces a group to demand a return to the teachings or in accordance with the mainstream group.

Atho Mudzhar has also stated the rules regarding the exclusionary attitude towards *Ahmadiyah* groups. According to him, the rules of the law should be established so that the state does not intervene in religion, but rather maintains and protects the peace of religion.¹²⁴ Consequently, the law is truly applied and produces an orderly and safe condition. Besides, the basis of the SKB policy against *Ahmadiyah* should protect the JAI community group itself. That consideration, Atho Mudzhar continued, is following the reference of Law No.1/PNPS/1965 on the Prevention of Abuse and/or Blasphemy of Religion.¹²⁵

Additionally, the consequences of the violence against the *Ahmadiyah* group are usually based on the displeasure of a certain group of different sects. In several regions of Indonesia, numerous evictions have occurred, including those in Bangka (December 14, 2015) and Lombok (since 2006). Attacks by mass groups, such as in Kuningan (2010), Cikeusik (2011), Parung Bogor (2011), and Tasikmalaya (2013). However, incidents such as the rejection of 'Islam' in the religion column in the e-KTP of *Ahmadiyah* residents in Manislor (2015). In addition, there have also been the sealing of *Ahmadiyah* mosques, such as Masjid al-Misbah in Bekasi (2013), Masjid al-Istiqomah in Banjar City (2015), Masjid al-Kautsar in Kendal (2016), and most recently, Masjid al-Hidayah in Depok (2017).¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Kemenag, "Pokok-Pokok Pendapat Prof. Dr. H. M. Atho Mudzhar," 2009, <https://balitbangdiklat.kemenag.go.id/berita/pokok-pokok-pendapat-prof-dr-h-m-atho-mudzhar>.

¹²⁵ See in the appendices UU No. 1/PNPS/1965

¹²⁶ Puslitbang Kemenag, "Puslitbang Kehidupan Keagamaan, Laporan Tahunan Kehidupan Keagamaan.," 2017.

Some of the events described earlier, although the *Ahmadiyah* themselves did not violate the SKB (Joint Decree), such as spreading the main teachings of *Ahmadiyah*, were still sanctioned in the end. The state's capacity, in this case, is represented by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) of the Regency, Province, and Capital City, which has the authority to anticipate potential conflicts between two parties and provide assistance to those considered heresy. Overall, often violent incidents committed by *Ahmadiyah* are generally the result of pure anti-*Ahmadiyah* sentiment and rejection of the existence of *Ahmadiyah*. The SKB itself stipulates that people who do not agree have no right to judge and commit violence against the *Ahmadiyah* group. As a result, it might prioritise hatred; the community, in the context of producing a culture of weakness in understanding the policies, has made. Thus, violence against problematic minority groups still occurs nowadays.

3.3.2 Instruction of the Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA) towards the Lia Eden Community.

Lia Eden is a new religious movement that once shocked the Indonesians. The sect has been banned since 2009. Unlike *Ahmadiyah*, which requires a Joint Decree, Lia Eden or *al-Salamullah* is easier to dissolve because its followers are too small.¹²⁷ In the context of regulation, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) only has the authority through instruction to the authorities. In this case, the police and the court, to discipline all groups that can trigger disturbances to the people's or public order.

The authority of the Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA), Maftuh Basyuni, at that time firmly stated that Lia Eden is a group that has desecrated religion or declared as a heresy in front of the press media. The government, in its authority, did not have a specific policy to dissolve it, but only appealed to the public regarding the misguidance of 'Lia Eden'. Hence, this is proven by the blasphemy article in Article 156 of the Criminal Code that caused Lia Eden to be imprisoned.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ antaranews.com, "DPR Dapat Memahami Penerbitan SKB *Ahmadiyah*," Antara News, June 12, 2008, <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/105326/dpr-dapat-memahami-penerbitan-skb-Ahmadiyah>.

¹²⁸ Liputan6.com, "Menteri Agama: Kasus Eden Wewenang Polisi," liputan6.com, December 29, 2005, <https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/115012/menteri-agama-kasus-eden-wewenang-polisi>.

3.3.3 Joint Decree of Three Ministers (Minister of Religious Affairs, Attorney General, and Minister of Home Affairs) against GAFATAR (Gerakan Fajar Nusantara)

The government classifies three reasons for GAFATAR's heresy through an institution called the Supervisor of Public Beliefs (PAKEM). Firstly, GAFATAR has spread the teachings of Islam by uniting with other religions and merging them into one belief. Secondly, GAFATAR was part of the evolution of the Millah Abraham (Komar) community. Third, GAFATAR's teachings are considered to believe in Ahmad Mushadeq as Al-Masih Al-Maw'ud, the Messiah (savior) who has been promised by the Prophet Muhammad SAW as Imam Mahdi.

In this regard, the policy on monitoring and stopping the Fajar Nusantara Movement (GAFATAR) is also contained in the Joint Decree of the Minister of Religion, Attorney General, and Minister of Home Affairs Number 93 of 2016, Number KEP-043/A/JA/02/2016, Number 223-836 of 2016 concerning Former Administrators, Former Members, Followers and/or Sympathizers of the Fajar Nusantara Movement Community Organization (GAFATAR). In Other Forms to Stop the Spread of Religious Activities that Deviate from the Main Teachings of Islam, which was stipulated on February 26, 2016. In the policy, the sixth dictum instructs government officials and local governments to take guidance measures in order to secure and supervise the implementation of this joint decision.¹²⁹

In terms of policy treatment, this has a similar pattern to the regulation in curbing the *Ahmadiyah* group when viewed from the Joint Decree. Based on this, *Ahmadiyah* and GAFATAR have been restricted from conducting their activities by the SKB regulation, which is overseen by the Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA), the Attorney General, and the Minister of Home Affairs. In addition, both are also referred to as violations of Law No.1/PNPS/1965 on the prevention of blasphemy. Hence, the GAFATAR group is considered heretical according to the wording of the Law, as it provides interpretations that deviate from the main points of religion, especially the teachings of mainstream Islam.¹³⁰ In light of this,

¹²⁹ Novi Dwi Nugroho, "Penanganan Mantan Anggota Gafatar oleh Pemerintah Daerah Kabupaten Tasikmalaya" 33 (2020): 95.

¹³⁰ "Gafatar Dalam Narasi: Melampaui Isu Agama," *Https://Crcs.Ugm.Ac.Id*, n.d., accessed May 21, 2025, <https://crcs.ugm.ac.id/gafatar-dalam-narasi-melampaui-isu-agama/>.

the emergence of GAFATAR then became the first test by religious instructors in Indonesia, and how they perceive and treat members and groups that are considered problematic.

3.3.4 Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA) Statement on *Ma'had al-Zaytun*

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (MORA) has the authority to implement several regulations regarding the management of all *pesantren* in Indonesia. This is stated in the PMA (Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia) No. 30 of 2020 concerning the Establishment and Implementation of Islamic Boarding Schools.¹³¹ In resolving the case of blasphemy committed by *Pondok al-Zaytun*, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), in this instance, issues an appeal and a warning of potential license revocation if it is proven to be heretical.¹³²

Additionally, Minister Yaquut Cholil Qoumas appealed and coordinated with the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal and Security Affairs (MENKOPOLHUKAM) regarding the handling of the *Al-Zaytun* case.¹³³ On the one hand, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) itself maintains neutrality in dealing with problematic *pesantren*. On the other hand, MORA also remains focused on the fulfilment of students' learning rights. In addition, in handling students in *pesantren*, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) continues to provide assistance and guidance to students who are affected, and the right to learn is still fulfilled.

Similarly to Lia Eden, the leader of *al-Zaytun* Islamic Boarding School was also charged with blasphemy. Panji Gumilang, as the leader of the boarding school, was sentenced to a year in prison.¹³⁴ The pattern remains the same, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) does not have full authority in suing a *pesantren* that is considered heretical or problematic. In the context of the sake of public order, legal cases regarding *pesantren* handled by the Ministry of Religious

¹³¹ See the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 30 of 2020 concerning the Establishment and Implementation of *Pesantren*

¹³² TEMPO, "Kemenag Bakal Bekukan Izin *Pesantren Al-Zaytun* Jika Tebukti Sesat | tempo.co," Tempo, June 23, 2023, <https://www.tempo.co/politik/kemenag-bakal-bekukan-izin-pesantren-Al-Zaytun-jika-tebukti-sesat-173976>.

¹³³ Kemenag, "Menag Pastikan Hak Belajar Santri *Al-Zaytun* Terpenuhi," <https://kemenag.go.id>, accessed May 24, 2025, <https://kemenag.go.id/nasional/menag-pastikan-hak-belajar-santri-Al-Zaytun-terpenuhi-oYfOx>.

¹³⁴ BBC, "Panji Gumilang dituntut 1,5 tahun penjara dalam kasus penodaan agama," BBC News Indonesia, August 1, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/clewwz273nj7o>.

Affairs (MORA). Also, in related to the freezing or stop of *pesantren* status, and the rights of *santri*. At the same time, the capacity of law enforcers, such as crimes against leaders of *Pondok Pesantren*, is left to the Courts and Police institutions not from MORA.

3.4 MUI Decisions Mechanism

MUI, as an Islamic civil society organization, has the highest authority in guiding Islamic teaching in Indonesia. Through a *fatwa*, it is often used as the main reference because it represents the decisions of *ulama* based on *al-Qur'an* and *as-Sunnah*. In producing *fatwas*, there are two commissions that produce *fatwa* policies. They are the *Sharia* National Board and the *Fatwa* Commission (FC-MUI). It is believed that the division is the work of a quasi-state mufti role to analyze decisions.¹³⁵

Nevertheless, the policy issued by MUI always begins with a study by commission members and experts by looking as a whole about the object of the problem in society. The comprehensive study in question is a review of the views of past *fuqaha mujtahids*, the opinions of the imams of *madzhab*, and *mu'tabar* scholars. In addition, it is a review of related *fatwas* and the views of *fiqh* experts related to the issue to be legislated on. After a comprehensive study is carried out, the team then depicts the object of the problem, or what is commonly called *tashawwur al-masalah*. The problems then be studied by the team regarding aspects of the formulation of the issue, its critical points, and its socio-diversity impact.

Furthermore, issues related to '*ma'lum min al-din bi al-dlarurah*' or something urgent are then directly addressed by conveying the law as it is. Interestingly, the determination of a *fatwa* is usually based on an attempt to find common ground between scholarly opinions through *the al-jam'u wa al-taufiq* method. Moreover, if no common ground is reached, the determination is then based on the results of *tarjih* through the method of comparison or *muqaranah* by using the rules of *ushul fiqh muqaran*. Interestingly, in discussing a problem, scholars (*ulama*) often have their own views and produce momentum that does not reach a common ground with each other. In the process of stipulating a *fatwa*, it is conveyed that there are differences of opinion, accompanied by an explanation of each argument that is careful (*ihitiyath*). The final step in determining

¹³⁵ Alfitri Alfitri, "Bureaucratizing Fatwā in Indonesia: The Council of Indonesian Ulama and Its Quasi-Legislative Power," *Ulumuna* 24, no. 2 (2020): 374, 2, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v24i2.412>.

a *fatwa* decision is the holding of a meeting attended by several commission members and experts. Meetings can be held if there are questions from community groups, or government institutions themselves, or often respond to phenomena that are crucial or viral in the public sphere.¹³⁶

Discussing MUI decisions, there are several stages involved in the process, culminating in the decision being published by some scholars (*ulama*). Usually, It recognizes a *fatwa* as a legal basis and a reference, especially for Muslims in Indonesia. In fact, the capacity to provide guidance or instructions is not limited to just issuing *fatwas*. MUI, in its practice as a recommender to the Muslim community, has several reference calls in conveying legal messages in addition to *fatwas*. According to Moch. Nur Ichwan, there are various non-*fatwa* discourses, such as Recommendation (*Tausiyah*), Admonition (*Tadzkirah*), Instruction/Mandate (*Amanah*), Position Statement (Attitude Statement), Appeal (*Istisharah*), or Thought Contribution (*Mazhab*). Additionally, there is media in the form of an official magazine called “*Mimbar Ulama*”.¹³⁷

All of that serves as a means of conveying legal messages in response to problems that are currently viral within the community. Finally, the author also describes some forms of decisions that are usually issued by scholars who are members of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) organization.

3.4.1 *Tausiyah* (Religious Guidance)

The Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) in the field of *da'wah* often employs the '*tausiyah*' approach method in its practical application of conveying Islamic law. In its own language review, *tausiyah* is an appeal, warning, and guidance. Referring to the Organizational Guidelines (PO), MUI has the task of providing warnings, advice, and *fatwa* on religious and social issues to the community and government wisely and soothingly. This is stated in Article 6, paragraph 3. MUI itself, in this case, the capacity of an *ulama* who joined has the authority to give *tausiyah* to Muslims and *ulul amri* (government). The law of *tausiyah* itself is not

¹³⁶ Asrorun Ni'am Sholeh, “Materi Sosialisasi Kemkes Oleh Dr. HM. Asrorun Ni'am Sholeh, MA,” 2017, <https://www.academia.edu/download/60054745/PEDOMAN-PENETAPAN-FATWA-sosialisasi-kemkes-materi-2a20190719-43240-1veqau9.pdf>.

¹³⁷ Moch. Nur Ichwan, “‘Ulamā’, State and Politics: Majelis Ulama Indonesia after Suharto,” *Islamic Law and Society* 12, no. 1, (2005): 51.

mandatory for all Muslims to follow. *Tausiyah* itself becomes mandatory for ordinary Muslims who must follow it (*taklid* and *ittiba*).

In terms of *fatwa* law, *tausiyah* itself is included in the *fatwa* section as stated in Article 6, paragraph 3 of the MUI Organizational Guidelines, giving *fatwa* and advice is the duty function of MUI. The article mentions explicitly both in one sentence and in one article, but separated by a conjunction. However, if we refer to the MUI *Fatwa* Stipulation Guidelines (MUI Decree Number: U-596/MUI/X/1997), there is no explicit mention of *tausiyah* specifically. Hence, *fatwa* and *tausiyah* are two different things in their capacity to convey a law.

3.4.2 *Tadzkirah* (Admonition)

Tadzkirah itself has a form of teaching or warning known in Islam, delivered by Islamic scholars or religious leaders. Additionally, the purpose is to provide reminders, advice, and explanations of religious teachings that are easy to understand. Although it is not an official product of MUI, the term *tadzkirah* itself refers to religious teaching delivered by scholars who are members of MUI. Moreover, MUI itself is better known for its *fatwa*, position statements, and recommendations regarding policies related to actual issues.

One of the contemporary examples of *tadzkirah* done by MUI is a call related to the condition of climate change and global warming, which has an impact on natural disasters. One of the *tadzkirah* letters numbered TAD-468/MUI/X/2015 signed by MUI through KH. Ma'ruf Amin and MUI Secretary General Anwar Abbas. The example of the policy product contains three warnings or appeals. Firstly, MUI called the people to repent and ask for forgiveness from Allah. Secondly, MUI urges Muslims to perform the '*Istisqa*' prayer (prayer asking for rain). Lastly, MUI requested the government to take firm and strategic policies that have an impact on stopping or at least reducing the consequences of the long drought.¹³⁸ Hence, the *tadzkirah* about the climate crisis warning (prolonged drought) was made as a result of God's warning to his people.

¹³⁸ MUI, "*Tadzkirah* MUI Terkait Perubahan Iklim dan Pemanasan Global," February 21, 2017, <https://mirror.mui.or.id/berita/10617/Tadzkirah-mui-terkait-perubahan-iklim-dan-pemanasan-global/>.

3.4.3 Position Statement

MUI position statement is an official position or view issued by the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) as a form of response to the issue that is currently viral in the society. The statement aims to provide the institution's appeals, recommendations, standpoints, or views to the government, various layers of society, and related parties, especially Muslims in Indonesia.

The statement itself can be found in various mass media channels in Indonesia, including news articles, videos, and press releases. The position statement by MUI itself is a statement often released in response to demands from the Muslim society, addressing issues such as heresy and new innovations. Some examples of '*Statement of Position*' of MUI can be found in various mass media or more specifically in the MUI website, which contains the positioning of MUI in responding to events, appeals, or recommendations in answering actual issues circulating in society. For example, MUI's position statement on Palestine outlines nine key indicators.¹³⁹ In addition, MUI's seven-point statement on a group considered heretical, called '*Paham Bab Kesucian*' in South Sulawesi.¹⁴⁰

3.4.4 *Fatwa* (A formal Islamic legal opinion)

To start, as an authoritative institution, Hasyim, in his article, explains that MUI has full authority in producing a *fatwa*.¹⁴¹ *Fatwa*, in the definition according to Mohammad Atho Mudzhar, is an Islamic legal opinion given to Islamic jurists as an answer to a question. Furthermore, Mudzhar also explained that a *fatwa* is advice that is not legally binding. However, the legal decision of a '*qadhi*' can actually be binding if faced with a judicial institution.¹⁴²

As it is explained earlier, a *fatwa* is a decision issued by scholars and experts on a particular contextual issue. According to the *Fatwa* of the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI), a separate procedure exists that involves raising a problem

¹³⁹ MUI, "MUI Keluarkan 9 Poin Pernyataan Sikap Atas Palestina," 2024, <https://www.mui.or.id/baca/berita/mui-keluarkan-9-poin-pernyataan-sikap-atas-palestina>.

