

Transformations And Contestations of Islamic Authority: Traditionalist Muslim Resistance to Bā'alawī In Contemporary Indonesia

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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ABSTRACT

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This thesis investigates the growing resistance over the past three years by certain traditionalist Muslim leaders and scholars in Indonesia towards the Bā'alawī, a Hadhrami group claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammad. Initiated by Imaduddin Utsman through a critical examination of lineage records, this initial rejection has led to widespread reactions against the Bā'alawī lineage. These narratives of rejection (Bā'alawī rejectionists) have proliferated across social media, Islamic study assemblies (majlis taklim), and academic platforms. Conversely, responses from the Bā'alawī and their traditionalist supporters (Bā'alawī supporters) affirm the authenticity of their lineage. This phenomenon is unprecedented, given the historically esteemed position of the Bā'alawī within traditionalist Muslim contexts. This research identifies this phenomenon as a contestation of religious authority within traditionalist circles. It elucidates the underlying reasons, the processes through which it unfolds, and its impact on both the religious authority of the Bā'alawī and the broader authority of traditionalist Islam. Drawing on Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, this study indicates that the traditionalist rejection and reactions towards the Bā'alawī is a sociological phenomenon arising from the interaction between actors (Bā'alawī rejectionists) and social structures. Employing a qualitative approach that includes interviews, observations, and documentation, this research uncovers the motives and reasons behind the rejection from traditionalist NU circles towards the existence of the Bā'alawī. Through analyzing narratives from both Bā'alawī rejectionists and supporters, the study argues that the rejection is driven not only by theological differences but also by complex socio-political dynamics. The transformation of traditionalist societal structures, influenced by globalization and digitalization, reshapes the perception and practice of religious authority, leading to contests between traditional actors and new authorities, as well as among traditional authorities themselves.

Keywords: *Religious Authority, Islam Traditionalist, Bā'alawī Rejectionist, Contestation, Transformation, and Structuration.*

ملخص البحث

الاسم: محمد معافيقول خالد م.د

البرنامج: الدراسات الإسلامية

العنوان: تحولات وصراعات السلطة الإسلامية: مقاومة المسلمين التقليديين للبعلوي في إندونيسيا المعاصرة

تبحث هذه الأطروحة في المقاومة المتزايدة على مدى السنوات الثلاث الماضية من قبل بعض القادة والعلماء المسلمين التقليديين في إندونيسيا ضد البعلويين، وهي جماعة حضرية تدعي النسب من النبي محمد. أدى هذا الرفض الأولي، الذي بدأه عماد الدين عثمان من خلال الفحص النقدي لسجلات الأنساب، إلى رد فعل عنيف واسع النطاق ضد الأنساب البعلوية. وقد انتشرت رواية الرفض هذه (الرافضون البعلويون) على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، ومجالس التعلم، والمنصات الأكاديمية. وفي المقابل فإن رد البعلويين وأنصارهم التقليديين (أنصار البعلويين) يؤكد صحة نسبهم. هذه الظاهرة غير مسبوقة، نظراً لمكانة البعلوي الموقرة تاريخياً في السياقات الإسلامية التقليدية. يحدد هذا البحث هذه الظاهرة بأنها صراع على السلطة الدينية بين التقليديين. يشرح هذا البحث الأسباب الأساسية، والعمليات التي حدثت من خلالها، وتأثيرها على السلطة الدينية البعلوية والسلطة الأوسع للإسلام التقليدي. وبالرجوع إلى نظرية الهيكله لأنتوني جيدنز، يوضح هذا البحث أن رفض التقليديين ورد فعلهم على البعلوي هو ظاهرة اجتماعية تنشأ من التفاعلات بين الفاعلين (الرافضين البعلويين) والبنى الاجتماعية. باستخدام المنهج النوعي الذي يتضمن المقابلات والملاحظة والتوثيق، يكشف هذا البحث عن الدوافع والأسباب وراء رفض التقليديين لهيضة العلماء لوجود البعلوي. من خلال تحليل روايات الرافضين والمؤيدين للبعلويين، يجادل هذا البحث بأن هذا الرفض ليس مدفوعاً بالاختلافات العقائدية فحسب، بل أيضاً بديناميكيات اجتماعية وسياسية معقدة. إن التحول الهيكلي للمجتمعات التقليدية، المتأثر بالعمولة والرقمنة، يعيد تشكيل تصور وممارسة السلطة الدينية، مما يؤدي إلى تنافس بين الجهات الفاعلة التقليدية والسلطات الجديدة، وكذلك بين السلطات التقليدية نفسها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السلطة الدينية، الإسلام التقليدي، رفض البعلوية، الصراع، التحول، والهيكله.

TRANSLITERATION GUIDE

Arabic	Roman	Arabic	Roman	Arabic	Roman
ا	a	س	s	ل	l
ب	b	ش	sh	م	m
ت	t	ص	ṣ	ن	n
ث	th	ض	ḍ	و	w
ج	j	ط	ṭ	ه	h
ح	ḥ	ظ	ẓ	ي	y
خ	kh	ع	'		
د	d	غ	gh		
ذ	dh	ف	f		
ر	r	ق	q		
ز	z	ك	k		

Short Vocal

Arab Alphabet	Roman Alphabet	Arabic Example	Transliteration
َ	a	جَلَسَ	<i>jalasa</i>
ِ	i	رَكِبَ	<i>rakiba</i>
ُ	u	كُتِبَ	<i>kutiba</i>

Long Vocal

Arab Alphabet	Roman Alphabet	Arabic Example	Transliteration
آ/أ	ā	جَرَى/سَافَرَ	<i>jarā/sāfar</i>
ي	ī	سَلِيم	<i>salīm</i>
و	ū	سَجُود	<i>sujūd</i>

Diphthong

Arab Alphabet	Roman Alphabet	Arabic Example	Transliteration
أَوْ	aw	مَوْلَا	<i>mawlā</i>
أَيُّ	ay	غَيْب	<i>ghayb</i>

Notes:

1. Consonant with shaddah (◌ّ) for instance, أمة is written as *ummah* (double letters).
2. Arabic letter *hamzah* (ء) at the beginning of a word is transliterated into “a” not into “ʿa”. For instance, أحمد is written as *aḥmad* not *ʿaḥmad*.
3. Arabic script of *alif-lam qamariyah* (ال) is written as “al” at the beginning of words and *alif-lam shamsiyah* (ا) is written in accordance with the first letter at the beginning of words. For instance:
المائدة : al-māidah
الرحمان : ar-rahmān
4. Arabic letter *ta' marbutah* (ة) is written as “h” when it is located at the end of the words, such as البقرة is written as *al-baqarah*. When located in the middle of a sentence is written as “t”, such as أمة وسطا is written as *ummatan wasaṭan*.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Discussing religious authority in contemporary Indonesia must acknowledge a phenomenon that has recently garnered significant attention: the rejection by some traditionalists¹ (individuals) of Arab-Hadhrami (Habaib Bā'alawī). These reactions and rejections cannot be seen as a contestation of religious authority but must be considered a sociological phenomenon. This means that the issue of religious authority is a social construction rather than a theological one. In other words, the problem of religious authority involves mutual influence between the construction of religious beliefs and social reality itself. Analogously, the particular position and role (authority) obtained by the Arab-Hadhrami (Bā'alawī) affects the construction of traditionalist Muslim religious beliefs within their social reality. This occurs because, under their religious authority, Bā'alawī present themselves as unique conduits, agents, and embodiments of God's power. They are viewed as more authentic in their understanding and practice of Islam than non-Arabs, partly due to their Arab ancestry, which helps them establish a connection with the Islamic holy land. They can also trace their lineage and families back to the Prophet Muhammad. This is the main reason why traditionalists consider them to be saints and protectors of Muslims, as well as scholars or experts in Islamic knowledge.²

The Bā'alawī in Indonesia have long held a distinct position among traditionalist Muslims. Their adherence to traditionalist Islam has placed them on par with the non-Arab traditionalist mainstream across various parts of Indonesia. Since they arrived in the Dutch East Indies before the 19th century, the Hadhrami Arabs have significantly influenced Indonesia's Islamic landscape.³ Their presence in Indonesia, especially from the 1880s through the mid-17th century to the early 20th century, increased their numbers in several regions and solidified their status as religious authorities, partly due to their political

¹ The term "Traditionalist" is debatable between Indonesian scholar and other scholar. It's term, for the first time used by Deliar Noer in his book on the title "*Gerakan Moderen Islam Di Indonesia 1900-194*" to classification an Islam in Indonesia. In the other hand, the term traditionalist quoted and criticized by other scholar, for example Martin van Bruinessen, "Traditionalist and Islamist Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia," in *The Madrasa in Asia*, ed. Martin van Bruinessen, Farish A. Noor, and Yoginder Sikand, Political Activism and Transnational Linkages (Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 217–46, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46n10w.12>. And I will explain more in chapter II about the history of traditionalism in Indonesia.

² Syamsul Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia: The Resurgence of Hadhrami Preachers*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003358558>.

³ Syamsul Rijal, "Revitalizing Hadhrami Authority: New Networks, Figures and Institutions among Habā'ib in Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 27 (August 3, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v27i2.9382>.

influence gained through marriages with local ruling families.⁴ Despite facing structured discriminatory treatment during the Dutch colonial period, they succeeded in establishing colonies in several parts of Indonesia, including Batavia, Cirebon, Semarang, Pekalongan, Surabaya, and Madura.⁵ This indicates that the transformation of identity, culture, and politics by the Hadhrami Arab community in Indonesia was a continuous process from the late 18th century to the early 20th century.⁶ Ultimately, their unique position among traditionalists has been maintained by positioning themselves in the religious sphere through the establishment of mosques and religious teaching assemblies that, to this day, are trusted and serve as platforms for Indonesian Muslims.⁷ Consequently, the Hadhrami Arabs (Bā'alawī) have maintained undisputed religious authority up to the present.⁸

Highlighting religious authority in Islam, in general, by contextualizing the position and role of Hadhrami Arabs in the Indonesian Islamic landscape is very complex. This is because, normatively and theologically, Islam does not recognize the institution of monks, as in Judaism, nor the Papacy, as in Catholicism, which can control religious life. However, religious authority is dispersed across various layers in Indonesian Islam, from religious institutions to state and local figures. Religious institutions such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, and Persis have fatwa bodies to guide their followers in various religious matters. Likewise, through its Fatwa Commission, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) regularly issues fatwa to regulate religious life, largely due to the success of Hadhrami Arabs in integrating and becoming part of Indonesia while maintaining their distinct genetic heritage. Furthermore, the unique position and dualistic role of the Hadhrami Arabs (Bā'alawī) have led to an overlap of religious and political authority. Consequently, it is challenging to distinguish the authority of the Hadhrami Arabs between religious authority, which has a divine, transcendent, and absolute dimension, and political authority, which is temporary, profane, and relative.⁹

⁴ Huub de Jonge, "Discord and Solidarity among the Arabs in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900-1942," *Indonesia*, no. 55 (1993): 73–90, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3351087>.

⁵ Justus M. van der Kroef, "The Arabs in Indonesia," *Middle East Journal* 7, no. 3 (1953): 300–323.

⁶ Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, "The Arab Periodicals of the Netherlands East Indies, 1914-1942," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 152, no. 2 (1996): 236–56.

⁷ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, "Becoming Indonesians: The Bā 'Alawī in the Interstices of the Nation," *Die Welt Des Islams* 51, no. 1 (2011): 45–74.

⁸ Rijal, "Revitalizing Hadhrami Authority."

⁹ Imron Rosidi, Yasril Yazid, and Amril, "The Fragmentation of Religious Authority in Provincial Towns in Indonesia: The Case of the Mui (Indonesian Muslim Scholar Council) in Pekanbaru and Pontianak," *MANUSYA: Journal of Humanities* 24, no. 2 (December 6, 2021): 185–203, <https://doi.org/10.1163/26659077-24020001>.

The above phenomenon confirms that the discourse of authority is not monolithic but a universal concept.¹⁰ Authority, in its abstraction—distinct from power, coercion, or violence—can be defined in Weberian terms as the right to command obedience in the name of shared values and norms recognized by those who wield this authority and those who submit to it. Religious authority signifies the right to impose regulations harmoniously with God's will.¹¹ Consequently, religious authority, manifesting through various means such as ideas, texts, individuals, groups, and institutions, faces contemporary academic challenges.¹² Modernization, secularization, globalization, radicalism, and extremism pose significant threats, placing religious authority within a framework of contestation between traditional and new authorities, religious and state authorities, and among traditionalists concerning the existence of Hadhrami Arabs.¹³ Historically, they have experienced reactions and debates, notably the internal Arab-Hadhrami identity conflict stemming from divergent interpretations of Islamic reformism. This conflict began with the initiative to establish Jamiat Khair in 1901, officially legalized on June 17, 1905, by the Governor of the Dutch East Indies. The organization became a catalyst for internal conflict, exacerbated by criticisms from figures like Sukarti against Bā'alawī Arab traditions such as hand-kissing (*taqbil*) and marriage based on equality (*kafa'a*), which pitted Al-Irsyad against Rabithah Alawiyah (the Alawites) at the time.¹⁴

Furthermore, the reactions and debates surrounding the Hadhrami Arabs in Indonesia did not end there. Following the 1998 reformation, which allowed individuals, groups, and organizations to express themselves freely, some Salafi-affiliated individuals also challenged the religious authority of the Bā'alawī.¹⁵ The Salafis' reactions and responses are intrinsically linked to the unique position of the Habaib in the Indonesian

¹⁰ Zulkifli, "THE ULAMA IN INDONESIA: Between Religious Authority and Symbolic Power," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 37, no. 1 (June 2, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v37i1.79>.

¹¹ Azyumardi Azra et al., eds., "Varieties of Religious Authority: Changes and Challenges in 20th Century Indonesian Islam," in *The Redefinition of Religious Authority Among South Asian Muslims from 1919 TO 1956*, IIAS/ISEAS Series on Asia (Singapore: Leiden, Netherlands: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; International Institute for Asian Studies, 2010).

¹² Nico J.G Kaptein, "The Voice of the 'Ulamā': Fatwas and Religious Authority in Indonesia," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions*, no. 125 (January 1, 2004): 115–30, <https://doi.org/10.4000/assr.1038>.

¹³ Bryan S. Turner, "Religious Authority and the New Media," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, no. 2 (March 2007): 117–34, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276407075001>.

¹⁴ Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami Awakening: Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900–1942* (Cornell University Press, 1999), <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501732522>.

¹⁵ Ahmad Muhajir and Afra Alatas, "The Debate on the Bā'alawī Lineage in Indonesia Highlighting Weaknesses in the Genealogical Records," *ISEAS Publishing*, 2023, https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/TRS20_23.pdf.

Islamic landscape. However, what is equally intriguing, and the focus of this research is a phenomenon that has gained significant attention in Indonesia over the past three years, where traditionalists have begun to reject the existence of the Arab-Bā'alawī. This started with a verification study using modern historiographic methods conducted by a Kiai affiliated with Nadhlatul Ulama (NU), which was enthusiastically received by several others, leading them to question the lineage of the Hadhrami Arabs (Habaib Bā'alawī) to the Prophet Muhammad.¹⁶ Their reactions and rejections extended beyond lineage disputes, encompassing broader issues such as the claims of Islamization of Indonesia by the Hadhrami Arabs and their questionable significance, dominance, and legitimacy.¹⁷ Ultimately, the elements underpinning their religious authority—including their genetic ties to the Prophet Muhammad, the continuity of their scholarly lineage with their teachers, their religious knowledge, managerial skills (in managing Islamic boarding schools and their businesses), and involvement in Tarekat (Sufi orders)—have faced severe reactions and rejection from some traditionalists.¹⁸

¹⁶ Imaduddin Utsman al-Bantani, *Menakar Kesahihan Nasab Habib di Indonesia* (Maktabah Nahdlatul Ulum, 2022).

¹⁷ There are three hypotheses regarding how Islam arrived in Indonesia: a) According to Snouck Hurgronje's Gujarat Theory, Gujarat is where Islam first entered the world. 1) The dearth of evidence supporting the Arabs' contribution to the spread of Islam throughout the archipelago was the primary basis on which Snouck Hurgronje centered his analysis of Gujarat. 2) Trade ties between Indonesia and India have existed for a while. 3) The earliest records of Islam may be discovered in Sumatra, which provides insight into the historical ties between Gujarat and Sumatra. In accordance with W.F. Stutterheim's assertion that Islam arrived in Indonesia in the thirteenth century from Gujarat. As evidenced by the tombstone of Malik Al-Saleh, the first Sultan of the Samudra Kingdom, who passed away in 1297 AD. b) The Makkah Theory, according to Hamka, dates the introduction of Islam to Indonesia to 1H/7 AD and attributes its spread to the Arabs. Gujarat. c) According to the Persian theory, there are parallels between Indonesian Islamic society and Persian culture. These include: a) the celebration of Ashura, or the 10th of Muharram, as a Shi'a memorial day honoring Husain's martyrdom. b) The parallels between Syaikh Siti Jenar's teachings and those of the Sufi Al-Hallaj of Iran. c) the usage of Iranian terminology in the spelling system of Arabic letters. d) Gravestones were ordered from Gujarat for the Gresik tombs of Malik Ibrahim (1419) and Malikus Saleh (1297). The Gujarati hypothesis and the Persian theory are exactly the same. Indonesia is undergoing six phases of Islamization, including: a) commerce routes. The bustling commerce in the seventh century. Muslims from the Western, Southeast, and Eastern regions of Asia participated in trade as Arabs, Persians, and Indians. a) The conduit for marriage. The marriage method is more advantageous when it unites Muslim merchants with the offspring of nobles or kings and dukes, as the aforementioned individuals expedite the process of Islamization. b) The Sufism channel. Sufism is a "form" of Islam presented to the native population that is easily understood and accepted because it is comparable to the minds of those who previously practiced Hinduism. d) A route for education. Education was another means by which Islamization was carried out, including boarding schools and cottages run by ulama-ulama and kyai-kyai, or religious instructors. d) Channel Arts. The Wayang performance is the most well-known example of Islamization through the arts. It's stated that Sunan Kalijaga was the most proficient Wayang performer. g) Political avenues. The king's political clout played a major role in the Islamization of the area. The Gujarat, Makkah, and Persian theories explain how Islam arrived in Indonesia. To support the current beliefs, however, further theories ought to be put forth.