¹⁴⁰ MUI, "7 Poin Pernyataan Sikap Pemerintah dan MUI Terhadap Paham Bab Kesucian," MUI Provinsi, *Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, January 12, 2023, <https://mirror.mui.or.id/mui-provinsi/46545/7-poin-pernyataan-sikap-pemerintah-dan-mui-terhadap-paham-bab-kesucian/>.

¹⁴¹ Syafiq Hasyim, *The Council of Indonesian Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) and Religious Freedom*, 2011, 8.

¹⁴² M. Atho Mudzhar, *Fatwa-fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia: sebuah studi tentang Pemikiran Hukum Islam di Indonesia, 1975-1988* (INIS, 1993), 1-2.

or *tashawwur al-masalah*. Then, it was comprehensively studied by the *fatwa* commission. The results of the discussion have been approved by the *Fatwa* Commission and result in the formulation of a *fatwa*, which is then stipulated as a *fatwa* and published by the Chairman of the MUI Center.¹⁴³ As of February 2025, the number of *fatwas* issued by the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) amounted to 160. Meanwhile, the *fatwas* authorized in addition to DSN-MUI *fatwas* are 143 *fatwas* that focus on many aspects, such as *aqidah*, business, trade, *halal* determination, and many more.¹⁴⁴

3.5 MUI *Fatwa* on Heresy or ‘*Aliran Sesat*’

To begin, MUI itself has principles or indicators of being called heretical. The following indicators are reported from the official mui.or.id website:

- 1) Denying one of the pillars of faith and pillars of Islam
- 2) Believing or following a creed that is not in accordance with *shar'i* evidence
- 3) Believing in the revelation after the *Qur'an*
- 4) Denying the authenticity of the truth of the *Qur'an*
- 5) Interpreting the *Qur'an* that is not based on the rules of interpretation
- 6) Denying the position of *hadith* as a source of Islamic teachings
- 7) Harassing and denying the Prophet
- 8) Denying the Prophet Muhammad as the last prophet
- 9) Reducing or adding to the main points of worship stipulated by *sharia*
- 10) Disbelieving fellow Muslims just because they are not part of the group.¹⁴⁵

In summary, the ten indicators are normative and have a basis in Islamic religious law. Additionally, there are specific *fatwas* targeting groups considered deviant or heretical. Some sections in this chapter also explain the mechanism of MUI *fatwa* and some *fatwas* that are considered not to give freedom in embracing religion. Thus, below is MUI's attitude towards the groups that are considered heretical by MUI. Some of these

¹⁴³ Dimiyati Sajari, “*Fatwa* MUI Tentang Aliran Sesat Di Indonesia (1976-2010),” *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman* 39, no. 1 (June 9, 2015): 46, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v39i1.38>.

¹⁴⁴ MUI, “Pengesahan 5 *Fatwa* Baru DSN MUI Jadi Landasan Pelaku Industri,” *Berita, Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, October 4, 2021, <https://mirror.mui.or.id/berita/31807/pengesahan-5-fatwa-baru-dsn-mui-jadi-landasan-pelaku-industri/>.

¹⁴⁵ MUI, “MUI - Majelis Ulama Indonesia,” accessed May 18, 2025, <https://www.mui.or.id/baca/berita/ketua-mui-bidang-fatwa-sampaikan-10-kriteria-aliran-sesat>.

groups have been justified as heresy from the mainstream teachings of Muslims through *fatwas* and appeals issued by *ulama* and muftis.

3.5.1 MUI's 1980 and 2005 *Fatwas* against *Ahmadiyah*

The *fatwa* of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) on *Ahmadiyah* has been widely discussed in the literature. MUI, as a *fatwa* production institution, is known for its controversial stance by progressive-moderate Muslims towards the *Ahmadiyah* group. Additionally, MUI, since its establishment in 1975, has released two heretical *fatwas* against the *Ahmadiyah* group. Firstly, MUI's *fatwa*, which was released at the Second National Conference on 11-17 Rajab 1400H/ May 26-June 1, 1980. In fact, the *fatwa* was addressed explicitly to the *Ahmadiyah* group with the '*Qadiani*' sect. Secondly, MUI *fatwa* No. 11/MUNAS VII/MUI/15/2005 about the *Ahmadiyah* sect. This *fatwa* is allegedly a reinforcement of the prohibition and blasphemy against the *Ahmadiyah* group.¹⁴⁶

The first *fatwa* in 1980 was the beginning of MUI's justification of the '*Ahmadiyah*' group as heretical. Specifically, the content of the *fatwa* explained the existence of unrest and potential division related to the teachings applied by *Ahmadiyah*. Furthermore, the content of the call from the *fatwa* is the MUI's call to the twig or regional branch of MUI that the teachings of *Ahmadiyah Qadiani* are 'heretical'. Besides, it contains repentance for those who have already followed the teachings of *Ahmadiyah* and increased vigilance against these teachings.

In the context of MUI's 1980 *fatwa*, MUI reasoned to make the *Ahmadiyah Qadiani* heretical because the religious status of the teachings is no longer Islamic. This was proven through research conducted by MUI on nine books used by *Ahmadiyah*, such as *Tadzkirah* and *Da'wat al-Amir*. Moreover, MUI also asked the government's authority regarding the potential conflict that may occur.¹⁴⁷ Then, MUI issued a recommendation, National Meeting (*Rapat Kerja Nasional Dewan Ulama Indonesia*) 1984, which was addressed to the Ministry of Justice—the recommendation aimed to review the legalization status of *Ahmadiyah*

¹⁴⁶ See in the appendices Fatwa MUI on *Ahmadiyah* 1980 and 2005

¹⁴⁷ Hasyim, *The Council of Indonesian Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) and Religious Freedom*, 2011, 11.

itself.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, MUI's *fatwa* in 2005 is a reinforcement of the previous *fatwa* made in 1980. In fact, MUI's *fatwa* in 2005 about the blasphemy of *Ahmadiyah* was very different from that in 1980. MUI's *fatwa* in 2005 is more specifically misleading and more critical that *Ahmadiyah* is not part of Islam.¹⁴⁹

Accordingly, in the seventh National Conference on July 26-29, 2005 MUI more specifically discussed eleven concepts of *fatwa* which were bound in a book entitled '*Fatwa National Conference (Musyawarah Nasional) VII Majelis Ulama Indonesia*' by MUI which discussed about '*Ahmadiyah Denomination*'.¹⁵⁰ The *fatwa* document of Indonesian Ulama Council Number: 11/MUNAS VII/MUI/15/2005 about *Ahmadiyah* consists of 18 pages which contains introduction information (*Menimbang, Mengingat, Memperhatikan*), Deciding *Ahmadiyah* case, and detailed explanation of findings and research result from Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) team. It seems from that document, at the beginning of Remembering '*Mengingat*', MUI explained some points that *Ahmadiyah* has been spreading the teachings that can disturb society, and the demand of society, MUI firmly opposes *Ahmadiyah* for the realization of the purity of Islamic faith.

Furthermore, in the Remembering '*Mengingat*' section, MUI started mentioning some verses of al-Qur'an, such as (al-Azhab: 40, al-An'am: 153), and *Hadith* of the Prophet narrated by al-Bukhari and at-Tirmizi, explaining the concept of apostasy. Meanwhile, in the Noting '*Memperhatikan*' section, MUI lists several points of the decision of the '*Majma al-Fiqh al-Islami* Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which confirms that the *Ahmadiyah Qadiani* group is proven to be heretical because it assumes Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the Prophet after the Prophet Muhammad, which is heretical and apostate.

Finally, the decision section stipulates the '*Fatwa* on the *Ahmadiyah* group' with reference to the 1980 MUI decision, which is part of outside Islam and heretical. Reaffirmation for those who have already become followers to return to

¹⁴⁸ See SK Menteri Kehakiman RI No. JA 5/23/23/ Tanggal 13.3.1953. The legitimacy is proof that the *Ahmadiyah* Group is legally recognized by the state in Indonesia.

¹⁴⁹ Denden Matin Dayyin and Ahmad Zuhdi Ismail, "Analisis Fatwa MUI Tentang Pelarangan Dan Penyesatan Kepada Kelompok Ahmadiyah di Indonesia," *Jurnal Iman dan Spiritualitas* 2, no. 4 (2022): 479, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jis.v2i3.19213>.

¹⁵⁰ Khoiruddin Nasution, "Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI): On *Ahmadiyah*," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies*, 2008, 3, <https://journal.uui.ac.id/Millah/article/view/351>.

the teachings of Islam (*al-ruju'ah ila al-haqq*), in line with the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. The last point that is considered critical and firm is MUI's appeal to the government to prohibit the spread of *Ahmadiyah* throughout Indonesia, stop the organization, and close all places of its activities.¹⁵¹

3.5.2 MUI *Fatwa* on the New Religious Movement of *al-Salamullah* (Lia Eden)

In 2009, the public was shocked by the phenomenon of a new religious movement called *al-Salamullah*, headed by Lia Aminuddin or Lia Eden. Shortly, Lia Eden, as the leader of the sect was proven to have committed blasphemy against mainstream Islam. MUI, as the highest authority of Islam, also contributed to determining the teachings of *al-Salamullah* as heretical.¹⁵²

In December 1998, MUI issued a *fatwa* specifically aimed at the case of Lia Aminuddin about providing an understanding of the *aqidah* about the angel Jibril based on the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*.¹⁵³ Therefore, the *fatwa* was issued in document no. 768/MUI/XII/1997- which explains that after the Prophet Muhammad, the Angel Gabriel has never come to earth.¹⁵⁴ Specifically, in the document, the pattern is the same as the way MUI works in determining a group as heretical. There are also sections (Noting, Considering, Recalling, and Deciding). First, in the Noting '*Memperhatikan*' section, there are reports and questions mentioned on behalf of Ir. Andan Nadriasta on October 4, 1997. Then, a few points later, a chronology is given regarding activities that are considered deviant, such as Lia Aminuddin being visited by the Angel Gabriel. Then, in the Considering '*Menimbang*' section, several points are also given about the position of Archangel Gabriel based on Islamic sources, its relation to *aqidah*, and the verdict of a person's confession. Additionally, in the Remembering '*Mengingat*' section, it is explained about the basis of the verses of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* regarding the concept of angels and the valid narration explained in the *Qur'an*

¹⁵¹ See appendices *Fatwa* Majelis Ulama Indonesia Nomor: 11/MUNAS VII/MUI/15/2005 Tentang *Ahmadiyah*

¹⁵² VOI, "Salamullah, Sekte Ajaran Lia Eden Disebut Sesat oleh MUI dalam Memori Hari Ini, 22 Desember 1997," VOI - Waktunya Merevolusi Pemberitaan, 2023, <https://voi.id/memori/341426/salamullah-sekte-ajaran-lia-eden-disebut-sesat-oleh-mui-dalam-memori-hari-ini-22-desember-1997>.

¹⁵³ See appendices *Fatwa* Pimpinan MUI Tentang Malaikat Jibril Mendampingi Manusia, Hasil Sidang Komisi *Fatwa* tanggal 11 November 1997.

¹⁵⁴ Al Makin, *Challenging Islamic Orthodoxy*, Popular Culture, Religion and Society. A Social-Scientific Approach (Springer International Publishing, 2016), 1:34, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-38978-3>.

about the visit of Archangel Gabriel to the prophets. Lastly, MUI's unanimous decision on the leader of the group, who is believed to be accompanied and get new teachings from the angel Gabriel, contradicts the *Qur'an* and is considered heretical and misleading.¹⁵⁵

3.5.3 *Fatwa* of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) on the Gerakan Fajar Nusantara (GAFATAR)

In 2015, the public was shocked by the emergence of a community that developed a new ideology that was contrary to the ideology of Pancasila and Islam itself under the name Fajar Nusantara Movement (GAFATAR).¹⁵⁶ The movement is considered deviant by the state and MUI itself because it believes that Ahmad Moshaddeq is the Messiah Al-Maw'ud. Furthermore, the GAFATAR group believes that Moshaddeq is the messiah or saviour promised to the followers of the teachings of Abraham (*bani ismail and bani ishaq*), replacing the Prophet Muhammad SAW. As a result, the group's beliefs have been debunked and deemed heretical and misleading by the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI). Moreover, the group is believed to be related to *al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyah*, which has been declared heretical by the MUI previously.¹⁵⁷

This is stated in the *fatwas* of the Indonesian *Ulama* Council Number 6 of 2016 concerning the Fajar Nusantara Movement (GAFATAR). The text includes several heretical *fatwa* decisions by MUIs from several regions, such as North Maluku MUI *Fatwa* Number 11 of 2015 on Fajar Nusantara Movement (GAFATAR), Aceh *Ulama* Consultative Assembly *Fatwa* Number 01 of 2015 on Fajar Nusantara Movement (GAFATAR). In addition, the West Kalimantan MUI *fatwa* Number 01/MUI-West Kalimantan/I/2016 on the Teachings of the *Fajar Nusantara Movement* (GAFATAR). In line with this, all of these texts emphasize and clearly establish the status of the GAFATAR group as a deviant group. Specifically, in the Central MUI *fatwa* text, it is also explained that there is a section, Remembering '*Mengingat*', about the concept of *Hanif* and verses related to Prophet Ibrahim.

¹⁵⁵ Syahril Siddik, "Fatwa of Indonesian Ulama Council On The God's Kingdom-Eden" 16 (2018): 270.

¹⁵⁶ Muhammad Wildan, "Gerakan Fajar Nusantara (Gafatar): Krisis Ideologi Dan Ancaman Kebangsaan" 2 (2019): 2.

¹⁵⁷ Muhammad Rahmatullah, "Aliran Gerakan Fajar Nusantara (Gafatar) Dalam Perspektif Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Kalimantan Barat" 12 (2018): 49–50.

In addition, it is also explained about the verse of *i'tiba* (following) the true religion, the threat against those who apostatize from religion, and the verse that explains the position of Prophet Muhammad as the final prophet.¹⁵⁸ Interestingly, the GAFATAR group in MUI's explanation is divided into two categories: the first category being those who believe in GAFATAR's religious teachings are apostates and must return to the right teachings (*al-ruju'ila al-haq*). Meanwhile, the second category consists of those who join only to participate in social activities but do not believe in the teachings of GAFATAR. Besides, they must leave the community so as not to be exposed to deviant teachings.

Nevertheless, in addition to the heretical *fatwa* against GAFATAR, recommendations are also explained in the form that *ulama* must foster and guide those who are exposed to deviant teachings. It recommends that the government prohibit all activities carried out by GAFATAR, especially those related to religious teachings. Lastly, it also continues to urge Muslims to be aware of deviant teachings and continue to accept these former members as part of *ukhuwah* (*Islamiyah, Wathaniyah and Bashariah*).

3.5.4 MUI's Position Statement on *Ma'had al-Zaytun*

In 2002, MUI once researched and traced the deviations that occurred in the *al-Zaytun* Islamic boarding school. The result of the investigation concluded that there were deviations or heretical in the teachings of this activity. Indicators that are considered deviant teachings in *al-Zaytun* are men and women praying in mixed rows. Next, congregational sins that can be redeemed with money, the obligation to prioritize teachings over prayers.¹⁵⁹ Interestingly, during the research, there were no deviations in the *pesantren* curriculum, but it found it in the way they are worshiping. As a religious institution, MUI has so far only appealed through media broadcasts and statements of attitude towards the *al-Zaytun pesantren*.

¹⁵⁸ See appendices of *Fatwa* Majelis Ulama Indonesia Nomor 6 Tahun 2016 tentang Aliran Gerakan Fajar Nusantara (GAFATAR)

¹⁵⁹ Yundri Akhyar and Wirda Ningsih, "Deviations from the Teachings of Ma'had *Al-Zaytun*: A Review on MUI (Indonesian Ulama Council) Recommendations Toward Aswaja Ideology," *At-Ta'dib* 18, no. 2 (January 22, 2024): 30, <https://doi.org/10.21111/attadib.v18i2.10443>.