¹⁸ Robert Pringle, *Understanding Islam in Indonesia: Politics and Diversity* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i press, 2010).

The above issue, the focus of this research, becomes even more intriguing considering that traditionalists, defined as Islamic communities, adhere to Islamic schools or doctrines that follow long-standing Islamic traditions and teachings, often aligning with a Sunni Fiqh school like Shafi'i.¹⁹ A critical characteristic of traditionalists is their commitment to customs and practices deeply rooted in society, supported by the culture of Islamic Boarding Schools (*Pesantren*) and Kiai as the epicentre of Islamic teaching, utilizing the *yellow book* (*Kitab Kuning*) as a primary teaching resource.²⁰ Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) exemplifies this typology. Historically, NU is one of Indonesia's largest Islamic organizations, and its adherents have never questioned the existence of Hadhrami Arabs; instead, they have acknowledged their presence, significance, dominance, and legitimacy. The recent reactions and rejections within the traditionalist community, particularly NU, mark a new development in the social structure. Despite differing views on the categorization of Indonesian Islam, the characteristics attributed to traditionalist NU are not significantly different from those of the Hadhrami Arabs, aside from the latter's status as migrants with complex histories and identities.

Thus, this research problematizes and debates the fragmented position of religious authority due to modern technology, global politics, and ongoing political-cultural transformations. Modern technology has a contradictory ideological impact, where the reaction and rejection by some traditionalists towards Hadhrami Arabs is a contestation between agents within the structure of Indonesian traditionalist Islamic society. Modern technology and new media have facilitated new ways of organizing and planning political movements and social revolutions, rapidly gaining global influence. Intriguingly, the traditionalist reaction and rejection of Hadhrami Arabs is a recent development, reinforcing the assumption that the structure of traditionalist Islam is experiencing significant academic challenges. In this research context, the phenomenon can be viewed as agent contestation, illustrating the interaction between individuals and problematic social structures and norms. Severe sociological issues within the traditionalist societal structure have led some individuals to act against Hadhrami Arabs. Based on Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, actors' reactions to social phenomena arise from two significant impulses: first, the actors' motivations, and second, the coercion of the social structure in which the actors are situated. Given these academic challenges, this research becomes even more compelling as

¹⁹ van Bruinessen, "Traditionalist and Islamist Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia."

²⁰ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi pesantren: studi pandangan hidup kyai dan visinya mengenai masa depan Indonesia*, Cet. 8 rev (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011).

it delves into social phenomena, particularly within the evolving traditionalist Islamic society.²¹

Finally, this research will focus on those who reject the existence of Hadhrami Arabs using a sociological approach with structuration theory. Through these methods and theories, the study will concentrate on the actors and the background of their rejection of the Bā'alawī lineage and the changing structure of Indonesian traditionalist society. Changes in societal structure, especially within Indonesian traditionalist society, affect how discourse and social construction are formed and how they manifest today. The research will also focus on the discourses that emerged among traditionalists due to the reaction and rejection of the Bā'alawī lineage. Whether acknowledged or not, the rejection of Bā'alawī is an attempt to contest the significance, domination, and legitimacy long held by the Bā'alawī. Thus, Imaduddin Uthman and his supporters, referred to in this paper as the "pro-cancellation of Bā'alawī lineage" group, are the primary sources of this research. The primary sources include contested discourses, arguments against the authenticity of Bā'alawī's lineage, rejection of claims of Islamization by Bā'alawī, and other discourses circulating in various online media. These primary sources will be analyzed to understand how actors' efforts and the changing social structure of traditionalist society can influence and encourage the fragmentation of religious authority within Indonesian traditionalists.

1.2 Research Objective

This research attempts to illustrate the traditionalist reaction and rejection of Arab Hadhrami (Bā'alawī) as a sociological phenomenon that can be examined from the players or agents and structures of Indonesian traditionalist society based on the academic difficulties outlined in the problem's background.

1. This research examines how the fragmentation and transformation of religious authority alters the structure of Indonesia's orthodox Islamic society.
2. This study looks at traditionalist players vying for religious authority due to Indonesian Islamic society's structural influences.
3. This research attempts to show how the structure of conservative Islamic culture in Indonesia influences how some traditionalists respond to and reject Bā'alawī and the dispute over religious authority.

²¹ Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Polity Press, 1984).

1.3 Research Question

Based on academic problems related to the fragmentation and transformation of religious authority within traditionalist Islam (NU), this research raises the most basic questions:

1. Why is there a reaction and rejection from traditionalist circles towards Bā'alawī religious authority in Indonesia?
2. How do traditionalists contest the religious authority of Bā'alawī in contemporary Indonesia?

1.4 Literature Review

Many experts and scientists have researched Arab-Hadhrami in Indonesia from various sociological, anthropological, historical, and theological aspects. Previous studies have focused only on the history of the Arab-Hadhrami's arrival in Indonesia, their influence and role, and their religious authority during Indonesia's growing society. However, in contrast, this study focuses on analyzing the latest phenomena related to the existence and authority of Arab-Hadhrami because of the reaction and rejection of some traditionalists (NU) towards Bā'alawī. Interestingly, the polemic has just occurred and is the first time in Indonesian history. It has not been completed until this research must be terminated because the deadline for collection is the final project. In the mapping process, this literature review will be divided into three scopes: historicity and identity, traditionalist Islam, and popularity and religious authority.

a. Historicity and Identity

There is nothing that has no history, including Arab-Hadhrami, whose existence is different in itself, both because of his past in the form of his connection to the Prophet Muhammad, his original area, which is close to the centre of Islam, to Arabic, which is their language but also Islam. These differences have become an inherent identity at the same time that Arabs in Indonesia have fought for a duration that is not short but through hundreds of years of travel. Arab-Hadhrami, by going through a long period of space and time, is one of the reasons that its historicity and identity are studied, researched, and debated to this day.²² In addition, researchers do not stop at its historicity and identity; they

²² Syed Farid Alatas, "HADHRAMAUT AND THE HADHRAMI DIASPORA: PROBLEMS IN THEORETICAL HISTORY," n.d.; Zeffry Alkatiri and Nabel A. Karim Hayaze, "Critical Literature Study on *Habaib* Identity in the Constellation of Islamic Studies in Indonesia from the Colonial Period to the Present," *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 9, no. 1 (December 31, 2022): 2096286, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2022.2096286>; Alatas and Slama, "Rethinking Diasporic Returns"; Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk, "Al-Manār and the Ḥadhramī Elite in the Malay-Indonesian World: Challenge and Response," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 17, no. 3 (2007):

also look at the geography and social problems in Yemen, where researchers conduct their research.²³ The existence of Arab-Hadhrami "seems" to be the center of research apart from the above reasons. It is also because their existence intersects with Islam, especially regarding tarīqah or Sufism.²⁴ Islam itself is a religion that has many influences and followers in world civilization.

As for this study, although Arab-Hadhrami is the same object as many previous researchers, there are significant differences. This study is focused on researching its existence after receiving reactions and rejections from several traditionalists. This phenomenon deserves to be studied because Arab-Bā'alawī has a particular position in Indonesian Islam. In addition, this phenomenon is the first time in the history of Indonesian traditionalist Islam – that the same vision and mission previously united Bā'alawī and traditionalists in Indonesia. In addition to the difference in space and time of the research with previous researchers related to historicity and identity, this research is based on the contest of fellow Islamic traditionalist authorities, namely Bā'alawī and traditionalists (NU).

301–22; Jajat Burhanuddin, "Diaspora Hadrami di Nusantara," *Studi Islamika* Vol VI, no. Indonesian Journal For Islamic Studies (1999); Huub de Jonge, "Discord and Solidarity among the Arabs in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900-1942," *Indonesia*, no. 55 (1993): 73–90, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3351087>; Huub de Jonge, "Abdul Rahman Baswedan and the Emancipation of the Hadramis in Indonesia," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 32, no. 3 (2004): 373–400; Ulrike Freitag and W. G. Clarence-Smith, eds., *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s*, Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia, v. 57 (Leiden ; New York: Brill, 1997); Frode F. Jacobsen, *Hadrami Arabs in Present-Day Indonesia*, 0 ed. (Routledge, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203884614>; Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, "The Arab Periodicals of the Netherlands East Indies, 1914-1942," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 152, no. 2 (1996): 236–56; Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami Awakening: Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900–1942* (Cornell University Press, 1999), <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501732522>; L. W. C. van Den Berg, *Orang Arab Di Nusantara/ L.W.C. Van Den Berg* (Komunitas Bambu, 1989); L. W. C. Van Den Berg, *Hadramaut Dan Koloni Arab Di Nusantara* (Jakarta : INIS, 1989., 1989); Justus M. van der Kroef, "The Arabs in Indonesia," *Middle East Journal* 7, no. 3 (1953): 300–323.

²³ A. S. Bujra, "Political Conflict and Stratification in Hadramaut — I," *Middle Eastern Studies* 3, no. 4 (July 1967): 355–75, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206708700083>; A. S. Bujra, "Political Conflict and Stratification in Hadramaut: II: Nationalism and the Yemeni Revolution: Their Effects on Hadramaut," *Middle Eastern Studies* 4, no. 1 (1967): 2–28; Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*, The California World History Library 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

²⁴ Martin Van Bruinessen, "Studies of Sufism and the Sufi Orders in Indonesia," *Die Welt Des Islams* 38, no. 2 (1998): 192–219; A. H. Jones, "Sufism as a Category in Indonesian Literature and History," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 2, no. 2 (1961): 10–23; Kholili Hasib, "TASAWUF BĀ'ALAWĪ: SEJARAH DAN PENGARUHNYA," *p p* 13 (2018); R. Michael Feener and Michael F. Laffan, "Sufi Scents Across the Indian Ocean : Yemeni Hagiography and the Earliest History of Southeast Asian Islam," *Archipel* 70, no. 1 (2005): 185–208, <https://doi.org/10.3406/arch.2005.3978>.

b. Islam Traditionalist

Indonesia is a country that formalizes five religions, but Islam has the largest population or mass than other inaugurated religions. Even Indonesia is home to around 230 million people, and more than 85 percent are Muslims. The number of Muslims in Indonesia is almost the same as the Muslim population in the rest of the Arabic-speaking world combined.²⁵ Interestingly, Indonesian Islamic society is unique and heterogeneous because it has two different religious styles, namely traditionalist and modernist Islamic societies. This stratification came since during the decade of Indonesian Independence, the mainstream of Islam in Indonesia was conventionally represented as consisting of the 'modernist' school, with Muhammadiyah as its organizational representative, and the 'traditionalist' school, with Nahdlatul Ulama as its representative.²⁶ However, this distinction is not new; instead, it borrows from earlier scholars who conducted studies on the development of Islamic thought and movements in the modern period, particularly in East, Central Asia, and the Indian Subcontinent.²⁷

The term traditionalist for Indonesian Islam is still relevant to make it easier for researchers to focus on research between Nahdlatul Muslims and Muhammadiyah Muslims. Therefore, few researchers still use traditionalist terms in their research.²⁸ Apart from the fact that the term is still relevant to use, recently published a book on the results of research that argues that the influence of Islamic traditionalists in Indonesia has

²⁵ Michael Buehler, "Islam and Democracy in Indonesia," *Insight Turkey* 11, no. 4 (2009): 51.

²⁶ Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia: 1900-1942*, 2. impr., East Asian Historical Monographs (Oxford University Press, 1978); Martin van Bruinessen, "Traditionalist and Islamist Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia," in *The Madrasa in Asia*, ed. Martin van Bruinessen, Farish A. Noor, and Yoginder Sikand, Political Activism and Transnational Linkages (Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 218, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46n10w.12>.

²⁷ Azyumardi Azra, "NU: Islam Tradisional Dan Modernitas di Indonesia," in *Studia Islamika*, vol. 4, 1970, 224, <http://studiaislamika.ppimcensis.or.id/index.php/studia-islamika/article/view/764>; Aziz Ahmad, "Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan," n.d.; Charles Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt* (United State of America: Russell and Russell, 1933).

²⁸ Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia*; Martin van Bruinessen, "Traditionalist and Islamist Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia"; Martin van Bruinessen, "TRADITIONALIST MUSLIMS AND POPULISM IN INDONESIA AND TURKEY" 40, no. 02 (n.d.); Carool Kersten, "Islamic Post-Traditionalism: Postcolonial and Postmodern Religious Discourse in Indonesia," *Sophia* 54, no. 4 (December 2015): 473–89, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11841-014-0434-0>; Andrée Feillard, "Indonesian Traditionalist Islam's Troubled Experience with Democracy (1999-2001)," *Archipel* 64, no. 1 (2002): 117–44, <https://doi.org/10.3406/arch.2002.3728>; Greg Fealy and Robin Bush, "The Political Decline of Traditional Ulama in Indonesia: The State, Umma and Nahdlatul Ulama," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 42, no. 5 (2014): 536–60; Edited Greg Fealy and Greg Barton, "Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia," n.d.; Dhofier, *Tradisi pesantren*; Martin van Bruinessen, "Traditionalist Muslims and Populism in Indonesia and Turkey," *Tashwirul Afkar* 40, no. 2 (December 29, 2021): 1–27, <https://doi.org/10.51716/ta.v40i2.63>; Azra, "NU: Islam Tradisional Dan Modernitas Di Indonesia."

strengthened after the 1998 reform, which goes hand in hand with the increasing popularity of Habib Bā'alawī in Indonesia.²⁹ But interestingly, with the reaction and rejection of Bā'alawī by the traditionalists themselves, this study seems to be an antithesis of the previous argument. This shows the difference in focus with the researcher earlier, who previously researched the role of traditionalists by making Habib Bā'alawī the object of his research. Meanwhile, this study looks at the age of traditionalists facing challenges due to the contestation of authority among traditionalists. Furthermore, in addition to the gap in the form of counter-productive with the previous research, this study uses social structure analysis where the emphasis of the analysis is built on two anchors, namely agents and the structure of society itself. To find reasons and answers to fellow traditionalist contests as has happened recently.

c. Popularity and Religious Authority

Habib Bā'alawī's popularity in Indonesia has been recognized continuously since it increased after Indonesia's reform in 1998, which ended with the resignation of Soeharto.³⁰ Of course, the increasing popularity is not a coincidence but because of the efforts and role of Arab-Hadrami in shaping and maintaining its existence in Indonesia.³¹ Their efforts in reshaping their identity in Indonesia have encouraged them to take part in many aspects, such as politics, economics, and education.³² By this point, it is clear that they deliberately shaped and built their popularity in all aspects of people's lives. Then, it can be imagined that researchers pay much attention to the sociological and anthropological aspects of Habib-Bā'alawī. However, the similarity of research objects does not mean the same sociological situation and conditions. The focus of this research is no longer examining the popularity of Arab-Bā'alawī but examining those who attacked and tried to

²⁹ Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia*, 3.

³⁰ Rijal, 3.

³¹ Syamsul Rijal, "Performing Arab Saints and Marketing the Prophet: Habaib and Islamic Markets in Contemporary Indonesia," *Archipel. Études Interdisciplinaires Sur Le Monde Insulindien*, no. 99 (July 15, 2020): 189–213, <https://doi.org/10.4000/archipel.1719>; Mobini-Keshch, *The Hadrami Awakening*; Syamsul Rijal, "Kaum Muda Pecinta Habaib: Kesalehan Populer dan Ekspresi Anak Muda di Ibu Kota," *Afkaruna* 14, no. 2 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.18196/AIJIS.2018.0086.166-189>.

³² Alatas, "Becoming Indonesians"; Rabith Jihan Amaruli, Nazala Noor Maulany, and Singgih Tri Sulistiyono, "Sumpah Pemuda Arab, 1934: Pergulatan Identitas Orang Arab-Hadrami di Indonesia," *Jurnal Sejarah Citra Lekha* 3, no. 2 (September 1, 2018): 122, <https://doi.org/10.14710/jscl.v3i2.19748>; Ismail Fajrie Alatas, "Pilgrimage and Network Formation in Two Contemporary Bā 'Alawī Ḥawl in Central Java," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 25, no. 3 (September 1, 2014): 298–324, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/etu037>.

undermine their authority by stating that their destiny was not connected to the Prophet Muhammad.³³

The reaction and rejection of some traditionalists against Habib-Bā'alawī is, of course, addressed to popularity and their religious authority in Indonesia. In many previous types of research, it is explained that the religious authority of Habib-Bā'alawī is inseparable from their backgrounds, such as their genetic relationship with the Prophet Muhammad, the connection of scientific sanad with his teachers, his religious knowledge, managerial ability (managing pesantren and his business), and involvement in the *tarīqah* (Sufism).³⁴ The pillars mentioned are the main pillars of Habib-Ba'alawwi's religious authority in Indonesia.³⁵ However, the problem is that the pillars that the Indonesian traditionalist community has long accepted are now getting severe reactions and rejections. Up to this point, it is clear that the difference and importance of this research lies in the focus of the study, namely the reaction and rejection of the pillars of Habib-Bā'alawī religious authority in Indonesia. This research will focus on the contestation of fellow religious actors who claim to be traditionalists but are contesting each other. In fact, in its history, the Habib-Bā'alawī entity and the traditionalists (NU) have had a close bond and relationship.³⁶

As for the research that is in line with this research, namely, the one that examines the debate related to the Bā'alawī lineage, as far as the author is traced, there are only two, namely the research conducted: the first by Ahmad Muhajir with Afra Alatas;³⁷ and second, by Aziz Miftahus Surur, Muhammad Anfa'u, and two other friends. The first article focuses

³³ Imaduddin Utsman al-Bantani, *Habaib Keturunan Nabi Benarkah? (Politik Identitas-Pengaruh-Keagungan)*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Onkor Semesta Alam, 2023); Imaduddin Utsman al-Bantani, *Kronik Perjalanan Ilmiah K.H Imaduddin Utsman Al Bantani dalam Mengungkap Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Banten: Maktabah Nahdlatul Ulum, 2024).

³⁴ Rijal, "Revitalizing Hadhrami Authority," 242; Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia*, 2.