The status of *al-Zaytun* itself is categorized as heretical by MUI officials because of its controversial teachings, such as the holy land, female preachers, and mixed congregational prayer. Others, its controversy regarding Soekarno's *madzhab*.¹⁶⁰ Although a *fatwa* is likely to be issued, MUI's authority in handling the problematic *al-Zaytun* so far is at the stage of being asked for clarification. Moreover, this initiative is to reform the controversial leader of *Ma'had al-Zaytun* (Panji Gumilang).¹⁶¹ In addition, it aligns with several approaches to groups that are considered heretical. MUI also provides guidance and assistance to those who are exposed to or indoctrinated in deviant teachings by the Da'wah Commission and the MUI Education Commission.

3.6 Conclusion

The two previous Islamic authorities (MUI and MORA), played an important role in reviewing formal and informal policy regulations. In terms of authority, MORA represents the state and acts in accordance with the constitution and laws. In regulating religious affairs in Indonesia, including Islam, this is outlined in several internal policies of the Ministry, such as (Decision Letters, Ministerial Instructions, Joint Decree with multiple ministers, or decisions from the Director General of the Ministry of Religious Affairs). Meanwhile, MUI's decisions or legal opinions from Muslim scholars are not binding. MUI decisions can serve as a primary reference for Muslims in practicing their religion, encompassing (*ibadah, muamalah, fiqh, and aqidah*).

However, issues of faith often become a source of controversy and sensitive within the Muslim community in Indonesia, particularly regarding deviations from orthodox beliefs by certain groups. A group can be deemed heretical if it has been declared as such by an authority with the power to judge based on legal opinion. Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) holds the authority to issue *fatwas* justifying deviations by groups deemed problematic. Numerous examples of *fatwas* declaring certain groups as deviant issued by the MUI include

¹⁶⁰ Kompas Cyber Media, "Beragam Temuan MUI Jelang Terbitkan *Fatwa* Terkait *Al-Zaytun* Halaman all," KOMPAS.com, June 30, 2023, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2023/06/30/08525251/beragam-temuan-mui-jelang-terbitkan-fatwa-terkait-Al-Zaytun>.

¹⁶¹ Tempo, "MUI Pernah Mengkaji Kontroversi Ponpes *Al-Zaytun* pada 2002: Begini Temuannya | tempo.co," Tempo, June 21, 2023, <https://www.tempo.co/politik/mui-pernah-mengkaji-kontroversi-ponpes-Al-Zaytun-pada-2002-begini-temuannya-174698>.

those directed at *Ahmadiyah*, *al-Salamullah* (Lia Eden), GAFATAR, and *al-Zaytun*.

Unlike MUI, MORA prioritizes an approach based on internal policies and laws established by the constitution. Some of MORA's policies prioritize the prevention of unrest, minimizing violence, and restricting the activities of groups considered problematic and potentially disruptive to public order. There are several Joint Ministerial Decrees (*Surat Keputusan Bersama*) involving the Minister of Religion that represent MORA's decisions and approach toward groups deemed heretical. Historically, these are documented in the 2008 Joint Ministerial Decision regarding *Ahmadiyah* and the 2016 Joint Ministerial Decrees (*Surat Keputusan Bersama*) regarding GAFATAR. Additionally, certain groups have been labeled as deviant through statements and position papers issued by Minister Maftuh Basyuni in 2006 regarding *al-Salamullah*. Additionally, restrictions were imposed on the *Ma'had al-Zaytun* institution through a decision by Minister Yaqut Cholil Qoumas in 2023.

Finally, this chapter explains that authority is not only based on organizational and leadership figures, but also on the authority and legitimacy that can regulate religious harmony in Indonesia through the issuance of *fatwas* and policies.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS OF INDONESIA ULAMA COUNCIL (MUI) AND THE MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS (MORA) TOWARDS HERESY GROUPS IN INDONESIA

4.1 Overview

This chapter discusses some topics related to the authorities of the two institutions regarding heresy groups, which are relevant to my previous discussion and help unify the two chapters (Chapters II and III). This aims to align the framework and structure of the thesis in Chapter I and address the research question as a result of the research. Some previous studies have also been related to the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) related to heresy. Furthermore, the focus of this chapter is on the dynamics of the authority of the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) in influencing the policies of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). Some of the main concerns in this research are the study of the influence on heresy groups, or '*aliran sesat*', which encompasses four groups considered heretical by the religious institution's authority. Moreover, this section categorizes them into two groups, deemed heretical, ranging from the oldest to the contemporary. For example, *Ahmadiyah* (oldest) and *al-Zaytun* (current). In addition, it also divided them into other categories, such as teachings originating in Indonesia (*al-Salamullah* (Lia Eden), GAFATAR, and *al-Zaytun*) and on an international scale (*Ahmadiyah*).

The indicator used to analyze the dynamics of the authority of the two institutions is the policies or decisions specifically directed at groups considered heretical. Regarding this, it gives full attention to the *fatwa* issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). It serves as the primary reference for Muslims and can influence policymakers (state). Referring to Foucault's theory, power can be seen as diverse and dispersed relations, like a network of networks in a strategic landscape area. Furthermore, Foucault's concept of "*Power and Knowledge*" explains that '*Knowledge*' is often legitimized as a '*Power*'. If it is related to the phenomenon of Muslim society, the community's understanding of religious practices and knowledge affects the response or reaction of the *ulama*. Hence, the knowledge of the *ulama* can co-opt and navigate the Muslim community's

understanding of certain religious issues. Conversely, power that does not produce knowledge, and there is no knowledge in it, means that there is no power relation in it.¹⁶²

Some important focuses in this chapter that can differentiate it from previous research results are the composition and role of MUI and MORA. Many literatures have discussed Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) and '*Heresy Group*'. Not a few have discussed the government side, in this case the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). Specifically, the dynamics of the authority of community organizations that influence the state. If examined more closely, the author argues that there is an anomaly in the hierarchy of authority regarding the position of authority between the state and civil society organizations. For example, Afan Gaffar (2002) cites Heyzer, Ryker, and Quizon (1995), who identify three roles of civil society organizations in influencing the state.

Firstly, supporting and empowering people at the lowest level of society (grassroots). Secondly, increasing political influence through cooperative relations between the state and the organization. Lastly, to determine the direction of future government policies and agendas.¹⁶³ Related to that, MUI has acted in accordance with the theory previously. MUI, as a civil society, supports all policies made by the government. Politically, MUI also participated in influencing the political constellation.¹⁶⁴ Engagingly, it often serves as an influencer of policies towards the authorities, such as policies from the *ulama* in the form of a *fatwa*, which the government has followed. For instance, halal certification, Islamic banking, health policy (vaccines), environmental policy, and religious sects.

As discussed earlier, the anomaly in the hierarchy of authority that is referring to is that the state should have the authority to regulate and control community organizations (not under civil organization).¹⁶⁵ Therefore, according to Max Weber's theory of authority, legal-rational authority is a form of authority based on legal laws and procedures. The state officials or leaders have positions governed by official regulations and recognized by bureaucratic organizations.¹⁶⁶ In this case, civil organizations are civil

¹⁶² Foucault, *Power / Knowledge*.

¹⁶³ Afan Gaffar, *Politik Indonesia: transisi menuju demokrasi* (Pustaka Pelajar, 1999).

¹⁶⁴ In 2017 and 2019, the constellation of regional leader election and Presidential election have been held. The author assumes that MUI participated in influencing the Muslim community in choosing leaders who are categorized as '*Ulama*' recommendations. See *Legitimasi Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) dalam Kontestasi Islam Politik Mutakhir* (Mohammad Baihaqi).

¹⁶⁵ See Law No. 16/2017 on Community Organizations.

¹⁶⁶ "Max Weber: Traditional, Legal-Rational, and Charismatic Authority," accessed May 31, 2025, <https://danawilliams2.tripod.com/authority.html>.

society that have the right to organize and voice their aspirations, but must be subject to the state in order to maintain a balance between freedom and the interests of the state.

Subsequently, the relationship between the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (MORA) in terms of authority, there is no contestation between the two. Instead, the state, in this case the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), is often influenced and follows the authority of the *ulama* through *fatwas*, suggestions, and statements of attitude from the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI). In relation to this, MUI, if imagined as Bourdieu's theory of 'symbolic power', is a form that appears as something that legitimizes, strengthens, and produces social hierarchy.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, Bourdieu assumes that this is also related to the 'monopolization of sacred capital' through *fatwas* that are often referred to by the *ummah* and *umara* (government).¹⁶⁸ The monopoly is a sacred or respected capital to enforce domination and legitimacy. This chapter discusses how the sacred capital '*fatwa*' against heresy groups (*Ahmadiyah*, *al-Salamullah* (Lia Eden), GAFATAR, and *al-Zaytun*) can influence the policy of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) by applying a pattern of decisions based on the institution of *ulama*. In addition, it can also describe between authority and knowledge that can produce power.

Further to that discussion, this study aims to answer the research question of what factors influence the policy-making process of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) regarding the *fatwa* of the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) on heresies, and how these factors shape their policies and actions.

4.2 Findings

This subchapter is organized into five sub-sections. The first section presents the legitimization of MUI in handling heresy, showcasing the authority of this council to establish a *fatwa* against groups considered heretical. The second is the position of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), which describes the role or position of a state in handling cases related to heretical groups. The third explains the relationship between the two institutions and how they interacted with each other regarding handling heresy. The fourth section demonstrates a comprehension of the topic regarding the hierarchy of

¹⁶⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *O poder simbólico* (DIFEL, 1989).

¹⁶⁸ Hugh Urban, "Sacred Capital: Pierre Bourdieu and the Study of Religion," *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 15, no. 4 (2003): 354–89, <https://doi.org/10.1163/157006803322697416>.

power between the aforementioned institutions, which explains heretical views. Lastly, it reflects the influence of Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) in shaping religious teachings based on the majority Islamic understanding in Indonesia. Additionally, how this institution from Ulama has a significant influence based on *fatwa* and accumulation public's perspective to issue a policy by MORA.

4.2.1 The Legitimation of MUI in Defining Heresy Groups (*Aliran Sesat*)

To begin, the study of power can be traced back to the theory of Michael Foucault. Knowledge has a close relationship with power. Additionally, the term '*the authority truth*' can be applied through power accumulated through knowledge. Furthermore, according to Foucault, a truth can be produced through a society that has a regime of truth. In essence, the truth is only a general politics of truth.¹⁶⁹

Therefore, normalization is often contained in the discourse of '*governmentality*', which is normative. Normativity refers to the power of social and legal norms that can influence and impose on many people. Further, these normative are oriented towards external rules that they must follow and adjust. Functionally, normativity aims to produce stability and conformity, with the goal of preventing deviation and protecting society from chaos or state instability.¹⁷⁰

On top of that, a religious-oriented institution often faces a dynamic phenomenon. From time to time, religious institutions act as an accumulation of truth that is already contained in the rules or legal norms. Thus, any deviation or mistake will be punished and tried to those who are considered heretical. In the case of religious institutions in Indonesia such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), both have an authority in navigating and regulating the way of religion that is considered truth. This is based on the guidelines and stance of their respective independent decisions.

Subsequently, all guidelines and rules agreed upon by the authorities are considered the '*absolute truth*' and should be obeyed by many people. In the case MUI and MORA have the tools to perpetuate their religious authority in a 'policy' or 'decision' power to mobilize Muslims in particular. Furthermore, MUI has a

¹⁶⁹ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1980), 131.

¹⁷⁰ Shelley Tremain, ed., *Foucault and the Government of Disability*, 4. Pr (University of Michigan Press, 2010), 191–93.

series of *fatwas* that can be referenced by the majority of Muslims. Likewise, MORA as a state representative, has specific policies and guidelines contained in guidebooks and laws for all religions, and more specifically, for Islam.¹⁷¹

Nevertheless, MUI itself has the authority to determine a decision (*fatwa*) that is considered truth which is normative way after the internal determination process of the organization. It aims to be applied by all Muslims to certain recommendations related to behaviour, attitudes, and morality. According to Syafiq Hasyim, a *fatwa* is understood as a means to normalize Muslim morality. The discourse of ‘governmentality’ becomes a tool to demonstrate that the function of the *fatwa* is to monitor and control Muslim morality in Indonesia.¹⁷² As a result, all of things that is attributed by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) is a form of absolute validity. Likewise, various problems faced by the community that are novel. The authority of the *ulama* plays a crucial role in this case, specifically in deciding whether it is permissible to proceed with a case.

Therefore, a religious institution in Indonesia that monopolizes the sacred capital is rightly addressed to the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI).¹⁷³ Furthermore, is the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) the only Islamic organization that is the main reference for Muslims? The temporary answer is that there are several large Islamic organizations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. As well as other organizations that also have the authority to decide on the legal form of ‘Islam’. Both institutions actually have the same framework for producing a *fatwa*. The authority of MUI in its journey is higher than those two institutions because it encompasses many Islamic institutions (institutions within institutions). Different from the two, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) can be illustrated as a giant house of Islamic organizations that

¹⁷¹ The Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) has so far published many guidelines aimed at guiding Muslims to worship in accordance with the guidance of scholars and sources of Islamic law. Among them are special guides on *fiqh* of *zakat*, *haji*, *fiqh* of worship, *infaq* and *waqf*, and religious guidelines. All of these are applied and circulated through several regional sub-branches (national, provincial, sub-district, and village levels). These can be further applied and socialized by extension workers, preachers, imam desa and so on.

¹⁷² Hasyim, *The Shariatization of Indonesia*, 36.

¹⁷³ The monopoly of sacred capital is a term that I use from the theory of French philosopher Pierre Bourdieu. The term is a reference to the sociology of religion that combines an understanding of symbolic religion and socio-religious practices. The religious metaphor explains how symbolic capital works in society, especially in terms of legitimacy and symbolic power. The author concludes that all religious attributes that declare them as *ulama* in a religious group organization can have a great influence in navigating and legitimizing a society's behavior, teachings, and attitudes. In the context of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), I assume that often *fatwa* is used as a symbolic monopoly of religious decisions that have the power to regulate society.

accommodates all groups of Islamic civil organizations under the umbrella institution. Reported from an interview with Firdaus Syam.

*"The Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) is a forum for Muslims where approximately eighty organizations are gathered. These include the Islamic organizations Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah and others. Which are spread at the central, provincial, and district or city levels."*¹⁷⁴

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Consequently, it is not surprising that MUI has the highest legitimacy in justifying a decision related to *halal*, *haram*, and everything that is prohibited and permitted. Because many scholars or *ulama* have compiled decisions from diverse organizational backgrounds and groups.

In the context of sentencing a decision of *takfir* or heresy against a problematic group, MUI itself has the full feasibility to decide whether a group is heretical or not. Compared to other institutions, often the *fatwa* about heresy addressed to certain groups does not get a rebuttal from other organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. Interestingly, in the context of *aqidah* affairs, Islamic civil organizations (NU, Muhammadiyah, and other Muslim organizations) are unity in the verdict decision from MUI. Thus, this is because some delegates from each organization are part of the organizational structure.¹⁷⁵ In the end, MUI becomes the main patron who declares a problematic or heretical in response to public demands.

Theoretically, the *fatwa* authority of the *ulama* in this context is a product of the *ulama*'s (practitioners ability) which meets the religious piety needs.¹⁷⁶ Frequently, the Muslim community needs clarity on an occurrence and deviation that is considered unnatural against a group based on MUI's view. Instead of waiting for the government's decision regarding the status of 'misguidance against a group', the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) is considered the most

¹⁷⁴ Interview with the Head of Commission for Assessment, Research, and Development of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) (Assoc) Prof. Dr. Firdaus Syam, M.A. PhD., May 28, 2025.

¹⁷⁵ See *Fatwa Aliran Sesat dan Politik Hukum Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI)*, Syafiq Hasyim.

¹⁷⁶ Bradford Verter, "Spiritual Capital: Theorizing Religion with Bourdieu against Bourdieu," *Sociological Theory* 21, no. 2 (2003): 155.

awaited decision in answering public unrest. Furthermore, this is proven by the answer of (Assoc) Prof. Dr. Firdaus Syam, Ph.D.

*“Actually, our society is very thirsty and enthusiastic (in terms of negative sentiment) towards the flow or group of worshipers who are considered troubling, misleading, deviant, and related to blasphemy. In the era of social media, the enthusiasm is extraordinary. People demand that MUI be proactive against the heretical groups. When MUI is proactive, they (the general Muslim community) are extremely grateful to us.”*¹⁷⁷

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Therefore, he further pointed out that the impact of MUI's *fatwa* at the community level (grassroots) is extraordinary in getting a positive reaction from the Muslim community. Primarily, it pertains to cases against sects that are considered problematic or heretical. He continued.