³⁵ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, "2. A Ḥadramī Sufi Tradition in the Indonesian Archipelago," in *Buddhist and Islamic Orders in Southern Asia*, ed. R. Michael Feener and Anne M. Blackburn (University of Hawaii Press, 2019), 20–47, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824877200-003>. Other research by Alatas, "Becoming Indonesians," Ismail Fajrie Alatas and Martin Slama, "Rethinking Diasporic Returns: Ḥadramī Trajectories in Indonesia's Religio-Political Field," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 178, no. 4 (2022): 410–39., Alatas, "Pilgrimage and Network Formation in Two Contemporary Bā 'Alawī Hawl in Central Java." Other book that explain about religious authority: Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *What Is Religious Authority? Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia*, Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021).

³⁶ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, Muhammad As'ad, and Fathurrochman Karyadi, "Sejarah Hubungan Habaib dan Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)," *Tebuireng: Journal of Islamic Studies and Society* 2, no. 2 (July 31, 2022): 87–101, <https://doi.org/10.33752/tjiss.v2i2.2388>.

³⁷ Ahmad Muhajir and Afra Alatas, "The Debate on the Bā'alawī Lineage in Indonesia Highlighting Weaknesses in the Genealogical Records."

on the debate in which both sides present documents and theories about the (severing) of the Bā'alawī genealogy with the Prophet Muhammad. It concludes that "Imaduddin's research does not completely deny the Bā'alawī lineage; the Habib has not been fully convinced—from Imaduddin's point of view—about their lineage."³⁸ The results of the subsequent study also concluded that "the authority of Habaib remained intact despite the challenges to their lineage. Because they can derive their authority from other factors outside their lineage."³⁹

The difference with this study lies in the fundamental basic question: why is there a reaction and rejection of Bā'alawī, a traditionalist? In addition, it also lies in the methods and theoretical framework used in the first research. The first research does not go beyond the limitations of supporting the phenomena that occur and forgetting other elements in the form of changes in the structure of Islamic society itself.

Meanwhile, the second research focus of the study is to find out the response and impact of the polemic of the Bani Alawi lineage in all *nahdliyin* Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. In addition, the research also uses a method in the form of literature research. So, books on the polemic of lineage written by Imaduddin Uthman became the primary source. The study concluded that there are still many traditionalists Islamic boarding schools that respond, and among them still believe and acknowledge the dependence of Bā'alawī on the Prophet Muhammad.⁴⁰ The difference with my research is the focus of the analysis. The second research focuses on the response of traditionalist Islamic boarding schools to the polemic of Bā'alawī's lineage, while this research is more of a reason why the polemic occurred. In addition, the difference is the pressure point of the analysis used. This research seeks to find the reasons for the actors who destroyed the lineage and also looks for other elements in the structure of Indonesian traditionalist Islamic society.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

Tracing the phenomenon of traditionalist reaction and rejection of Bā'alawī in Indonesia using Antony Giddens' theory of structuration is the same as putting the phenomenon in a sociological framework. Sociologically, the reaction and rejection of Bā'alawī are not something that suddenly exists. Rather, it is due to changes in the structure of contemporary Indonesian Islamic society. That is the action in the form of reaction and rejection of Bā'alawī, in the framework of the sociology of religion, was born from two

³⁸ Ahmad Muhajir and Afra Alatas, "The Debate on the Bā'alawī Lineage in Indonesia Highlighting Weaknesses in the Genealogical Records," 22.

³⁹ Ahmad Muhajir and Afra Alatas, 22.

⁴⁰ Surur et al., "Memudarnya Otoritas Keagamaan?" 41–44.

major impulses: the personal impulse of the actor (pro-rejection of Bā'alawī) and the coercion of the social structure (contemporary traditionalist structure) where the actor is located. The attempt to trace the reasons for the rejection - influenced by the two above - of Bā'alawī with Giddens' structuration is merely to highlight the phenomenon so as not to be trapped in the framework of structuralism and phenomenology. Both theoretical views, for Giddens, are considered one-sided because structuralism overemphasizes structure in assessing any role in realizing actions. In contrast, phenomenologists valiantly believe that structure has no role in determining the actions of the actors who determine their actions (subjectivism). This means that in the sociological view if it only relies on the theoretical perspective of phenomenologists, it will not be possible to see the influence of important structures in determining actions in the form of reactions and rejection of Bā'alawī. Thus, the social symptoms that form the background of the traditionalist rejection of Bā'alawī will not be fully understood.⁴¹

The recent social phenomenon of traditionalist (NU) reaction and rejection of Bā'alawī is a symptom that is intricately woven with various influences from the elements involved. Although actors who reject the existence of Bā'alawī have a high awareness of realizing their actions, the intervention of structures in realizing their actions cannot be ignored. Therefore, in Giddens' view of structuration, the two elements of actor and structure must be considered simultaneously in understanding the traditionalist reaction and rejection of Bā'alawī. Admittedly or not, the reality in the form of traditionalist reactions and rejection that has recently been busy in social media cannot be fully understood if the social analysis does not link the actor's behavior with a structure that can be understood because the birth of social action is a combination of personal motivation and the demands of the interpreted structure. Both are mutually enhancing, so both have a duality relationship rather than dualism. On the other hand, both have the same and equal position, namely influencing each other and having the same significance value in realizing an action. In the context of this research, this is the traditionalist reaction and rejection of Bā'alawī.⁴² Traditionalist actors who react and reject Bā'alawī perform actions and become

⁴¹ Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Polity Press, 1984), 16-28; George Ritzer, *Sociological Theory*, 8th ed (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011); George Ritzer and Jeffrey N Stepnisky, "Sociological Theory," n.d..

⁴² Doyle Paul Johnson, *Contemporary Sociological Theory* (New York, NY: Springer New York, 2008), 177-78, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-76522-8>; Nirzalin, "Reconciling Actors and Structures in Analysis from the Social Perspective of Theory, Structuration Antony Giddens' *Journal of Sociology UniversitySyiah Kuala June 2013* Vol. 3 (2013): 19.

events recently in the spotlight. The structure of traditionalist Islamic society is a system of rules and resources formed from and shaping the recurrence of their social practices.

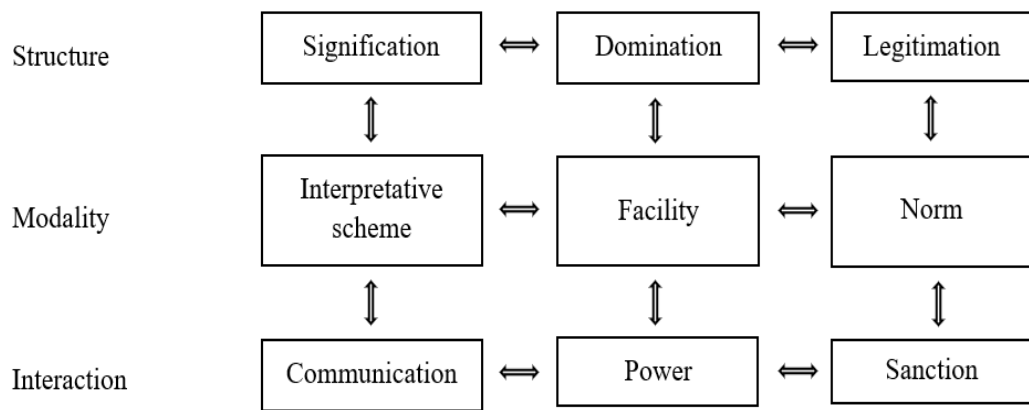
What is meant by duality is a relationship that is reciprocal, internal, and constraining but also makes actors able to produce actions. The duality of structure occurs in social practices that are repeated and patterned across time and space. In the context of this research, the traditionalist reaction and rejection of Bā'alawī results from the influence of the structure of society and the actor's motivation. In addition, the phenomenon is limited to several individuals, traditionalists, and NU that occur within a certain period and a certain space or media.⁴³ On the other hand, social practice is a habit that can be anything and makes an individual called a descendant of the Prophet, sayyid or Habib, alim, or kiai, gus, traditionalist, etc. Therefore, social action, which in this study relates to the reaction and rejection of traditionalists against Bā'alawī, cannot be separated from the three structures that influence each other and affect actors' actions.⁴⁴ The structure itself is divided into three schemes: the structure of signification, the structure of domination, and the structure of legitimacy. The structure of signification is symbolic, discourse, and mention; the structure of domination is divided into two: authoritative and allocative. The authoritative-dominance structure is control over people, while the allocative-dominance structure is control over goods or materials. Finally, the structure of legitimacy is a normative regulation revealed in the legal system.⁴⁵

The relationship and dialectics between the three structural schemes and Giddens' concept of structuration can be described as follows:

⁴³ Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, 25-27; Nirzalin, "Reconciling Actors and Structures in Analysis from the Social Perspective of Teori Strukturalis Anthony Giddens' Structuration Theory," 19; Anthony Giddens, "Theory Structuration Anthony Giddens' for Analysis, Social " n.d., 18; Zainal Abidin Achmad, "ANATOMY OF ANTHONY GIDDENS' THIRD WAY STRUCTURATION THEORY AND IDEOLOGY," *Translitera: Journal of Kajian Communication and Studies Media* 9, no. 2 (September 1, 2020): 11, <https://doi.org/10.35457/translitera.v9i2.989>.

⁴⁴ Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis*, 1st ed. (Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1979), 82, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-16161-4>.