*“Indonesian society has a high level of religiosity (piety), perhaps all the expectations of the community are burdened to us MUI. In addition, people often question the role of the government (Ministry of Religious Affairs), which does not respond at all. This is inversely proportional to MUI.”*¹⁷⁸

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Based on this, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) plays a crucial role in determining heresy. In the context of Bourdieu's theory, an individual or institution plays a crucial role in positioning itself in a symbolic form that is respected by those who consider it sacred or holy. In the context of heresy against groups, people prefer the *aqidah* truth reference from the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) over that of the government's Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). Thus, when the decision of heresy is issued, it is final and absolutely true, without any rebuttal or counter legal decision from other individuals or organizations, even from the government (Ministry of Religious Affairs). The similar stated regarding about intervene MUI *fatwa* was expressed by Dedi Slamet Riyadi, who is an official of the sub-directorate of Understanding Islam and

¹⁷⁷ “Interview with the Head of Commission for Assessment, Research, and Development of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) (Assoc) Prof. Dr. Firdaus Syam, M.A. PhD.,” May 28, 2025. This interview I used in-depth structured questions regarding the topic of the influence of Indonesian Council Ulama (MUI) in navigating the term of ‘heresy’ toward the government (Ministry of Religious Affairs).

¹⁷⁸ “Interview with the Head of Commission for Assessment, Research, and Development of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) (Assoc) Prof. Dr. Firdaus Syam, M.A. PhD.,” May 28, 2025.

Handling Conflict at the Directorate of Islamic Guidance, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

*“The Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) have no direct relationship with each other, especially within the structural scope. The government also has its own authority. MUI has its own duties and roles... The state authority, in this case the Ministry of Religious Affairs, cannot revoke a fatwa from the MUI, for example. Because a fatwa is part of religious belief and expression. Additionally, it is protected and guaranteed by the Constitution to issue and express the ritual of belief. Thus, the government cannot and should not revoke MUI's fatwa.”*¹⁷⁹

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The government has no right to withdraw a *fatwa* that was issued. It is clear that the decision of a MUI authority cannot be contested by other institutions, particularly by the state. Hence, a religious decision issued by an Islamic civil organization is supported by the constitution. MUI's position in determining heresy, for example, is legalized by the state as part of expression. But often the decision is used as a political tool to get rid of a group that can capitalize on a congregation in a particular sect. As a consequence, the drawback is that if a view of faith or a teaching decision is monopolized by only one institution, it often leads to inquisition toward the considered heretical groups.¹⁸⁰

4.2.2 The Position of Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) in Handling Heresy Groups (*Aliran Sesat*)

After discussing the feasibility of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) in determining heresy. The following subsection will explain whether the State or the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) has the authority to determine heresy or not. This becomes a critical question by the author in placing the position of the state in dealing with groups that are considered problematic and considered heretical by the authority of religious institutions.

¹⁷⁹ Interview with the Head of Sub directorate of Islamic Religious Understanding and Religious Conflict Handling, Ministry of Religious Affair (MORA) Dedi Slamet Riyadi, M.Ag, May 23, 2025. This interview was held in Ministry of Religious Affairs office in Kebon Sirih, Center of Jakarta. This interview process, I conducted structure questioned, which I ask roughly 10-15 questions which no following up question. Overall, this collecting data just want to find the answer of research question, whether MUI can influence MORA in terms of state policy.

¹⁸⁰ Hasyim, “Fatwa Aliran Sesat Dan Politik Hukum Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI),” 250.

To understand the nature of a state and religion is to examine its constitution. In general, constitutions have been organized in a way that limits the power of government in exercising authority over its people. As legal documents, some constitutions have a state-religion nexus. In Indonesia, the constitution has adopted a model that positions religion as an essential factor in the state system. One proof of this is the recognition that God exists, especially in the first principle of *Pancasila*. In this regard, all symbolic forms of religion and the Indonesian constitution also incorporated specific chapters or articles dealing with religious affairs.¹⁸¹

Frankly, the position of religion in a country is often a mediator and neutral in taking care of the worship procedures of all aspects of religion (Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Kong Hu Chu). The state's limitation in regulating religion is only limited to supporting all religious activities adopted by the community. In addition, the state does not have to intervene in a religion or its teachings itself. In recent scholarship, religion is defined as a formal involvement with others. It means that the state plays a role in supporting and intervening in taking care of the religious activities of the majority and minority religions.

The idea of the state regulating religion is often linked to religious freedom (Gill 2008; Grim and Finke 2011). Frequently, the state's involvement in managing religious activities leads to injustice and discrimination against minorities.¹⁸² In light of this, governments essentially have a role in bureaucratizing religion and tend to have 'technical' characteristics. However, this process is often characterized by conflict and exclusivity, as religious references impose standardized religious ideas and favour the majority. According to Ahmad Najib Burhani, religion in a country often dichotomizes the majority and minority, which can refer to the politics of numbers that are vulnerable to politicization. Thus, the term between majority and minority can create negative social segregation in society.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ See Ismatu Ropi, *Religion and Regulation in Indonesia* (Springer Singapore, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2827-4>.

¹⁸² David T. Buckley and Luis Felipe Mantilla, "God and Governance: Development, State Capacity, and the Regulation of Religion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 52, no. 2 (2013): 329.

¹⁸³ Ahmad Najib Burhani, *Agama, Kultur, (In)Toleransi, Dan Dilema Minoritas Di Indonesia* (LIPI, 2020), 5.

A condition that positions the state as a neutral party is a necessity in dealing with religion in Indonesia. The dichotomy between majority and minority is often a dilemma that must be faced by the government, in this case, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). According to Ropi, the position of religion in a constitution sometimes contradicts each other. On the one hand, the concept of freedom of religion is clearly enshrined in certain articles of the constitution. On the other hand, some rules impose requirements aimed at limiting this freedom.¹⁸⁴ Accordingly, there are always loopholes or ways for a state to be impartial to the idea of religious freedom because of an interest in the public decision.

Gvodes have outlined this context in four patterns of subversion practices relating to public order and political adventure. Firstly, state provisions enshrined in the constitution that give the government the power to ban groups and practices that conflict with the state. Secondly, placing religious freedom under special categories, such as the religion and culture section. Thirdly, it infringes on religious freedom by redefining ‘religious freedom’ in a narrow and restrictive manner that deviates significantly from the standard definition of the term. Lastly, it involves a vague and undefined constitution that mandates restrictions on the right to freedom of religion. However, it justifies restrictive practices based on international human rights law, such as the ICCPR 1965.¹⁸⁵

From this, restrictions on freedom are commonplace in every country. Most countries leave aspects to support all religious activities in their constitutions. Nevertheless, other rules collide that limit the movement of a group to worship certain beliefs. Based on this, it is enough to know that each country has its own rules in regulating religion in the majority and minority. It is often in its application that the state has the main reason to bring order to avoid horizontal conflict.

For example, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) has historically often handled new religious sects or movement groups. Among them are *Ahmadiyah* (2005), Lia Eden (2009), GAFATAR (2016), and *al-Zaytun* (2023). The position of a state in responding to this does not take sides or justify a

¹⁸⁴Ropi, *Religion and Regulation in Indonesia* (Springer Singapore, 2017), 20.

¹⁸⁵Nikolas K. Gvosdev, “Constitutional Doublethink, Managed Pluralism and Freedom of Religion,” *Religion, State and Society* 29, no. 2 (2001): 81–90, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09637490120074774>.

particular teaching. Again, the government basically complies with the law and constitution in involving a sect that is considered problematic. Also, it is not influenced by external factors or certain community organizations. Even though the state (Ministry of Religious Affairs) has the duty to regulate it. In line with this, it is very interesting to note the answer from Dedi Slamet Riyadi regarding the neutral position of the state in dealing with heretical groups.

“In terms of regulation, we really try to guarantee its neutrality. In terms of regulations, in terms of policies, decisions as a government institution, yes, we have never produced policies that favor Ahmadiyah, In terms of regulations, and in terms of policies, we remain neutral, placing ourselves as part of the government or in religious affairs.”¹⁸⁶

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Furthermore, the government's efforts in relation to ‘groups that are considered heretical’ or ‘groups that are considered problematic’ are still aimed at guaranteeing the rights of all citizens. Further, citizens' rights include the right to religion and belief. Related to the article mentioned by the informant, it is part of the policy outlined in the constitution. The goal is to handle problematic minority groups while still protecting them and maintaining public order.

Judging from their main tasks and functions, MUI and Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) have a role in managing the Muslim and other religious people. Based on the findings in the field, in determining a heresy, for example, against a group, the state should not decide whether it is heretical or not.¹⁸⁷ The state in this case always refers to the constitution and is based on Ministry regulations such as the Minister of Religious Affairs Decree (KMA), Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation (PMA), Joint Decree (SKB), and Directorate General Regulation. Referring to these regulations, the government always has a position on a policy in the name of obeying the state constitution. From these regulations, it can be concluded that they are products of the state in controlling society, a common feature in the context of political discourse.

¹⁸⁶ Interview with the Head of Subdirector of Islamic Religious Understanding and Religious Conflict Handling, Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) Dedi Slamet Riyadi, M.Ag.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with the Head of Subdirector of Islamic Religious Understanding and Religious Conflict Handling, Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) Dedi Slamet Riyadi, M.Ag.

In contrast, based on Migdal's theory of the origin of the state, a basic institution of state power can organize society without significant compromise or other social concessions, including those related to religion and ethnicity.¹⁸⁸ This is supported by the fact that state power depends on dominance over social forces. Reflecting on the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (MORA), deciding that a group is misguided means dismissing or side-lining social power on the basis of deviating from the mainstream. Meanwhile, the ideal is to defend the idea of religious freedom, but siding with the ideal can undermine a state's dominance.

In practice, the state is supposed to be neutral and ensure that everyone gets a fair shake. Frequently, the application is far from fair. The state always prioritizes principles based on the security and stability of an area in the context of dealing with the emergence of heretical groups that can disturb many parties. The Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) does not have the authority to determine whether a group is heretical or not, but only to provide guidance and understanding that is considered problematic by mainstream groups. Reporting from the findings in the field, the main key is harmony.¹⁸⁹ Thus, things that harm and disturb public order are the primary considerations in determining a decision related to religion.

4.2.3 The Relationship between the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) in Handling Heresy Groups

To start, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) is often equated with the task of regulating religion in Indonesia. However, the approach to regulating is very different. According to Norshahril Saat, the concepts of co-optation and capture are used to describe the dynamics of the relationship between the state and the official Ulama. Both of these can influence, resist, and capitalize on each other's strengths. First, co-optation in this context refers to the state's strategy in neutralizing opposition voices to achieve social dominance. Second, capture

¹⁸⁸ Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*, Princeton Paperbacks (Princeton Univ. Press, 1988).

¹⁸⁹ Interview with the Head of Subdirector of Islamic Religious Understanding and Religious Conflict Handling, Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) Dedi Slamet Riyadi, M.Ag.

refers to how actors apply influence to affect policy, law, and resource allocation.¹⁹⁰

In the context between MORA and MUI, the two actually do not have a direct structural relationship. Although it is not a structural relationship, it cannot be denied that some personnel or employees of MORA are directly involved in the administration of MUI. According to the findings in the field, it also confirms that the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) is not part of MUI organization. It is even the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) that provides operational assistance to several religious organizations, including Islamic religious organizations such as MUI. In addition, in the structural hierarchy, the position of the state is neither above nor below MUI, and it has no authority to pressure the government based on a *fatwa*.¹⁹¹

Based on previous, referring to the case selection in this research, the state and Ulama at least have the same pattern in determining a decision against a group that is considered problematic. Both are often linked to each other to take action in disciplining a group or sect. In the case of *Ahmadiyah*, for example, it can be said that the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Ulama have a similar pattern in dealing with the *Ahmadiyah* group, which involves limiting their movement activities. MUI's decision in this case is purely because the *aqidah* of the *Ahmadiyah* group is considered to deviate from the teachings of Islam, which is actually understood by the majority of Muslims. Meanwhile, the Government, through a Joint Decree with other Ministries, is also emphasizing the need to maintain security and public order, *Keamanan dan Ketertiban Masyarakat* (KANTIBMAS).

Meanwhile, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) considers the aspect of *aqidah*, which is indeed a sacred and non-negotiable matter. According to informants, all matters concerning the issue of deviation of faith are not always related to disturbing order, nor are they directly. Therefore, such issues have the potential to create segregation and prolonged social conflict. In contrast, if the

¹⁹⁰ Norshahril Saat and ISEAS Publishing, *The State, Ulama and Islam in Malaysia and Indonesia* (Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 28–30, <https://doi.org/10.5117/9789462982932>.

¹⁹¹ Interview with the Head of Subdirector of Islamic Religious Understanding and Religious Conflict Handling, Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) Dedi Slamet Riyadi, M.Ag.

Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) is guided by the consideration of not disturbing security, MUI is actually more proactive and initiative on issues related to heretical groups.¹⁹²

In the case of *Ahmadiyah*, for example, the group was convicted of heresy by the scholars at the National Conference (MUNAS) and National Work Meeting (RAKERNAS).¹⁹³ In 1980, MUI issued a ruling on *Ahmadiyah* as a group that deviated from the core teachings of Islam, then later strengthened in 2005 by stipulating the prohibition of all *Ahmadiyah* activities and emphasizing that the teaching is heresy. As time goes by, three years after the MUI's determination as heretical, the Government, in this case, including the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (MORA), the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Attorney General, made a joint decision to maintain religious harmony and peace.

Interestingly, the decision had already been discussed by the PAKEM institution on May 12, 2005, following the issuance of the *fatwa* by MUI.¹⁹⁴ Based on this, the state has an essential role in presenting evidence against a group to justify it as heretical. The existence of the MUI *fatwa* is also a tool of the government, clearly has the obligation to prohibit *Ahmadiyah*. Additionally, because there is a *fatwa* from MUI, the government must automatically prohibit *Ahmadiyah*.¹⁹⁵ The causality between the state (MORA) and the Ulama can be said to be a form of co-optation of each. According to Norshahril Saat's theory, the state is highly considered when determining a misguided group. It chooses to side with the will of the religious or ethnic majority. Consequently, that co-optation is inevitable, the state chooses to minimize all forms of opposition that can affect its dominance in society.

However, Ulama, as an agency and extension of the majority Muslim society also see the phenomenon of heresy such as *Ahmadiyah* as a challenge in testing the authority or power of the government. MUI, through a *fatwa*, can exert

¹⁹² "Interview with the Head of Commission for Assessment, Research, and Development of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) (Assoc) Prof. Dr. Firdaus Syam, M.A. PhD.," May 28, 2025.

¹⁹³ See Fatwa MUI about *Ahmadiyah*

¹⁹⁴ BAKOR-PAKEM itself is part of a government institution initiated by the Attorney General's Office of the Republic of Indonesia that functions as a supervisor of religious beliefs and religious orientations that deviate from the main teachings.

¹⁹⁵ Fariz Alnizar, "The Language of Exclusion: Ideology and Power in the Fatwa of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia on *Ahmadiyah*," *Journal of Islamic Law (JIL)* 6 (2025): 105.

some influence on the regime, providing a basis for a positive law that can lead to the formation of a binding law or policy. For example, the Joint Decree of 3 Ministers (Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affairs, and Attorney General) against *Ahmadiyah* and the GAFATAR group.

Meanwhile, GAFATAR is a movement group that is considered problematic, and the government restricts its activities through a Joint Decree (SKB). In fact, MUI's *fatwa* on heresy against GAFATAR is also alleged to have a significant influence on government policy. This can happen because the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) can shape a religious discourse and public opinion, which then puts pressure on the state to change its policies.¹⁹⁶ Similarly to the *Ahmadiyah* heretical fatwa, the one against GAFATAR was released on February 3, 2016. Meantime, the Joint Decree (SKB) of three ministers (Attorney General, Minister of Religious Affairs, and Minister of Home Affairs) regarding the prohibition of activities was announced on March 24, 2016.¹⁹⁷ This is a follow-up to the MUI *fatwa* No. 6 of 2016 and the recommendation of the Public Belief Monitoring Team (PAKEM).

Based on these two case studies, MUI and MORA have a coordination relationship with each other in handling heresy. Regularly, both of them have the same pattern in deciding cases indirectly, even though they are not one and the same structure in an institution. It can be concluded that MUI, through the power of civil society, can accumulate the domination of a truth through a *fatwa*.

From Saat's theory about co-optation and capture, it can be inferred that the state and Ulama often have a dynamic relationship with each other. MUI sees the opportunity of heretical sect phenomenon as a show of authority power on the pretext of purification of faith and blasphemy. In addition, capture theory can be explained Ulama as agents can influence government stakeholders and law enforcers, especially the decision of the Joint Decree of three ministers. The Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), in this case, the state views a heresy group as a challenge to the mainstream majority, which seeks to silence the voice of

¹⁹⁶ Norshahril Saat, "Theologians 'Moralising' Indonesia?," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 44, nos. 4–5 (2016): 557, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685314-04404005>.

¹⁹⁷ See fatwa MUI about GAFATAR in appendices

opposition that disrupts social stability. Hence, the government chooses authority in co-opting voices that are considered to be against the state.

4.2.4 The Institutional Hierarchy toward Heresy Groups: Between Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) and Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA)

To begin, MUI has established itself as an actor or a set of agencies in navigating Islamic understanding and exercising quasi-legislative power.¹⁹⁸ This is evident in the role of MUI, which is highly authoritative in issuing *fatwas* that are considered influential. Then, it has the same weight as national laws, especially in the case of blasphemy against Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok).¹⁹⁹ The event concluded that civil society organizations can mobilize public opinion and community movements, influencing state policy. Thus, the power dynamics between the state and civil society organizations complicate the positioning of who is the most authoritative.

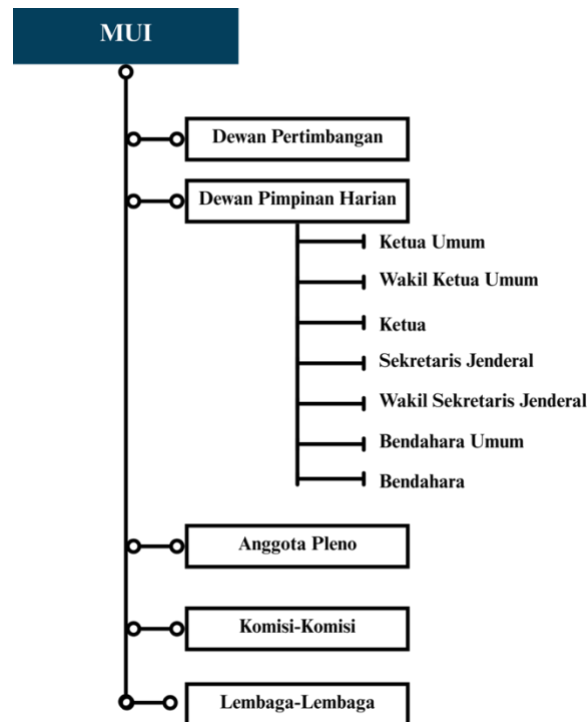
Furthermore, MUI's influence in Islamic affairs is often faced with various kinds of government regulations and administration. For instance, the management of Islamic education, religious moderation, and religious understanding in matters of *muamalah*, *fiqh*, and *aqidah*. In certain positions, MUI and MORA are often seen to show collaborative and sometimes competitive relationships.²⁰⁰ In the collaborative relationship, limited emphasis is placed on the role of the *Ulama* to mediate religious practices, provide advice or direction, and support government programs. The scenario reflects a relationship between bureaucratic governance and spiritual authority, intertwined in navigating religious affairs, particularly in the context of Islam.

¹⁹⁸ Quasi-legislative is an act or function that resembles legislative (making laws or regulations), but is carried out by a body or institution that is not the main legislative body.

¹⁹⁹ Alfitri, "Bureaucratizing Fatwā in Indonesia"; Sandya Mahendra and Muhammad Junaidi, "The Position of the Indonesian Council of Ulama in The Indonesian State Governmental Legal System: The Perspective of Abu Hasan al-Mawardi," *Al-Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syari'ah Dan Hukum* 8, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.22515/alahkam.v8i1.6428>.

²⁰⁰ Husaini Husaini and Athoillah Islamy, "Harmonization of Religion and State : Mainstreaming the Values of Religious Moderation in Indonesian Da'wah Orientation," *Al-Adalah: Jurnal Hukum Dan Politik Islam* 7, no. 1 (2022): 51–70, <https://doi.org/10.35673/ajhpi.v7i1.2128>.

Figure 4.2 The Structure of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) Centre



MORA on the other hand, is the highest authority in religious affairs at the state government level. Its function is to provide regulation and mandate, as mandated by the constitution, to handle and administer the six recognized religions in Indonesia, one of which is Islam. Specifically, MORA, in its capacity as an authority complies with national laws on religion and ensures harmony. Within its own state structure, MORA relies on formal legal regulations. Nonetheless, MORA is also not centralized in a single ministry, but has many branches, including *Kantor Urusan Agama* (KUA). The KUA itself is a clerical sub-agency and an extension of the central ministry that is highly effective and crucial in achieving the ministry's goals at the grassroots.

Figure 4.3 Bureaucratic Structure of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA)



The role of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) in Indonesia is a vital aspect of religious governance within the state, as well as its interaction with various religious organizations in the country. Additionally, it demonstrates its status as the primary authority in legal governance between the state and Islamic organizations. However, MORA has formal and legal authority based on its constituents, its pragmatic influence in public discourse is also shaped by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). Although the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) operates independently of government structures, the *fatwas* or decisions issued by the Ulama often have a significant impact on public perception and government policy. As a result, this affects the direction of state policy in deciding cases related to certain issues.

MORA, in its hierarchical position in the government, provides a bureaucratic framework and legal foundation for religious policy. While MUI acts as a partner and supervisor, it is based on the interpretation of a group of scholars institutionalized in the public sphere, which is not binding but serves as the primary reference. In light of this, although MORA has authority in regulatory oversight, MUI has significant interpretative power that can shape public policies and government rules.

Figure 4.4 Legal Hierarchy between the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI)



In analyzing the hierarchy between MORA and MUI, especially in justifying the term ‘heresy’, such as the case selection (*Ahmadiyah*, *al-Salamullah (Lia Eden)*, *GAFATAR*, and *al-Zaytun*). From the aforementioned figures, the dynamics of institutional authorities are complex and multifaceted. On the one hand, MORA has legal authority, guidance, and supervision over Islamic religious affairs in accordance with the law. On the other hand, MUI emerges as a very influential entity in shaping the opinion via *fatwa* of the majority of Muslims in religious discourse.

Prominent evidence of this authority dynamic phenomenon is how MORA reacts to certain groups deemed as heretical. However, MORA is expected to maintain neutrality and harmony. The strong position of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) can encourage MORA to align its actions with MUI’s views. The alignment of actions then results in the regulation or marginalization of groups considered heretical. Subsequently, this illustrates how MUI can influence government actions in religious governance, creating a complex hierarchy of power that sometimes conflicts and synergizes with one another.

Therefore, hierarchical power has been mandated to the state, in this case, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), to provide religious guidance. In contrast, the situation becomes complex when it comes to the interpretation and implementation of the law in relation to religious sects that are considered deviant. MUI, on the other hand, can exert significant pressure on the government through a *fatwa* or a statement. It can profoundly influence people's perception of religious groups considered heretical. For example, MUI's *fatwa* policy in issuing a *fatwa* that categorizes *Ahmadiyah* and other problematic groups as sects that are considered deviant. As a result, after the issuance of the decision, the state also declared to restrict similar cases to those with the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI).

This change in orientation allows the MUI to act quasi-politically, with its *fatwas* considered a legitimate source of authority, equivalent to state laws. Subsequently, the mutual dependency between MUI and MORA creates a system where religious authority and state regulation are interdependent and influence one another. It is triggering recurring negotiations on issues of orthodoxy and blasphemy. Evidently, this is prominent in a recent event or controversy surrounding the deviation of the GAFATAR and *al-Zaytun* groups, in which both MORA and MUI engaged in public debate and issued conflicting statements regarding their legitimacy.

Furthermore, the spotlight on groups deemed deviant reflects the space for negotiation and interpretation within the theological sphere. MUI's issuance of *fatwas* on controversial issues further illustrates how *ulama* can influence religious practice simultaneously with the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA).²⁰¹ A more popular example, the *fatwa* issued by MUI regarding the *Ahmadiyah* group has triggered the debate of heresy and deviation in religious practice and led to negative sentiment in the public and a response from MORA.²⁰²

MUI's *fatwa* not only becomes a public reference but also triggers socio-political dynamics to push the government to take the side of religious disputes,

²⁰¹ Ismail Koto et al., "Islamic Holy Days: The Contention of Rukyatul Hillal and Hisab Hakiki Wujudul Hilal Disputes for Muslims in Indonesia," *Pharos Journal of Theology*, no. 105(2) (March 2024), <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.105.210>.

²⁰² Sajari, "Fatwa MUI Tentang Aliran Sesat di Indonesia (1976-2010)," 1.

thus complicating the relationship between the state and religion. However, the law grants MORA the status of an intermediary and mediator in the legal sense. MUI's influence often extends beyond the Ministry's regulatory function, which raises questions about the actual hierarchy of power. However, MORA holds the highest position in the hierarchy that regulates religious affairs through formal legislative authority. The influence of socio-jurisdictional law, as exercised by MUI, presents a special challenge to the hierarchy within the social system. MUI's ability to navigate, provide understanding, and mobilize masses to influence Muslim society through its interpretation has a tremendous impact on the landscape of Islam in Indonesia. Therefore, the hierarchy between MUI and MORA shows the complexity of institutional authority dynamics in the interaction of governance, bureaucracy, and religious dynamics in a pluralistic society.

From this pattern, a conclusion can be drawn that, although the state in this case, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), has the highest position in regulating a state's religious affairs. Legally formal and constitutionally it is true that the state in this context is a political and religious entity (hybrid). The decision of MORA is not based solely on religious considerations, but is also driven by state considerations such as stability, harmony, and security.

In contrast with MUI, it is a purification religious entity that takes a stance of refining the term of *aqidah* or a firm stance on theological aspects. In the context of heresy, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and MUI play different roles in a hierarchical system. In this case, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) occupies the uppermost power hierarchy compared to MUI. In handling heresy, although MORA denies being influenced by civil society organizations or MUI, in the end, the policy pattern of MORA is often in line with the voice of the Muslim majority or MUI.

4.2.5 The Authority of Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) over the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) in Handling Heresy Groups

Previously, several key points were discussed regarding the authority dynamics between MORA and MUI in handling groups considered heretical. Both institutions are believed to have the authority to handle Islamic religious affairs. It assumes that the formal legal policy of the government will always prevail over

a non-binding legal opinion issued by an Islamic organization. This is because a formal legal policy is the only mechanism that can bridge the interests of the state (politics) and religion in Indonesia.

This subsection comprehensively discusses how the government authority, which includes MORA and MUI, has exercised its authority through the group of heresy that has emerged in Indonesia. Moreover, the highest authority position in negating a religious guideline should be the state. Because the output can be issued in the form of laws that bind all aspects of society, especially Muslims, to be obeyed. However, often in practice, it is precisely Islamic community institutions that are dominant in terms of convincing public perception and leading to the formation of decisions in the form of policy rules. The following table can explain the relationship between the two institutions in terms of aspects of authority, legal power, and influence on Muslim society.

Table 4.2. Influence and Authority between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI).

Aspect	Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA)	Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI)
Status	State institution	Religious organizations
Authority	Formal, legal, administrative	<i>Fatwa</i> , advice, judgment
Legal Power	Binding all citizens	Morally/religiously binding, legal if adopted by the state
Influence	Very broad and official	Strong in Muslim communities, moral and social

From Table 2, it is clear that the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) is not a direct part of the state government. However, the authority expressed in the form of a *fatwa* is very influential on the dynamics of public perception, even though it

is not binding. The state, in this case, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), which occupies the highest position in the hierarchy of power, depends solely on the policies issued by the Ulama. In analysing the discourse between religion and the state, this is closely related to the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), which acts as a buffer between the state and religion (*Ulama*), balancing between harmony and mainstream beliefs.

In the context of the dynamics of authority, it shows that two powerful entities influence each other. Firstly, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) is identified as an entity that maintains the purity of Islam and tends to prefer strong theological aspects. Secondly, MORA is an entity that must balance between religious freedom and the political interests of the state. Subsequently, this becomes a dilemma for policymakers such as the Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA), whose goal is to provide space for religious freedom to any group, but on the condition of an orderly situation. This was similarly expressed by the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia from 2014 to 2019, Dr. (H.C.) K.H. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin.

*“In the context of freedom and public order, we must be careful. In public spaces, do not demand too much freedom. It is impossible. Because if every person in a diverse, heterogeneous, and complex public space demands their own freedom, chaos will ensue. For instance, “I am free to believe this,” I am free to believe that. Everyone will demand freedom. Then, public order would be disrupted.”*²⁰³

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The dichotomy between religious freedom and public order is often a domain that the state confronts. There is a dilemma in taking sides in the case of giving free space to the flow of religious groups or siding with the orthodoxy adhered to by mainstream religious groups. Then, he also continued.

“Therefore, freedom must be limited by the obligation to fulfil the rights of others who also want to be free. There is no unlimited freedom in the public sphere. That is why the term public order is necessary. That is the external realm, the practical realm. Freedom can only exist in the internal

²⁰³ Interview with the Former of Minister of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affair (MORA) from 2014-2019, Dr. (H.C.) K.H. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, June 20, 2025.

realm, in the realm of faith, because this is a realm that cannot be interfered with by anyone. Even the state cannot interfere with the internal realm of every human being. That is why humans are free in that realm.”

²⁰⁴

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In the view of Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, a former Minister of Religious Affairs, there is a significant dilemma arises when dealing with groups considered heretical. The informant in this context enlightens us that the root of the problem often lies in the mistake of distinguishing between the areas of *internum* (faith, personal belief) and *externum* (freedom that must be restricted for the sake of public order). In the public sphere, individual rights are limited by the rights of others. Subsequently, the demand for absolute freedom will not disrupt stability. Meanwhile, conflicts often arise because freedoms that should be maintained in the private sphere are demanded in the public sphere, even though what needs to be preserved is order and common rights. Also explained comprehensively by Pak Bahrul Hayat, Ph.D. the former of Secretary General of Ministry of Religious Affairs 2006-2014.

*“The state must maintain freedom in public spaces for the sake of public order. Religious freedom is an internal matter and not a concern. But the external forum is my responsibility. Because once you violate it, it affects not only you, but also society. So it’s not a choice. The state gives you freedom, so please use the internal forum. But the state will intervene if you disturb the external forum. This is understandable. It is not a choice because the roles are different. Unless the state provides a forum for freedom, your internal forum has been disturbed. The PNPS Law states that religions other than Islam are free to exist as long as they do not conflict with the law.”*²⁰⁵

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From this, the state consistently prioritizes public order over religious freedom when faced with a choice between the two. This has been measured in terms of benefits and losses. That is, siding with religious freedom will harm many people, not only groups that are considered heretical, but also many other groups

²⁰⁴ Interview with the Former of Minister of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affair (MORA) from 2014-2019, Dr. (H.C.) K.H. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin.

²⁰⁵ Interview with the Former of Secretary General, Ministry of Religious Affair (MORA) from 2006-2014, Bahrul Hayat, Ph.D.

in society. Accordingly, as an entity that serves as a buffer and balancer between the two, there are times when the state entity (MORA) indirectly supports all *fatwas* issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). At the same time, in certain conditions or situations, they may feel the need to respond cautiously or take a stand against the decision of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). This is evidence that the state has made political considerations in accommodating the input from the *Ulama* and the general public regarding the handling of heresy in Indonesia.

*“The Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) is part of the government, and the government is part of the state, so terms such as heretical, deviant, let alone accusing someone of apostasy, the state does not have such a position, does not have legal standing, does not have the authority, does not have the power to declare that a belief is heretical or not, that a religious practice is deviant or not, the state does not have the authority or power to make such a declaration.”*²⁰⁶

I-MI-N3-02

Furthermore, after personally inquiring about the decision made by the SKB 3 Minister regarding *Ahmadiyah* and GAFATAR, for example. According to Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, the SKB 3 Minister was a moderate step that the government had taken in navigating religious harmony in Indonesia. On the one hand, the informant explained that the decree prohibits *Ahmadiyah* congregations from spreading ideas that are not in line with the majority of Islam. On the other hand, it prohibits the community from taking the law into their own hands against *Ahmadiyah*. However, conflicts often arise because neither party complies with the two points of the regulation. For example, there are *Ahmadis* who proselytize outside, and there are also non-*Ahmadis* who carry out persecution. Therefore, informants argue that the SKB 3 Minister is very moderate in maintaining order and protection of both.²⁰⁷

Regarding GAFATAR, the informant explained that the problem is very complex, encompassing not only religious aspects but also law, employment,

²⁰⁶ “Interview with the Former of Minister of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affair (MoRA) from 2014-2019, Dr. (H.C.) K.H. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin,” June 20, 2025.

²⁰⁷ “Interview with the Former of Minister of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affair (MoRA) from 2014-2019, Dr. (H.C.) K.H. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin,” June 20, 2025.

fraud, and even politics, particularly in terms of allegiance and attitudes towards the legitimate government. In the context of Lukman Hakim Saifuddin's leadership era, he limited his role to focus more on aspects of religious understanding and practice with a humanist approach.