⁴⁵ Giddens, 83-84; Nirzalin, "Reconciling Actors and Structures in Analysis from the Social Perspective of Theory Structuration Anthony Giddens'



Picture 01

*Giddens' concept of the duality dimensions of structure:*⁴⁶

According to Giddens, the three categories of structures above are resources, the most basic properties of social systems that are structured, generated, and produced by knowledgeable actors during interactions. In the context of traditionalist reactions and rejection of Bā'alawī, it can be said that the rejection of lineage, the rejection of the history of Indonesian Islamisation, and the rejection of authority are efforts that are structured and produced by several traditionalist actors (NU). The linkage of the three structures above in social practice can be seen as saying that the Bā'alawī lineage is not connected to the Prophet, which is the same as an effort to undermine the domination of the Bā'alawī Habaib authority.⁴⁷ Simultaneously, the statement that the Bā'alawī lineage is not connected to the Prophet is the same as undermining the legitimacy that the Bā'alawīs already have, as well as undermining the (theological) statements of the Bā'alawī community in Indonesia. That is, stating that the Bā'alawī lineage is not connected to the Prophet undermines the structure of significance associated with Bā'alawī authority. The following also undermines the structure of domination that coincides with legitimacy, where it is bound as a religious authority by being a reference for its congregation from various actions until they obey and are bound to Bā'alawī.

In another analogy, the status of *Sayyid* or *Habib*⁴⁸ (significance structure) causes them to be able to claim themselves as descendants of the Prophet. In addition, they can claim that they understand Islam best because they are closest to the source of Islam, so

⁴⁶ Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, 29; Nirzalin, "Reconciling Actors and Structures in Analysis from the Social Perspective of Theory Structuration Antony Giddens"

⁴⁷ Imaduddin Uthman al-al-Bantani, *Measuring the Validity of Nasab Habib's* (Maktabah Nahdlatul Ulum, 2022), 12.

⁴⁸ Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia*, 5.

that (dominance structure) they can convey the teachings of Islam because they feel the most authoritative. The authority of *sayyids* or Habaib to convey Islamic teachings (legitimacy structure) can be justified by agreed norms. Likewise, the *kiai* or *Syekh* title refers to someone whose status allows him to test the truth of what the *Sayyid* or *Habib* conveys, even the reality of his existence. At this point, an actor can realize his actions not only because of his motivation and desire but also because he adapts to the structure. At the same time, the structure gives him the empowerment that allows his actions to be realized. In this position, Giddens places power not as a totality but as a domination through mobilizing the resources of the domination structure owned by the actors.⁴⁹

In structuration theory, power has a central position in the theoretical framework. Power can be generated in and through the reproduction of structures of domination. Actors or figures with power, such as *Habib*, *sayyid*, *Sekh*, and *Kiai*, control resources and channel them to those declared subordinates.⁵⁰ In the context of structuration theory, power differs from power in the view of Max Weber (1964), who believes that "power is the ability of an actor to realize his ideas even though they are opposed by other people in a social relationship."⁵¹ For Giddens, power cannot be sustained based only on coercive capabilities. An individual's submission to the fears of others is just a false submission, which, when he gets the opportunity and momentum to fight back, will release himself from the grip of his power. However, real power is power that can channel the resources needed by others to an individual. Therefore, an actor can dominate others if he can control the social structures that underlie social relations in a society.⁵² Suppose it is analogous to the context of this research. In that case, the reaction and rejection that began with doubting the *Bā'alawī* lineage by Imaduddin Uthman is a resistance to *Habib Bā'alawī's* hegemony and authority in a fitting momentum, namely when several *Habib* became patrons of identity politics, such as *Habib Rizieq Shihab* who orchestrated the demonstrations in Indonesia after the 2016-2017 DKI elections.

The ability of some religious elites to control the structure of significance (discourse) ultimately becomes a facility for them to dominate and mobilize society in a society that accepts the domination of religious elite power through an attitude of obedience and submission that they interpret as something natural and natural. The social acts and practices of obedience and submission of the community will slowly become routine

⁴⁹ Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, 27.

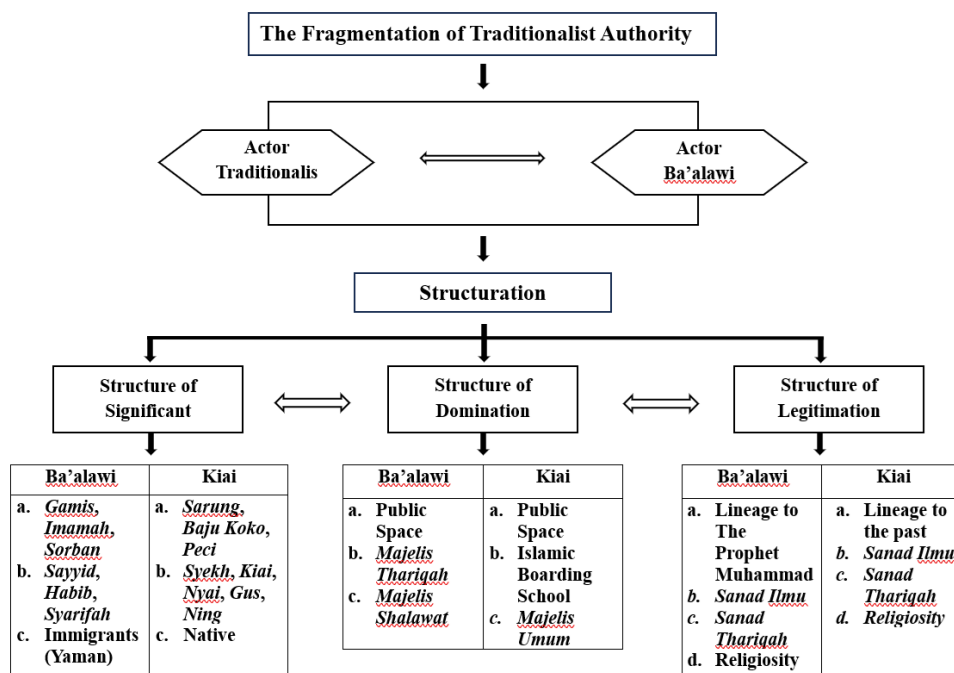
⁵⁰ Clifford Geertz, "The Javanese Kijaji: The Changing Role of a Cultural Broker," n.d., 243.

⁵¹ Nirzalin, "Reconciling Actors and Structures in Analysis from the Social Perspective of Theory Structuration Antony Giddens' *Economy and Society an Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley. Los Angeles - London: University of California Press, 1967).

⁵² Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, 29-32.

practices. This routine practice occurs because what becomes routine action is carried out based on reflection of practical awareness. Doing something that has become practical awareness evokes a sense of security for the perpetrators, automatically encouraging them to do it repeatedly. However, what needs to be underlined is that power does not just appear. Power refers to people's transformative capacity and actions (actors or elites in power). This means that the broadest meaning of power will logically adhere to subjectivity through introspection and self-reflection. Like the power possessed by sayyids, Habib, *Syekh*, kiai, and other religious elites, in terms of the transformative capacity of human agency, it is the ability of actors to interfere with the series of events and also change the series like the word "can" which can mediate the intention or desire, and the actual realization of the results sought. In this sense, Habib Bā'alawī or even traditionalist kiai who have power over others can be called domination power.

Although Habib Bā'alawī or traditionalist Kiai, as actors with their resources, can dominate their power over others, this does not mean they have total power over those they dominate. Submission to a powerful religious elite is not always absolute or total control; this happens because, in domination, there is always a relationship of autonomy and dependence, both the one who controls and the one who is controlled. At this point, it is clear that the traditionalist reaction and rejection of Bā'alawī domination results from breaking the dependency intertwined in several patterns, such as the similarity of *fiqh* schools, vision and mission in preaching, and many others. Therefore, the reaction and rejection of traditionalists can be personified as a fragment of traditionalist authority influenced by changes in the structure and activities of the actors themselves.



Picture 02

Theoretical implications, which I myself drew up, based on the results of analysing Antony Gedeens' Structuration Theory.

Thus, all dependencies, such as Bā'alawī followers or students of kiai-kiai, actually offer resources because their position as subordinates can influence the activities of recognized individuals. This mechanism is referred to by Giddens (1984) as the debate of control in social systems. A person who dominates others because he has the necessary resources in the form of authority and economy must always be able to channel his resources to his subordinates. If not, the subordinates will leave the network of power. On the one hand, the resources owned by a powerful figure are facilities for him to dominate others. Still, on the other hand, it is also a resource for subordinates to control their superiors and always transfer these resources to them. This is what the debate of control means: superiors and subordinates are always bound in a relationship of receiving and giving. For this reason, every powerful figure must always be reflective and pay attention to the interests of his subordinates. Thus, a person in power should not act arbitrarily or arbitrarily toward subordinates.

1.6 Research Significant

Based on the study's assumptions and arguments, this research attempts to answer scholarly problems about the disintegration of religious authority among traditionalist bodies due to global politics, modern media, and extremism. Furthermore, until religious authority is continuously transformed, this research aims to demonstrate how modifications

in Indonesian Islamic conservative society's structure impact it. The next step is to explain how the structure of traditionalist Islamic society logically produces the contestation between agents or actors in the form of Hadhrami Arabs' rejection and reactions, as the two are inextricably linked and serve as the foundation for social action taking the form of these reactions.