Furthermore, as a comparison with Islamic community organizations, the roles of MORA and MUI complement each other indirectly. The role of MUI has a significant influence on navigating the religious affairs and policies of MORA. MUI, as the leading authority that issues *fatwas*, is very influential in attracting public attention, especially related to the sects focused on by researchers such as *Ahmadiyah*, *al-Salamullah (Lia Eden)*, *GAFATAR*, and *al-Zaytun*. Nevertheless, MORA sometimes acts as an executive agency that indirectly translates these religious *fatwas* into public policy, as outlined in the SKB.

To test a power, MUI is often positioned as a key player in the religious landscape in Indonesia following the New Order period. The *fatwa* released previously has both symbolic and spiritual significance, and also carries political implications. The issuance of heretical *fatwas* against *Ahmadiyah*, *al-Salamullah (Lia Eden)*, *GAFATAR*, and *al-Zaytun* groups, for example, provides an important insight into how these mass organizations can actually provide policy direction that aligns with state decisions. Frankly, the issuance of SKB or Ministerial Decree and Minister considerations are examples of how the state apparatus can institutionalize the decision of the religious authority. It is from the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), through its *fatwa*, in a quasi-political manner.

MUI's approach to heresy strongly reflects a broad socio-political narrative where sectarian boundaries are drawn to maintain Islamic orthodoxy. *Fatwas* against *Ahmadiyah*, Lia Eden, and *GAFATAR* groups, for example, reflect a majoritarian approach to cementing Sunni hegemony in Indonesia's diverse religious landscape (Wahid 2018). Hence, the guidelines provided by the government (MORA) in this case convey an implicit message that state actions are often based on *fatwas*, decisions, and directives from Ulama. It includes educating, fostering, and directing about the 'correct' practice of Islam, as per the provisions of the MUI. Thus, MUI's legitimacy is reinforced by the state (MORA).

Additionally, the powerful influence between the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) can be understood when a clerical entity has the ability to influence a state. Moreover, MORA often acts and is fully responsive to the attitude of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). Additionally, it attempts to strike a balance with a more moderate approach for all parties to achieve justice.

Meanwhile, the approach taken by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), for example, is merely to exercise power through the *fatwa* they issue. This becomes effective when the majority of mainstream Muslims have one understanding of the rules that depend on the Ulama, who have provided the same justification. This tendency is caused by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) having motives based on dogmatic aspects of Islam. In this exercise, a power analysis can be conducted to trace how a clerical institution can exert more power and influence in shaping public perception. Even exert full pressure on the government. The case of *Ahmadiyah* and GAFATAR, for example, the two groups have similarities in formal legal provisions contained in SKB. The MUI *Fatwa* in 1980 and 2005 against *Ahmadiyah*, as well as the *fatwa* on GAFATAR in 2016, have significant implications for how the state's decision is influenced by a clerical decision contained in the legal document of a *fatwa*.

Nonetheless, Lia Eden and *al-Zaytun* sometimes have very complex cases. The State's consideration is limited to prohibiting the *Ma'had's* activities, which are believed to be heretical. Particularly, in aspects of worship methods and *mazhab*. In the element of creed, the state has an understanding with the Islamic organization MUI. As for the element of the *pesantren* curriculum, the state has its own belief that it is in accordance with the rules of the Ministry under the auspices of Islamic Education, and there is no evidence of deviation. Interestingly, the case of *al-Zaytun* itself has not yet been addressed with a *fatwa* by MUI. In contrast, authentic evidence from the MUI Research Commission is clear that deviations exist in the *pesantren*. Meanwhile, in the case of Lia Eden itself, the state is also in line with the decision issued by the Ulama. In addition, Maftuh Basyuni provided a clear statement to the media, which was corroborated by the informant of the Secretary General at the time, Pak Bahrul Hayat.

“However Minister, Maftuh, for example, feels that after we studied Lia Eden, the deviation was because she almost took various elements of religion. And the definition of blasphemy is explicit. So she made an assessment of the main points of religious teachings, and the law says that. So if you have an assessment, this is blasphemy. At that time, Maftuh is using this, but again, we need to limit it; we shouldn't formally state this on behalf of the state. So the Minister can give a signal. Mr. Maftuh is aware that, structurally speaking, he has indeed committed blasphemy. But since the legal process for blasphemy is already underway, let it proceed. The Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) doesn't need to make a formal declaration. Additionally, the Minister should give a signal.”²⁰⁸

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In this regard, due to public pressure at the time, the Minister of Religious Affairs (MORA) was required to issue a statement in the media to harmonize the decision of the Ulama and the Muslim majority community. In connection with this, a decision by the Minister, as stated by the former Secretary General of MORA from 2006 to 2014, is that a public statement by the Minister cannot serve as a legal reference for a binding decision.²⁰⁹ However, as the Minister responsible for religious affairs, it is necessary to send a signal to the public as an effort to demonstrate support and bring calm to the situation.

From these cases, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) has demonstrated a strong influence on an institution as powerful as the state domain in its journey. In the context of handling heresy, the author assumes that this is merely a quasi-political step to show power. The way the quasi works is by exercising every decision or *fatwa* against deviant groups such as *Ahmadiyah*, *al-Salamullah* (Lia Eden), GAFATAR, and *al-Zaytun*. Historically speaking, every time MUI released a *fatwa* of heresy, in near or far time, simultaneously, a regulation or law that has the same pattern as MUI's *fatwa* is also issued. Indirectly, although MORA denies being influenced by civil society and Islamic organizations. The pattern of state policy is often in line with the decisions of Islamic organizations such as MUI in the context of handling heresy.

²⁰⁸ Interview with the Former of Secretary General, Ministry of Religious Affair (MORA) from 2006-2014, Bahrul Hayat, Ph.D., June 23, 2025.

²⁰⁹ Interview with the Former of Secretary General, Ministry of Religious Affair (MORA) from 2006-2014, Bahrul Hayat, Ph.D.

4.3 Conclusion

The relationship between MUI and MORA within the hierarchical structure often involves a dynamic decision-making process that can be cohesive, divergent, compete or even contradictory. This is particularly evident in the discourse surrounding the handling of groups deemed problematic, where the two organizations exhibit variations in their decision-making approaches. On the one hand, MUI has its own process for determining a deviant sect, which involves consensus among the council of ulama and the issuance of a fatwa. On the other hand, MORA's approach emphasizes neutrality and mediation toward groups deemed heretical.

Therefore, MUI has the authority to label certain groups as heretical if they meet the criteria for heresy agreed upon by MUI's scholars. Unlike MUI, MORA does not have a justification for considering certain groups guilty or deviant. Furthermore, MORA's stance is based on actions regulated by law and refers to the constitution. In terms of hierarchy, the Ministry of Religion holds the highest position compared to the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). In terms of capacity, MORA is an executive agency and the state's delegate in matters related to Islam. Meanwhile, MUI, in its historical formation, serves as the government's partner or an Islamic civil society organization responsible for internal Islamic affairs based on the guidance of ulama.

In the discourse on the phenomenon of “heretical sects,” the MUI and MORA have the authority to regulate, guide, and control groups that are considered heretical. The MUI regularly issues non-binding legal opinions (fatwas) directed at groups deemed heretical, such as the Ahmadiyah, *al-Salamullah* (Lia Eden), GAFATAR, and *Ma’had al-Zaytun*. Historically, this has been a recommendation from religious scholars that has led the government to adopt the same stance through joint policy decisions aimed at eliminating the activities of groups that could disrupt religious harmony in Indonesia.

In terms of authority, MUI is superior in issuing opinions documented through fatwas. Although it has the status of a community organization in this study, some of the data collected provide evidence that MUI fatwas are very powerful in mobilizing the understanding of Muslims. Meanwhile, MORA, which is the highest institution in the hierarchy, has limited power to regulate groups considered heretical by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Trajectory Remarks

The dynamics of Islamic religious authority in Indonesia exhibit significant variation in terms of types, forms, and quantities. The scope of this study identifies two types of institutionalized authority between Islamic civil society organizations and government bureaucracies that possess the authority to regulate religious affairs in Indonesia. This thesis focuses on two organizations, including the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), which was established after Indonesia's independence in 1946. Then, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), was founded during the modern era (1975) as the republic entered a period of growth leading up to the reform era.

In terms of authority and jurisdiction, both have their respective duties and functions in handling matters related to the Muslim community, particularly in Indonesia. Additionally, some tasks and decision-making methods also differ from one another. The first, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) is a state institution regulated by the Constitution and laws. It is mandated to implement the main principles of the state as stipulated in Pancasila, particularly the first principle of Belief in One God (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*). Moreover, the state is present to accommodate, bureaucratize, regulate, supervise, guide, and facilitate the lives of the six religions in Indonesia. For example, it manages the hajj, marriage, zakat, construction of houses of worship, and other religious aspects besides Islam. The second, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) is a religious institution that has the role of serving the people (*khidmah al-Ummah*), being a partner of the government (*shadiq al-Hukamah*), and being the heir to the prophets (*waratsatul Anbiya*). Additionally, MUI is renowned for issuing *fatwas* that address various religious, social, economic, and political issues arising in society, based on the principles of Islamic religious law.

Throughout its religious history, Indonesia has experienced turmoil and dynamics, particularly in terms of differences in understanding and issues related to beliefs. One example that often causes public uproar is the emergence of a new religious group movement or a group with a different religious sect from the majority of *Sunni* Islam. In Indonesia, there are hundreds of religious sects and groups that have grown, especially

after independence, and continue to evolve and develop. The emergence of these groups varies, ranging from transnational influences on an international scale to local growth. Some groups that have emerged and often become the subject of public discussion, as selected by the researcher in this thesis, include *Ahmadiyah*, *al-Salamullah* (Lia Eden), GAFATAR, and *Ma'had al-Zaytun*, which are considered heretical by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI).

Based on this, the discourse of authority and power is often dichotomized between the government (MORA) and Islamic organizations, especially MUI. In this case, MORA has the highest position in the hierarchy of institutions because it represents a state or government. In terms of influence, MUI can influence and mobilize the masses or the Muslim community in capitalizing on Islamic religious knowledge, compared to MORA. One measure that can be used to compare is navigating heretical groups, such as MUI *fatwas* against the *Ahmadiyah*, *al-Salamullah* (Lia Eden), GAFATAR, and the decision heresy on *Ma'had al-Zaytun* groups. In this context, MUI plays a role in exercising power to justify a group based on Islamic law decision-making (*fatwa*). The outcomes can influence public perception of the Muslim community. Subsequently, this leads to the formation of policies, such as joint ministerial decrees (SKB) or ministerial decisions, against groups regarded as heresy due to their potential to create disharmony.

However, several essential factors in the formation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) decision are based more on how scholars (*Ulama*) describe the types of beliefs considered valid by the mainstream of Muslims. In the context of heretical groups, the determining factors for MORA policy are often based on public order and national security rather than the theological aspect. Meanwhile, the considerations of Muslim community organizations are based on the name of preserving the purity of faith or *aqidah*. Therefore, through *fatwas*, the MUI has the power to shape a country's policies. This is due to several factors, such as the state's aim to create a safe environment, maintain religious harmony, and minimize horizontal conflicts between opposing groups. Meanwhile, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), through its *fatwas*, aims to protect or uphold the faith of Muslims. However, the intersection between the fatwa decisions of the MUI (*Ahmadiyah*, *al-Salamullah* (Lia Eden), GAFATAR, and *al-Zaytun*) is influenced by disturbances to the understanding of the Muslim majority in the public sphere. Therefore, the influence of the MUI can shape public perceptions. Public pressure,

which has the potential to cause conflict and disrupt national stability or security, drives the formulation of policies by the state, in this case, the Ministry of Religion (MORA).

Conclusively, the role of religious authorities in Indonesia becomes a dynamic sphere of authority in influencing one another also including eliminate, restrict, and dissolve other heretic groups. The author argues that the composition of a group considered heretical or the issue of heterodoxy become an arena that strengthens each other's legitimacy. Hence, the emergence of a group considered heretical involves a struggle between religious authorities to perpetuate their authority by justifying heresy or neutrality.

5.2 Research Limitations

Although this study provides several valuable findings on the study of Islamic bureaucratization and the influence of religious authorities in shaping state policy. It is important to acknowledge a limitation in the findings of this study. First, the limitation of this study is the number of groups considered deviant by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). The number of groups considered deviant is approximately hundreds when viewed from a historical perspective. The limitations of the groups that the author presents in this paper do not necessarily imply that other groups. Besides the four listed groups, it would yield the same results from MUI and MORA decisions.

Second, several limitations related to accuracy and reliability prevented me from collecting data from the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), particularly from the Chair of the *Fatwa* Commission and the Chair of the Da'wah Commission of the MUI, regarding their discourse on handling groups considered problematic. Based on this, the author decided to summarize the experiences of only five informants, predominantly from the former of Secretary General of MORA 2008-2014, the former of Minister of Religious Affairs 2014-2019, the Sub-Directorate in Understanding of Islam and Managing Conflict (BIMAS Islam), and Head of Assessment, Research and Development Commission of the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI).

Nevertheless, this does not diminish the impact of the study's findings, as it only focuses on dependent variables, particularly those from MORA, in validating the influence of MUI, particularly in handling cases of heretical sects. Moreover, in the data collection process, the author used open-ended questions with semi-structured interviews

and analyzed relevant policy documents, such as decrees and legal *fatwas*, which serve as the main basis for the findings and discussions presented in this chapter.

Due to time constraints, the researcher only conducted fieldwork research for approximately one month. This limitation prevents the researcher from obtaining comprehensive information regarding the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), especially regarding the validation of the civil society approach in *fatwas* and its potential influence on the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) in handling heresy. Subsequently, the findings regarding information from the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) are only focused on the experiences and information of MUI officials who are involved in the research and development commission.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview Documentations



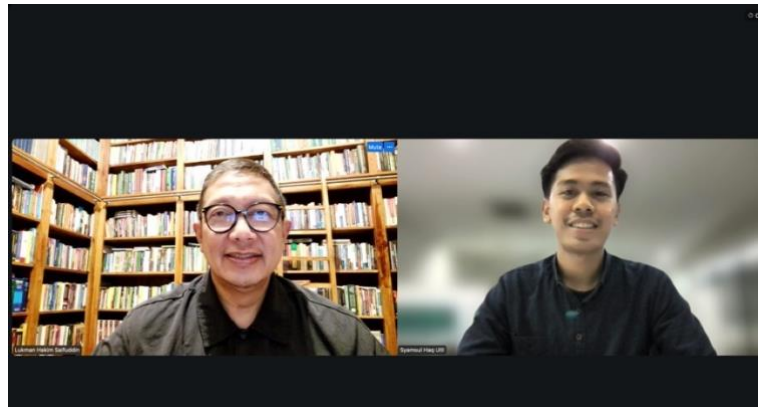
Interview with Pak (Assoc) Prof. Firdaus Syam, Ph.D. (The Head of Commission of Assessment, Research and Development of MUI)



Interview with Pak Dedi Slamet Riyadi, M.Ag (The Head of Sub-directorate for Religious Understanding and Conflict Management, Islamic Community Guidance (BIMAS), Ministry of Religious Affairs)



Interview with Pak Bahrul Hayat, Ph.D. (The Former of Secretary General of MORA 2006-2014).



Interview with Pak Dr. (H.C.) K.H. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin (The Former of Ministry of Religious Affairs 2014-2019).