1.7 Method

This research uses a qualitative approach to obtain in-depth and extensive information about the motives and reasons for some individuals from among Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) who react and reject the existence of Hadhrami Arabs in Indonesia. Data collection techniques include interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with several individuals keen to reject Hadhrami Arabs who were met in a planned schedule and appointment. The information obtained is primary data from interviews supported by an analysis of their content on YouTube and other media, which contains a rejection of Hadhrami Arabs in Indonesia. In addition, data collection was also carried out by searching the internet, online news, and scientific articles related to the issues of Hadhrami Arab proselytization and rejection in Indonesia. Thus, the information collected was analyzed based on the structuration theory and grouped according to specific themes and categories, such as the denial of lineage, signification, domination, and legitimacy. These steps were taken to find accurate data to answer the problem formulation used as the basis of this research.

1.8 Outline

This thesis includes five chapters. The first chapter introduces the background, problem formulation, research objectives, literature review, research significance, theoretical framework, methodology, and thesis structure.

In the second chapter, I discuss the Bā'alawī and Traditionalist: The Transformation of Islamic Authority in Indonesia. It begins by introducing the term traditionalist in Islam and how the term is used as identity in the Muslim community in Indonesia. Furthermore, I briefly discuss Habib and Kiai, Indonesia's leading traditionalist Islamic religious authorities. I also explain the relationship between traditionalists (NU) and Arab-Bā'alawī and how both of them are prominent religious authorities in traditionalist Islam in Indonesia. At the end of the second chapter, I explain the challenges traditionalist Islamic authorities face due to any factor in contemporary civilization.

The third chapter focuses on the Genealogy and Resistance of Bā'alawī in Indonesia. I explain some of the resistance that has occurred since the arrival of Arab-

Bā'alawī to Indonesia. Here, I show how resistance to the Bā'alawī Arabs began. For example, I show how there was an internal conflict between Irsyadi and Bā'alawī, as well as Salafī attacks on Bā'alawī, and how some Bā'alawī individuals themselves became part of the Salafī religious movement.

The fourth chapter examines how the actors and structures of traditionalist Islamic society produce discourse and influence the fragmentation of contemporary Indonesian religious authority. I begin by presenting the argument of Imaduddin Uthman's rejection of the Bā'alawī lineage, which received responses from both the Arab-Bā'alawī themselves and traditionalists. Next, I present a discourse on Bā'alawī's claim of Islamization, which several parties later rejected. Finally, I analyze how the structure of signification is produced, how domination is formed, and how both Bā'alawī and traditionalists use the structure of legitimacy. Through these stages of analysis, the birth of fragmentation of authority within traditionalists can be imagined as a necessity.

The fifth chapter contains the conclusion of this research.

CHAPTER II: BĀ'ALAWĪ AND TRADITIONALIST ISLAM: THE TRANSFORMATION OF ISLAMIC AUTHORITY IN INDONESIA

2.1 Introduction

Indonesia, with a population of approximately 230 million people, has more than 85 percent of its inhabitants adhering to Islam. The number of Muslims in Indonesia is almost equivalent to the total Muslim population in the entire Arabic-speaking world combined.⁵³ Given this substantial population, the reality of Islam in Indonesia is highly complex and heterogeneous. Therefore, this chapter provides a detailed overview of what is referred to as traditionalism in Islam and the traditionalist Muslims of Indonesia. Traditionalist Islam generally exhibits strong characteristics associated with classical Islamic thought tracing back to scholars proficient in jurisprudence (*fiqh*), *hadith*, sufism (*tasawwuf*), exegesis (*tafsir*), and theology (*tauhid*) from the 7th to the 13th centuries. Traditionalists tend to follow the fatwas of prominent historical scholars rather than derive their conclusions directly from the Qur'an and Hadith. They typically reside in rural areas and consider Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) as their educational base. They engage in Sufism and mysticism, often rendering them exclusive and inclined to disregard global issues.

Traditionalist Islam in Indonesia is also closely linked to the ideological concept of *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jama'ah*. This concept distinguishes not only between Sunni and non-Sunni Muslims but also between traditionalists and modernists. Therefore, traditionalism refers to an understanding or doctrine based on tradition, describing structured teachings that become practiced norms within society. In the Indonesian context, traditionalist Islam is often identified as "*aswaja*," referring to specific characteristics of traditionalist Sunni groups that are socio-culturally associated with the most prominent Islamic mass organization, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). In Indonesian Islam, the roles of traditionalist scholars such as Kiai and Habib are central. Kiai in Indonesia, particularly those associated with NU, play crucial roles as religious consultants and in addressing various multidimensional societal issues. Meanwhile, Habib, who claims descent from the Prophet Muhammad, holds significant authority, particularly in propagating and upholding traditional Sunni Islamic teachings.

The central argument of this chapter revolves around the transformation of Islamic authority in Indonesia and the challenges faced by traditionalist Islam. Traditionalist Islam

⁵³ Michael Buehler, "Islam and Democracy in Indonesia," *Insight Turkey* 11, no. 4 (2009): 51.

in Indonesia has shown remarkable resilience in maintaining traditional teachings and practices despite facing significant challenges from reformist and modernist movements. Principal figures such as Kiai and Habib have played crucial roles in preserving this tradition through education in Islamic Boarding Schools and various religious activities. Reformist and modernist movements frequently criticize traditionalist practices as *bid'ah* (innovations), advocating a return to the primary sources of Islam, such as the Qur'an and Hadith, and rejecting local practices deemed un-Islamic. This conflict underscores broader tensions within Indonesian Islamic society concerning religious authority and legitimacy.

Furthermore, globalization and the digital era have opened new arenas for contesting religious authority, with celebrity preachers on social media challenging the traditional roles of Kiai and Habib. This situation indicates that religious authority is becoming decentralized and accessible to anyone capable of attracting public attention. Despite these challenges, traditionalist Islam has demonstrated a notable capacity for adaptation, with Kiai and Habib increasingly utilizing digital media to disseminate their teachings and maintain relevance in a modern, globalized society. This adaptability underscores the flexibility of Islamic traditionalism in sustaining its significance in contemporary times. This chapter explores how religious authority in traditionalist Islam in Indonesia transforms and adapts to various challenges and how the interaction between Kiai and Habib influences the dynamics of religion in Indonesia. Therefore, this chapter will explore how religious authority transforms. It begins with the term traditionalism in Islam and traditionalist Muslims in Indonesia, discussing the authority of Kiai and Habib as anchor traditionalist authority, their relationship, and challenges to religious authority within Indonesian traditionalism.

2.2 The Traditionalist Islam in Indonesia

Traditionalism, linguistically, carries two meanings: first, hereditary customs still followed by the community, and second, the assessment or assumption that existing ways are the best or most correct. Tradition is thus a broad term encompassing practices from the past that persist into the present.⁵⁴ In Islamic context text, Sayyed Hossein Nasr defines tradition as God's revelation and expression throughout civilization. He identifies three aspects of tradition: *firstly*, *al-dîn* (religion) comprehensively covering all aspects of religious life; *secondly*, *al-sunnah* (the Prophet's example), understood as the rope connecting all times, circumstances, and facets of life. Tradition, therefore, embodies

⁵⁴ Rumadi, *Islamic Post-Traditionalism in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2015), 7.

sacred truth and timeless wisdom applicable to specific times and places.⁵⁵ However, "tradition" is often narrowly translated concerning Hadith, Sunnah, and customary practices. Despite this, these terms alone do not fully capture the essence of tradition, though they are undeniably intertwined with it. For instance, Sunnah is frequently regarded as a living tradition, and organizations such as NU claim adherence to *ahl al-sunnah wa al-Jema'ah*.⁵⁶

Tradition can be understood from various perspectives, as demonstrated by Muhammad Muhammad Al-Jabiri's research, which examines multiple forms of tradition and highlights their relevance. Al-Jabiri identifies several forms of tradition: 1. Meaningful tradition (*al-turâs al-ma'nawî*), in the form of cultural tradition or the tradition of thought itself; 2. Material tradition (*al-turâs al-mâdî*) means monuments or objects that existed in the past; 3. The Cultural tradition or everything that was owned in the past; 4. Universal humanitarian tradition, or everything that exists among us, is from the past of others.⁵⁷ Traditionalists in the context of Indonesian Islam usually have the following characteristics. Firstly, it is strongly associated with traditional Islamic thought, which can be traced back to the thought of scholars who were experts in the fields of *fiqh*, *hadith*, *tasawwuf*, *tafsir*, and *tawhid* and who lived in the seventh to thirteenth centuries.⁵⁸

Meanwhile, the traditionalists of Islam are happier to follow the fatwa of the great ulama from the past than to describe their conclusion based on the Qur'an and Hadith. Secondly, many who usually live in the villages and make an Islamic Boarding School the basis of their education. Then, they look like an exclusive group that neglected a global issue because of their involvement or a part in the world of Sufism and mysticism (*tasawwuf*); they also rejected modernization and the way of thinking of urban *santri*, protected their possessions, and bowed down to their *kiai* almost without limitation. *Thirdly*, the most characteristic of traditional Islam is the ideological concept that they are attached to a particular understanding of *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jam'ah*. This argument does not just classify or differentiate between the Sunnis and non-Sunnis but also between the traditionalists and the modernists.⁵⁹ Hence, traditionalism is an understanding or teaching

⁵⁵ Rumadi, 8; See the book by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World*, 1st pbk. ed (London; New York: K. Paul International: Distributed by Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1990), 13.