Appendix 2. Table of Thematizing Matrix

No.	Themes	Code
1.	The Legitimation of MUI	LM
2.	The Position of MUI	PM
3.	The Relationship MUI and MORA	RM
4.	The Hierarchy Power MUI And MORA	HP
5.	MUI Influencing MORA	MI

Appendix 3. Table of Coding System

Source of Data	Sample of Coding	Interpretation
Interview	I-LM-N1-01	I or interview means that the data is obtained from the interview. LM is an abbreviation from The Legitimation of MUI which is the theme. N1 means informant number one. 01 means that the data come from the transcript of the informant interview line 1.
Document	D-XX-LM	D or document means that the data is obtained from the document. CB is for Curriculum Book means the type of document. ID is an abbreviation from The Legitimation of MUI

Appendix 4. Interview Transcript

No : 01 Respondent : Dedi Slamet (Subdit Pemahaman Agama Islam dan Penanganan Konflik, Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia) Date : 23 May 2025 Time : 09.00 - 11.30 WIB Place : Kementerian Agama RI Topic : The Position or Role Ministry of Religious Affairs toward Heretical Groups (<i>Ahmadiyah</i> , al-Zaytun cases) Link : https://bit.ly/transcriptsnyamsulhaq				
Line	Subject	Interview Transcript	Theme	Code
	Researcher	Jadi, sebelumnya terima kasih atas kesempatan yang diberikan. Saya sangat bersyukur bisa mengunjungi tempat ini. Diizinkan ke subdit pemahaman agama dan penanganan publik. Jadi, judul saya itu tentang menavigasi aliran sesat. Ini <i>independent variable</i> -nya itu dinamika otoritas MUI dalam memengaruhi Kementerian Agama.		
2	Informant	Sepertinya kayak memandu gitu ya. Menavigasi itu kan secara harfiah berarti kan memandu, kan? Oh ini kamu tersesat nih, kamu harus ke sini nih. Betul, betul. Navigasi itu kan seperti itu. Apakah menavigasi aliran sesat itu dalam pengertian aliran sesat itu kemudian dipandu sehingga mereka tidak tersesat gitu? Apakah dalam pengertian yang lain?		
	Researcher	Sebenarnya yang lebih di- <i>highlight</i> di sini, merupakan Otoritas agama MUI. Jadi, otoritas agama MUI kan lumayan sangat tinggi di Indonesia. <i>The most authority</i> di Indonesia. Dan yang paling kuat itu karena <i>fatwanya</i> . <i>Fatwanya</i> itu bisa mempengaruhi kebijakan, baik kebijakan pemerintah daerah bukan hanya Kemenag, tapi juga Pemerintah daerah dan sebagainya. Jadi <i>highlight</i> -nya itu otoritas agama MUI dalam mempengaruhi kebijakan Kemenag. Dalam hal ini <i>fatwanya</i> MUI mempengaruhi kebijakan Kemenag. Jadi sebenarnya banyak ya, Pak, ratusan tuh aliran sesat. Yang bisa mendeklarasikan ini sesat itu sesat adalah organisasi <i>civil society</i> kayak MUI, NU, atau Muhammadiyah memiliki otoritas itu. Dan yang sepemahaman saya juga, Pak, Kemenag itu cuma otoritasnya itu membina, memberi pemahaman, dan meminimalisir adanya konflik horizontal di antara masyarakat. Mungkin pertanyaan awal nih, Pak. Bagaimana gambaran umum tugas, fungsi, subjek pembinaan agama dan penanganan konflik? Kalau boleh tahu. Check this out for more https://bit.ly/transcriptsnyamsulhaq		

No : 02 Respondent : (Assoc) Prof. Firdaus Syam, M.A. P.hD. (The Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) Research Commission) Date : 27 May 2025 Time : 11.00 - 12.30 WIB Place : Personal Residence (Assoc) Prof. Firdaus Syam, M.A. P.hD. Topic : The Role of MUI in Influencing MORA (<i>Ahmadiyah</i> , <i>al-Zaytun</i> cases) Link : https://bit.ly/transcriptsnyamsulhaq				
Line	Subject	Interview Transcript	Theme	Code
	Researcher	Oke, Assalamualaikum Wr. Wb. Sebelumnya, terima kasih atas jemuannya, Pak, dan ketersediaan yang mau diwawancara perihal tesis saya. <i>Interview</i> kali ini saya akan membacakan pertanyaan yang sesuai dengan yang saya buat pada manual wawancara. Sifatnya <i>in-depth</i>, mendalam. Kalaupun saya masih membutuhkan informasi, saya bisa <i>follow up</i> setiap <i>question</i>. Jadi, total pertanyaan yang sudah saya siapkan itu ada 15, kalau tidak salah 15. Mungkin tujuannya itu adalah tesis saya kan menjelaskan, menulis tentang dua otoritas Islam tertinggi, yang ini MUI sama Kemenag. Bagaimana keduanya itu memandang aliran sesat, dan bagaimana juga MUI bisa memengaruhi kebijakan negara dalam hal ini Kemenag. Sudah ada Bapak. Drs. H. Firdausy, M.A., merupakan Ketua Penelitian dan Pengkajian MUI. Baik, Pak, izin saya mau bertanya pertanyaan pertama. Tema utamanya itu definisi dan kriteria aliran sesat menurut MUI, menurut Ketua Penelitian dan Pengkajian MUI. Pertanyaan pertama: bagaimana MUI, khususnya bidang penelitian dan pengkajian, mendefinisikan aliran sesat?		
1	Informant	Pertama, saya ingin mengucapkan terima kasih kepada saudara Syamsul atas waktu yang diberikan sebagai suatu kepercayaan kepada saya untuk memberikan pandangan kepentingan untuk tesis Anda. Begini, kalau kita bicara tentang aliran sesat, itu yang pertama adalah... itu kan memang ada peraturannya di pemerintah, ya. Anda nanti bisa pelajari tentang dasar-dasar yang berkaitan dengan masalah aliran sesat tersebut. Itu ada peraturan-peraturan yang berkaitan dengan itu. Saya ingin mulai dengan pandangan begini: MUI, saya itu di MUI sebagai Ketua Komisi Pengkajian, Penelitian, dan Pengembangan MUI Pusat, ya. Kalau disingkat KP3, ya, Pengkajian, Penelitian, dan Pengembangan MUI Pusat. Komisi ini adalah salah satu kelengkapan di dalam struktur organisasi MUI. Jadi, MUI itu punya komisi sangat banyak, ya. Ada komisi, ada badan, ada lembaga. Komisi itu ya, Komisi Pengkajian, Penelitian, dan Pengembangan, Komisi Dakwah, Komisi Pendidikan, dan lain-lain. Kemudian ada badan-badan dan lembaga. Tetapi, Komisi Pengkajian, Penelitian, dan Pengembangan ini memang sangat strategis karena dia diamanahkan, itu ada kaitan langsung dengan apa yang menjadi tujuan MUI didirikan. Tujuan MUI didirikan itu kan, dia sebagai tenda besar umat Islam. Dalam hal menjaga, menjalankan peran dan fungsinya sebagai <i>khadimul ummah</i>, <i>khadimul ummah</i>, <i>himayatul ummah</i>. Sebagai pelindung, penjaga, pelayan <i>ummah</i>. Dan juga <i>himayatul ummah</i>, membangun kemitraan dengan pemerintah di dalam kesatuan negara. Komisi yang berasal dari sumber, Pancasila, dan Check this out for more https://bit.ly/transcriptsnyamsulhaq		

No : 03 Respondent : Dr. (H.C.) K.H. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin (Former Ministry of Religious Affair 2014-2019) Date : 20 June 2025 Time : 19.00 - 20.00 Place : Zoom meeting Topic : The Power of MUI in Influencing MORA (GAFATAR cases) Link : https://bit.ly/transcriptsnyamsulhaq				
Line	Subject	Interview Transcript	Theme	Code
	Researcher	Alhamdulillah. Jadi, sekedar briefing atau pendahuluan. Jadi, tesis saya ini ingin meng-highlight semacam dinamika otoritas antara MUI dan Kemenag terhadap case selection aliran sesat yang saya sebutkan beberapa di tesis saya. Ada empat. Yang pertama itu <i>Ahmadiyah</i> .. Yang kedua, Lia Eden. Yang ketiga, Gafatar. Yang keempat, yang terakhir, yang baru-baru ini, yaitu Pondok Pesantren Al Zaytun. Mungkin keterkaitan pertanyaan yang sudah saya kirimkan itu mungkin lebih berfokus kepada pandangan pribadi atau perspektif dari Bapak sendiri mengenai aspek terkait Kementerian Agama, khususnya dalam penanganan isu-isu aliran sesat selama prioritas Bapak selama menjabat Menteri Agama sebelumnya dari tahun 2014 sampai 2019. Langsung saja mungkin pertanyaan pertama, gambaran umum dan peran Kementerian Agama. Bagaimana Kementerian Agama di bawah kepemimpinan Bapak mendefinisikan dan menyikapi kelompok atau aliran keagamaan yang dianggap bermasalah atau sesat, Pak?		
2	Informant	Sebelum saya menjawab itu, perlu difahami terlebih dahulu basis pemahaman kita terkait relasi, hubungan antara agama dan negara. Ini menurut saya sebagai fondasinya. Supaya nanti cara pandang kita atau setidaknya-tidaknya mengapa saya punya perspektif tertentu itu karena berbasis pada pandangan terkait dengan relasi, pola hubungan antara agama dan negara. Karena di banyak negara di dunia, umumnya relasi agama dan negara itu dua saja. Macamnya, ragamnya. Pertama adalah negara dan agama itu menyatu menjadi satu. Apa kata negara, ya itulah kata agama. Apa yang menjadi <i>fatwa</i> agama, itu pun yang menjadi kebijakan negara. Karena agama dan negara menjadi satu. Seperti contohnya negara-negara Islam. Kebijakan negara pada negara-negara Islam atau negara fatihan, sama juga. Bapak Seripaus itu selain sebagai pemimpin tertinggi umat Katolik, dia juga pemimpin tertinggi pemerintahan. Dia kepala negara. Karena negara dan agama menyatu. Jadi apa yang menjadi <i>fatwa</i> keagamaan di negara seperti itu, artinya itu juga merupakan kebijakan negara. Sebaliknya, apa yang menjadi kebijakan negara pada negara dengan pola relasi yang menyatu, maka kebijakan negara itu pun hakikatnya adalah <i>fatwa</i> agama. Sama, menyatu. Maka negara-negara seperti Saudi, Pakistan, Iran, dan kita bisa menyebut banyak negara Islam di dunia, itu tidak pernah ada sidang isbat untuk menentukan kapan satu Ramadan atau kapan satu sawal. Karena cukup seorang Grand Mufti di sana, pemimpin tertinggi MUI-nya, misalnya di Darul Iftik di Saudi Arabia, Darul Iftik tidak perlu mengadakan sidang, musyawarah atau rapat, cukup seorang Grand Mufti-nya mengatakan bahwa satu Ramadan jatuh pada		

		hari ini, tanggal ini. Itu semua warga negara. Saudi wajib tunduk dengan keputusan itu. Raja sekalipun wajib tunduk. Dan ketika ada yang berbeda dengan apa yang <i>difatwakan</i> oleh pemimpin tertinggi keagamaan di sana, negara punya kewenangan untuk memberikan sanksi hukum. Karena itu juga kebijakan negara. Kalau kita di Saudi, ummat azad, toko-toko harus tutup. Kalau masih ada yang membuka, maka polisi atas nama negara itu bisa memberikan sanksi, memberikan hukuman bagi orang yang nggak sholat. Karena keputusan agama dan keputusan negara itu menyatu. Ini satu relasi. Pola yang kedua, jenis yang kedua yang terpisah sama sekali. Negara-negara sekuler. Negara pemerintah sama sekali tidak mengurus hal ikhwal kehidupan keagamaan warganya. Itu urusan pribadi, urusan personal. Negara sama sekali. Maka di negara-negara sekuler juga nggak ada sidang isbah. Karena itu diserahkan sepenuhnya kepada setiap warga negara. Anda mau puasa hari Senin, hari Selasa, hari Rabu, hari Kabis, pemerintah negara nggak peduli. Itu bukan urusan negara. Karena terpisah sama sekali hubungan relasi antara agama dan negara. Indonesia bukan yang pertama dan juga bukan yang kedua. Kadang-kadang orang suka menganalogikan, mengkiaskan, membanding-bandingkan yang sebenarnya tidak tepat. Indonesia bukan negara Islam, tapi Indonesia juga bukan negara sekuler. Dalam bahasa yang sering saya sampaikan, dalam relasi seperti itu dalam konteks Indonesia, maka negara tidak boleh terlalu campur tangan mengurus hal ikhwal kehidupan keagamaan warganya, tapi juga negara tidak boleh terlalu lepas tangan untuk tidak mau tahu-menahu terkait hal ikhwal kehidupan keagamaan warganya. Jadi moderasinya di sini. Moderat, Check this out for more https://bit.ly/transcriptsnyamsulhaq		
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No	: 04			
Respondent	: Bahrul Hayat, Ph.D. (Former Secretary General of Ministry of Religious Affairs 2006-2014)			
Date	: 23 June 2025			
Time	: 19.00 - 20.00			
Place	: Bahrul Hayat Office Room, Faculty of Education, UIII			
Topic	: The Relationship of State and Muslim Civil Society Organization (<i>Ahmadiyah</i> , Lia Eden cases)			
Link	: https://bit.ly/transcriptsnyamsulhaq			
Line	Subject	Interview Transcript	Theme	Code
1.	Peneliti	Assalamualaikum Wr. Wb. Assalamualaikum. Sebelumnya saya mengucapkan terima kasih, Pak. Sebuah kehormatan bagi saya bisa menginterview Bapak. Terima kasih banyak sudah meluangkan waktunya di tengah kesibukan Bapak sekarang. Mungkin interview kali ini lebih meng-highlight bagaimana kedua otoritas institusi keagamaan antara pemerintah dan organisasi masyarakat Islam, dalam hal ini Majelis Ulama Indonesia. Apakah dalam perjalanannya MUI, <i>fatwa</i> MUI dapat mempengaruhi kebijakan negara atau pemerintah dan sebagainya? Mungkin pertanyaan awalnya apakah lebih foundation, bagaimana negara dalam hal ini Kementerian Agama memandang kelompok-kelompok yang dianggap bermasalah? Apakah memiliki wewenang atau otoritas dalam menjustifikasi bahwa kelompok ini adalah kelompok sesat atau menyimpang?		

	Informant	Yang pertama, harus dipahami betul ya, kedudukan dari Republik Indonesia dan di mana posisi <i>state</i> dan <i>religion</i>. Saya kira itu yang harus didudukan, karena ini tidak punya model lain yang saya tahu ya di negara-negara lain yang seperti Indonesia. Jadi di dalam konteks hubungan <i>state and religion</i> di Indonesia, kita tahu kan dia bukan <i>theological state</i> seperti banyak negara Islam atau termasuk Katolik, mungkin Roma dan beberapa negara, walaupun tidak eksplisit dia memang negara agama. Nah, ini kita tidak mengandalkan itu dan itu eksplisit tidak. Hanya ada Kementerian Agama. Yang kedua adalah tapi juga tidak <i>secular state</i>. Kalau orang memilah dua ini, kita <i>neither secular state nor theological state</i>. Bukan negara agama, bukan negara sekuler. Nah, <i>frame</i> ini <i>very conditional</i> bagi pemahaman nanti seluruh kebijakan negara di Indonesia terkait dengan agama yang ditempuh oleh kita di Indonesia. Sejak <i>founding fathers</i> memang meletakkan tanpa kesilat, diletakkan kata Ketuhanan menjadi <i>core</i> yang berada di antara dua tarikan tadi. Bentuknya, jadi bentuk yang kita anut adalah negara religius-lah, di mana satu adalah kita, kita menentukan <i>all religious values</i> dan <i>aspiration</i> itu <i>to be part</i> dari <i>nation</i>. Ini saya kira penting ya, karena di hampir semua hal kan berbeda dengan filosofi Pancasila dan Ketuhanan sebagai dasar nomor satu. Sehingga ini otomatis akan menjadi <i>the values orientation</i> dari <i>state</i>. Tidak boleh lepas dari <i>the values of religion</i>. Itu saya kira harus sangat dipahami ya. <i>I'm not the Islam scholar</i>, tapi karena saya bertugas di kementerian, saya coba pelajari <i>frame</i> ini. Jadi sangat penting untuk meletakkan bahwa kita menarik <i>values of religion</i> dan itu menjadi bagian dari <i>the spirit of the nation</i>. Karena Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa. Tetapi yang kedua adalah, sejak tidak lama setelah berdiri, negara ini kan itu hanya 6 bulan saja. Pada 3 Januari 1946, <i>founding fathers</i> mendirikan Kementerian Agama. Nah, pendirian Kementerian Agama juga tidak <i>as simple as any other ministry</i>. Karena ini adalah perbulatan <i>the relationship again</i> antara para <i>founding father</i> dalam merumuskan <i>state and religion</i> tadi. Tapi <i>agreement</i> yang dicapai waktu itu kan tidak ada agama juga yang dijadikan <i>state religion</i>. Jadi ada tadi yang disebut <i>theological state</i> satu ya, tapi karena ini tidak ada, walaupun mayoritas Muslim waktu itu, hampir 90% dan sekarang 87%, itu tidak ada <i>state religion</i> yang di-declare. Tidak ada negara agama, misalnya Islam sebagai agama negara, tidak ada. <i>I mean</i> tidak ada dokumen apapun dan bahkan tidak kita tahu perdebatan bahwa termasuk bunyi Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa dan kewajiban menjalankan syariat agama Islam, itu kan juga disepakati di-drop kata-kata itu. Tidak eksklusif kewajiban menjalankan agama hanya pada Muslim, kan pada semua. Jadi dengan kata lain, sejak itu terjadi negosiasi dan demi <i>unity</i>, kita memang membuat hubungan antara agama dan negara. Apapun agama yang ada, dia jalankan sama. Itu <i>state</i> yang kedua. Jadi kita buat <i>theological</i> bukan <i>secular</i> satu. Yang kedua, karena walaupun mayoritas sejak awal ada Muslim, dan ini bukan hal kecil karena Malaysia juga di bawah 60% yang men-declare Islam sebagai <i>state religion</i>, sementara Indonesia 90%, sekarang 87%, waktu itu 90-an, dan kita tidak men-declare <i>state religion</i> Check this out for more https://bit.ly/transcriptsamsulhaq		
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ALIRAN AHMADIYAH

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

FATWA MAJELIS ULAMA INDONESIA
Nomor: 11/MUNAS VII/MUI/15/2005
Tentang
ALIRAN AHMADIYAH

Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), dalam Musyawarah Nasional MUI VII, pada 19-22 Jumadil Akhir 1426 H / 26-29 Juli 2005 M, setelah :

Menimbang :

1. bahwa sampai saat ini aliran Ahmadiyah terus berupaya untuk mengembangkan pahamnya di Indonesia, walaupun sudah ada fatwa MUI dan telah dilarang keberadaannya;
2. bahwa upaya pengembangan faham Ahmadiyah tersebut telah menimbulkan keresahan masyarakat;
3. bahwa sebagian masyarakat meminta penegasan kembali fatwa MUI tentang faham Ahmadiyah sehubungan dengan timbulnya berbagai pendapat dan berbagai reaksi di kalangan masyarakat;
4. bahwa untuk memenuhi tuntutan masyarakat dan menjaga kemurnian aqidah Islam, Majelis Ulama Indonesia memandang perlu menegaskan kembali fatwa tentang Aliran Ahmadiyah.



AHMADIYAH QADIYAN

بِسْمِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Majelis Ulama Indonesia dalam Musyawarah Nasional II tanggal 11-17 Rajab 1400 H/ 26 Mei – 1 Juni 1980 M di Jakarta memfatwakan tentang jama'ah Ahmadiyah sebagai berikut :

1. Sesuai dengan data dan fakta yang diketemukan dalam 9 (sembilan) buah buku tentang Ahmadiyah, Majelis Ulama Indonesia memfatwakan bahwa Ahmadiyah adalah jama'ah di luar Islam, sesat dan menyesatkan.
2. Dalam menghadapi persoalan Ahmadiyah hendaknya Majelis Ulama Indonesia selalu berhubungan dengan Pemerintah.

Kemudian Rapat Kerja Nasional bulan 1- 4 Jumadil Akhir 1404 H/4 – 7 Maret 1984 M, merekomendasikan tentang jama'ah Ahmadiyah tersebut sebagai berikut :

1. Bahwa Jemaat Ahmadiyah di wilayah Negara Republik Indonesia berstatus sebagai badan hukum berdasarkan Surat Keputusan Menteri Kehakiman RI No. JA/23/13 tanggal 13-3-1953 (Tambahan Berita Negara: tanggal 13-3-1953 No. 26), bagi umat Islam menimbulkan :
 - a. keresahan karena isi ajarannya bertentangan dengan ajaran agama Islam
 - b. perpecahan, khususnya dalam hal ibadah (shalat), bidang munakahat dan lain-lain.
 - c. bahaya bagi ketertiban dan keamanan negara.

Maka dengan alasan-alasan tersebut dimohon kepada pihak yang berwenang untuk meninjau kembali Surat Keputusan Menteri Kehakiman RI JA/22/ 13, tanggal 31-3-1953 (Tambahan Berita



FATWA DEWAN PIMPINAN MUI TENTANG MALAIKAT JIBRIL MENDAMPINGI MANUSIA

بِسْمِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

- Memperhatikan :**
1. Surat dari Ir. Andan Nadriasta tanggal 4 Oktober 1997 yang bertanya dan mengharapkan ada penjelasan dari Majelis Ulama Indonesia tentang ajaran kelompok pengajian yang dipimpin oleh Ibu Lia Aminuddin, Jln. Mahoni 30 Jakarta Pusat 10460 Telp. 4207420-4247218.
Dalam surat itu dinyatakan, antara lain, bahwa Ibu Lia Aminuddin ditemani (didampingi) oleh Malaikat Jibril. Pengajian atau ajaran yang disampaikan Ibu Lia itu pada hakikatnya adalah ajaran yang dibawa Malaikat Jibril melalui Ibu Lia. Hal demikian, menurut pengirim surat, jelas dapat meresahkan umat karena bertentangan dengan akidah Islam;
 2. Penjelasan Ibu Lia Aminuddin kepada Sekretaris Komisi Fatwa MUI pada Selasa, 4 Nopember 1997, bahwa benar ia didampingi dan mendapat ajaran dari Malaikat Jibril.
 3. Penjelasan Ibu Lia Aminuddin dalam Sidang Komisi Fatwa tanggal 11 Nopember 1997, yang antara lain, mengatakan:
 - a. Setelah merasa dikecewakan oleh sikap Anton Medan dan dua kiai (Nur Muhammad Iskandar dan Zainuddin MZ) mengenai masalah Yayasan At-Ta'ibin, Ibu Lia setiap malam menangis dan mengadu kepada Allah tentang



MAJELIS ULAMA INDONESIA

WADAH MUSYAWARAH PARA ULAMA ZU'AMA DAN CENDIKIAWAN MUSLIM
Jalan Proklamasi No. 51 Menteng Jakarta Pusat 10320 Telp. 31902666 - 3917853, Fax. 31905266
Website : <http://www.mui.or.id> E-mail: muipusat@mui.or.id

FATWA FATWA MAJELIS ULAMA INDONESIA

Nomor 6 Tahun 2016

Tentang

ALIRAN GERAKAN FAJAR NUSANTARA (GAFATAR)



Komisi Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), setelah :

MENIMBANG

- a. bahwa di tengah masyarakat telah berkembang organisasi bernama Gerakan Fajar Nusantara (GAFATAR) yang bergerak di bidang sosial, namun pada faktanya—mengajarkan keyakinan dan pemahaman keagamaan yang meresahkan masyarakat muslim;
- b. bahwa di antara keyakinan dan pemahaman keagamaan yang meresahkan tersebut berasal dari ajaran *al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyah* dan *millah Abraham*, yakni menyakini adanya pembawa risalah dari Tuhan Yang Maha Esa setelah Nabi Muhammad SAW, yaitu Ahmad Musadeq alias Abdus Salam Messi sebagai mesias dan juru selamat; mengingkari kewajiban shalat lima waktu, puasa ramadhan, dan haji; serta mencampuradukkan pokok-pokok ajaran Islam, Nasrani dan Yahudi dengan cara menafsirkan ayat-ayat al-Quran tidak sesuai dengan kaidah tafsir;
- c. bahwa aliran ini berkembang di beberapa daerah yang kemudian menimbulkan keresahan masyarakat, sehingga sebagian organisasi, lembaga termasuk Kejaksaan Agung RI mengajukan permintaan fatwa tentang masalah tersebut;
- d. bahwa oleh karena itu Majelis Ulama Indonesia memandang perlu menetapkan fatwa tentang aliran GAFATAR guna dijadikan pedoman.

MENGINGAT

1. Al-Quran :
 - a. Firman Allah SWT yang menegaskan soal perintah tunduk dan patuh dalam hal beragama serta ajaran Islam merupakan ajaran yang *hanif*, antara lain:

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Ketika Tuhannya berfirman kepadanya: "Tunduk patuhlah!" Ibrahim menjawab: "Aku tunduk patuh kepada Tuhan semesta alam". (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:131)

Appendix 6. Policy Documents



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA R.I.

SEKRETARIAT JENDERAL

Jl. Lapangan Banteng Barat No. 3 - 4
Telepon : 3811679, 34833004, 34833005
JAKARTA 10710

Kepada Yth.:

1. Inspektur Jenderal Kementerian Agama;
2. Para Direktur Jenderal di lingkungan Kementerian Agama;
3. Kepala Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama;
4. Para Rektor UIN/IAIN/IHDN; ·
5. Para Kepala Biro dan Pusat pada Sekretariat Jenderal Kementerian Agama;
6. Para Kepala Kantor Wilayah Kementerian Agama Provinsi;
7. Para Ketua Sekolah Tinggi Agama Negeri;
8. Para Kepala Kantor Kementerian Agama Kabupaten/Kota;

di -

Tempat

SURAT EDARAN SEKRETARIS JENDERAL KEMENTERIAN AGAMA

Nomor: SJ/B.V/2/HK.00/ 71.08 /2014

TENTANG

PEDOMAN PENANGANAN ALIRAN DAN GERAKAN KEAGAMAAN BERMASALAH DI INDONESIA

Dalam rangka penyelesaian masalah aliran dan gerakan keagamaan baru dan bermasalah di Indonesia secara komprehensif dan berkesinambungan, kami mohon agar satuan kerja di lingkungan Kementerian Agama melakukan penanganan dan pembinaan terhadap aliran keagamaan bermasalah dengan mengacu pada Pedoman Penanganan Aliran dan Gerakan Keagamaan Bermasalah Di Indonesia yang diterbitkan oleh Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan Kehidupan Keagamaan, Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama.

Demikian, untuk dapat dilaksanakan sebagaimana mestinya.

Jakarta, 7 April 2014

a.n. Menteri Agama
Sekretaris Jenderal,



Bahrul Hayat, Ph.D.

Tembusan:

Yth. Menteri Agama Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.



**KEPUTUSAN BERSAMA
MENTERI AGAMA, JAKSA AGUNG, DAN
MENTERI DALAM NEGERI REPUBLIK INDONESIA**

NOMOR : 3 Tahun 2008

NOMOR : KEP-033/A/JA/6/2008

NOMOR : 199 Tahun 2008

TENTANG

**PERINGATAN DAN PERINTAH KEPADA PENGANUT, ANGGOTA, DAN/ATAU
ANGGOTA PENGURUS JEMAAT AHMADIYAH INDONESIA (JAI)
DAN WARGA MASYARAKAT**

**MENTERI AGAMA, JAKSA AGUNG, DAN
MENTERI DALAM NEGERI REPUBLIK INDONESIA,**

- Menimbang :
- a. bahwa hak beragama adalah hak asasi manusia yang tidak dapat dikurangi dalam keadaan apapun, setiap orang bebas untuk memeluk agamanya masing-masing dan beribadat menurut agamanya dan kepercayaannya itu, negara menjamin kemerdekaan tiap-tiap penduduk untuk memeluk agamanya masing-masing dan untuk beribadat menurut agamanya dan kepercayaannya itu, dan dalam menjalankan hak dan kebebasannya setiap orang wajib menghormati hak asasi orang lain dalam tertib kehidupan bermasyarakat, berbangsa, dan bernegara, serta tunduk kepada pembatasan yang ditetapkan dengan undang-undang;
 - b. bahwa setiap orang dilarang dengan sengaja di muka umum menceritakan, menganjurkan atau mengusahakan dukungan umum, untuk melakukan penafsiran tentang suatu agama yang dianut di Indonesia atau melakukan kegiatan-kegiatan keagamaan yang menyerupai kegiatan-kegiatan keagamaan dari agama itu, penafsiran dan kegiatan mana menyimpang dari pokok-pokok ajaran agama itu;
 - c. bahwa Pemerintah telah melakukan upaya persuasif melalui serangkaian kegiatan dan dialog untuk menyelesaikan permasalahan **Jemaat Ahmadiyah Indonesia (JAI)** agar tidak menimbulkan keresahan dalam kehidupan beragama dan mengganggu ketenteraman dan ketertiban kehidupan bermasyarakat, dan dalam hal ini Jemaat Ahmadiyah Indonesia (JAI) telah menyampaikan 12 (dua belas) butir Penjelasan pada tanggal 14 Januari 2008;
 - d. bahwa dari hasil pemantauan terhadap 12 (dua belas) butir Penjelasan **Jemaat Ahmadiyah Indonesia (JAI)** sebagaimana dimaksud pada huruf c, Tim Koordinasi Pengawasan Aliran Kepercayaan Masyarakat (PAKEM) menyimpulkan bahwa meskipun terdapat beberapa butir yang telah dilaksanakan namun masih terdapat beberapa butir yang belum dilaksanakan oleh penganut, anggota, dan/atau anggota pengurus **Jemaat Ahmadiyah Indonesia (JAI)** sehingga dapat mengganggu ketenteraman dan ketertiban kehidupan bermasyarakat ;
 - e. bahwa warga masyarakat wajib menjaga dan memelihara kerukunan umat beragama untuk menciptakan ketenteraman dan ketertiban kehidupan bermasyarakat demi terwujudnya persatuan dan kesatuan nasional;
 - f. bahwa dengan maksud untuk menjaga dan memupuk ketenteraman beragama dan ketertiban kehidupan bermasyarakat, serta berdasarkan pertimbangan pada huruf a, huruf b, huruf c, huruf d, dan huruf e perlu menetapkan Keputusan Bersama Menteri Agama, Jaksa Agung, dan Menteri Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia



Jakarta, 03 Maret 2016

Kepada Yang Terhormat :

1. Gubernur
2. Kepala Kejaksaan Tinggi
3. Kepala Kantor Wilayah
Kementerian Agama Provinsi
4. Bupati/Walikota

Di -
Seluruh Indonesia

**SURAT EDARAN BERSAMA
SEKRETARIS JENDERAL KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA,
JAKSA AGUNG MUDA INTELIJEN,
DAN DIREKTUR JENDERAL POLITIK DAN PEMERINTAHAN UMUM
KEMENTERIAN DALAM NEGERI REPUBLIK INDONESIA**

NOMOR : SE/SJ/ 06 /2016.
NOMOR : SE/B- 264 /D/Dsp.2/03/2016.
NOMOR : 410/921/POLPUM.

**TENTANG
PEDOMAN PELAKSANAAN KEPUTUSAN BERSAMA MENTERI AGAMA
REPUBLIK INDONESIA, JAKSA AGUNG REPUBLIK INDONESIA, MENTERI
DALAM NEGERI REPUBLIK INDONESIA NOMOR : 93 TAHUN 2016; NOMOR
: KEP-043/A/JA/02/2016; NOMOR : 223 - 865 TAHUN 2016**

**TENTANG
PERINTAH DAN PERINGATAN
KEPADA
MANTAN PENGURUS, MANTAN ANGGOTA, PENGIKUT DAN / ATAU
SIMPATISAN ORGANISASI KEMASYARAKATAN
GERAKAN FAJAR NUSANTARA
ATAU DALAM BENTUK LAINNYA
UNTUK
MENGHENTIKAN PENYEBARAN KEGIATAN KEAGAMAAN
YANG MENYIMPANG DARI AJARAN POKOK AGAMA ISLAM**

Dasar Hukum

Keputusan Bersama Menteri Agama Republik Indonesia, Jaksa Agung Republik Indonesia dan Menteri Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia Nomor: 93 Tahun 2016; Nomor: KEP-043/A/JA/02/2016; Nomor: 223 - 865 Tahun 2016 tanggal 29 Februari 2016 tentang perintah dan peringatan kepada



PENETAPAN PRESIDEN REPUBLIK INDONESIA
NOMOR 1 TAHUN 1965
TENTANG
PENCEGAHAN PENYALAHGUNAAN DAN/ATAU PENODAAN AGAMA

PRESIDEN REPUBLIK INDONESIA

Menimbang : a. bahwa dalam rangka pengamanan Negara dan Masyarakat, cita-cita Revolusi Nasional dan pembangunan Nasional Semesta menuju ke masyarakat adil dan makmur, perlu mengadakan peraturan untuk mencegah penyalah-gunaan atau penodaan agama;
b. bahwa untuk pengamanan revolusi dan ketentuan masyarakat, soal ini perlu diatur dengan Penetapan Presiden;

Mengingat : 1. pasal 29 Undang-undang Dasar;
2. pasal IV Aturan Peralihan Undang-undang Dasar;
3. penetapan Presiden No. 2 tahun 1962 (Lembara-Negara tahun 1962 No. 34);
4. pasal 2 ayat (1) Ketetapan M.P.R.S. No. II/MPRS/1960;

Memutuskan:

Menetapkan : Penetapan Presiden Republik Indonesia tentang pencegahan penyalahgunaan dan/atau penodaan Agama.

Pasal 1.

Setiap orang dilarang dengan sengaja di muka umum menceritakan, menganjurkan atau mengusahakan dukungan umum, untuk melakukan penafsiran tentang sesuatu agama yang dianut di Indonesia atau melakukan kegiatan-kegiatan keagamaan yang menyerupai kegiatan-kegiatan keagamaan dari agama itu; penafsiran dan kegiatan mana menyimpang dari pokok-pokok ajaran agama itu.