⁵⁶ Azra, "NU: Islam Tradisional Dan Modernitas di Indonesia," 217–40.

⁵⁷ Mohammad Abed Al-Jabiri and Muḥammad ‘Ābid Jābirī, *Islamic Post traditionalism* (LKIS, 2000), 11-99.

⁵⁸ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi pesantren: studi pandangan hidup kyai dan visinya mengenai masa depan Indonesia*, Cet. 8 rev (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011), 1.

⁵⁹ Rumadi, *Islamic Post-Traditionalism in Indonesia*, 9; See the article by F. Ali and B. Effendy, *Travelling the New Path of Islam: The* (Mizan Publisher, 1986), 48-52, <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=y1ctnQAACAAJ>.

based on tradition, and the tradition describes teaching structured in such a way that it becomes a living practice within a community. When related to Islam, Islamic traditionalism refers to a specific Islamic understanding and doctrine, both in the form of religious thought and practices inherited from one generation to the next.

In other contexts of traditionalism, it comes from the term '*Sunni*' that refers to *ahl sunna wa al-jama'a*, meaning 'the people of the Prophetic tradition' (Sunnah) and 'community' (*jama'a*). According to the historical context, the group (*Sunni*) appears as a middle way out of the conflict and controversies between the two early opposing traditions, Kharijism and Shi'ism, after the death of Prophet Muhammad.⁶⁰ The dispute over legitimate leadership raised many questions that could divide Muslims based on theological facts. The Khawarij are considered an extreme group because they claim that sinners cannot be considered Muslims. The Shi'ah refers to the group that follows Ali ibn Abi Talib and believes that authority comes only from the *ahl bait* (the Prophet's family).⁶¹ Therefore, the term Sunni is contrasted with Shia in its current development. Sunnis are the largest branch of Islam in the world. Still, Sunni Muslims are divided into various groups and organizations with different schools of law (madhab) and social and cultural centers. It can also be seen in Indonesian Islam, where many Islamic organizations claim to be Sunni, whether they are traditionalist or reformist. Each group promotes Sunni Islam based on its interpretation.

However, it is different from what is called a tradition in Indonesia. The difference in understanding is due to the reality of Indonesian Islam, which is different from Islam in other regions. During the decade of Indonesian Independence, the mainstream of Islam in Indonesia was conventionally represented as consisting of the 'modernist' school, with Muhammadiyah as its organizational representative, and the 'traditionalist' school, with Nahdlatul Ulama as its representative.⁶² However, this distinction is not new; instead, it borrows from earlier scholars who conducted studies on the development of Islamic thought and movements in the modern period, particularly in East, Central Asia, and the

⁶⁰ Syamsul Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia: The Resurgence of Hadhrami Preachers*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2023), 42, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003358558>; and he quoted the book by Gordon Newby, *A Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*, n.d., 187; and the book by Juan Eduardo Campo, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (New York: An Imprint

⁶¹ Newby, *A Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*, 198; Campo, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1:646.

⁶² Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia: 1900-1942*, 2. impr., East Asian Historical Monographs (Oxford University Press, 1978); Martin van Bruinessen, "Traditionalist and Islamist Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia," in *The Madrasa in Asia*, ed. Martin van Bruinessen, Farish A. Noor, and Yoginder Sikand, Political Activism and Transnational Linkages (Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 218, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46n10w.12>.

Indian Subcontinent.⁶³ In addition to the above typology, a different typology responds to the previous one. It is introduced by the distinction and typology of modernists (including classical and neo-modernists) and revivalists (which provides for classical and neo-revivalists).⁶⁴ Such a framework could re-examine the position of NU and Muhammadiyah, where NU could fall into the "neo-modernist" typology. In contrast, Muhammadiyah could fall into the "revivalist" typology if the typology is based solely on religious discourse.

In the Indonesian Islamic context, traditionalist Muslims use the specific abbreviation '*aswaja*' to identify themselves as Sunni. The term refers to particular characteristics of the Sunni traditionalist group, which relates socio-culturally to the most prominent Islamic mass organization, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU).⁶⁵ NU members use the term to distinguish themselves from modernist groups such as Muhammadiyah, Al-Irsyad, and Persis. Furthermore, in the context of contemporary Indonesian Islam, the term used by NU becomes a distinguishing identity from transnational Islamic movements such as Salafism, Shia, and the Muslim Brotherhood. Among these groups, the reformist and Salafi movements have become the primary concern of traditionalists as they oppose the doctrinal and traditional practices of traditionalist Muslims, especially for conventional religious leaders such as Kiai and Habib, who have enjoyed a privileged status and economic rewards from the existing Islamic society.

Discussing traditionalist Islam in Indonesia is not complete without considering the emergence of NU as the only large mass organization in Indonesia. The NU was established on 31 January 1926 in Surabaya by several religious scholars and traders from East Java.⁶⁶ The establishment of NU was none other than to "represent and develop traditional Islam in the Dutch East Indies. NU views itself as Sunni Islam and adheres to the concept of *ahl sunnah wal-jama'a*, or as it is more commonly known, '*aswaja*.' As for NU itself, *aswaja* has three doctrinal foundations: adopting al-Ash'ary and al-Maturidi in Islamic theology;

⁶³ Azyumardi Azra, "NU: Islam Tradisional Dan Modernitas di Indonesia," in *Studia Islamika*, vol. 4, 1970, 224, <http://studiaislamika.ppimcensis.or.id/index.php/studia-islamika/article/view/764>; Aziz Ahmad, "Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan," n.d.; Charles Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt* (United State of America: Russell and Russell, 1933).

⁶⁴ D. P. Brewster, "Islam: Past Influence and Present Challenge. In Honour of William Montgomery Watt. Edited by Alford T. Welch and Pierre Cachia. Pp. Xvi, 359. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1979. £15.," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 113, no. 1 (1981): 76–76, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0035869X00136895>.

⁶⁵ Azra, "NU: Islam Tradisional Dan Modernitas di Indonesia," 224; Ahmad Najib Burhani, "Al-Tawassuṭ Wa-l I'tidāl: The NU and Moderatism in Indonesian Islam," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 40, no. 5/6 (2012): 564–81.

⁶⁶ Edited by Greg Fealy and Greg Barton, "Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia," n.d., xx.

following one of the four schools of law (Hanafi, Malik, Shafi'i and Hanmbali), particularly Shafi'i in Fiqh; and following the Sufi schools of al-Ghazali and al-Baghdadi.⁶⁷

Therefore, traditionalist scholars generally hold a tolerant view of non-Islamic local cultures. They understand that blending local cultures can be a means of spreading Islam more widely. Thus, the incorporation of local customs emerged and flourished in religious ceremonies popular among NU members, such as marriage, circumcision, *maulid* (celebration of the Prophet's birthday), and pilgrimage (visiting the graves of saints for blessings and intercession).⁶⁸ On the other hand, Islamic rituals themselves contain local customs, which were criticized by reformists, who argued that these customs were not Islamic and thus were considered heresy and in violation of Islamic law itself.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, reformist ideas originating from Egypt with Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), Muhammad' Abduh (1849-1905), and Rashid Rida (1865-1935) as the masterminds with many other figures, inspired the formation of reformist organizations such as Muhammadiyah, Al-Irsyad, and Persis. The general platform of the reformist movement was to encourage people to purify their Islamic faith by returning to the primary doctrinal sources of Islam, such as the Quran and Hadith, and rejecting local customs mixed with heresy, superstition, and idolatry.⁷⁰

Furthermore, the reformers urged the community to adopt independent reasoning in performing *ijtihad* in reconstructing its understanding of Islam rather than 'blindly' following the ideas of medieval scholars (*taqlid*). It is not surprising that Islamic reformers are highly critical of the religious practices and customs of traditionalist Muslims that they consider sinful, such as reciting prayer intentions (*usually*) aloud, saying prayers for the dead (*talqin*), commemorating the death of important people with annual celebrations (*haul*), and holding ceremonies (*kenduri*) for the dead. The reformists assumed all these rituals to be something the Prophet never did during his lifetime. Given the responses and assumptions of the reformers at the time, the founding of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) was nothing but a direct response and reaction of the Muslim traditionalists to the reformers who were gaining influence in Java.⁷¹ In addition, the long-running dispute between

⁶⁷ Dhofier, *Tradisi pesantren*, 158; Burhani, "Al-Tawassuṭ Wa-l I'tidāl," 573.

⁶⁸ Fealy and Barton, "Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia."

⁶⁹ Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia*, 43; see other resources by Fauzan Saleh, *Modern Trends in Islamic Theological Discourse in 20th Century Indonesia: A Critical Survey* (BRILL, 2001), 71, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047401131>.

⁷⁰ Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia*, 43; Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia*, 109; Saleh, *Modern Trends in Islamic Theological Discourse in 20th Century Indonesia*, 71.

⁷¹ Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia*, 43; Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia*, 72.

modernists and traditionalists had significant logical consequences. However, sociocultural developments in the Middle East led to the founding of NU.⁷² Among the developments in question in the Middle East was the occupation by the Wahabi group under the leadership of Ibn Saud after the abolition of the caliphate system in 1924. Given these conditions, traditionalists feared that the Wahabi position in Mecca could lead to the prohibition of Shafi'i religious rituals at home and abroad. Such rituals as pilgrimage (grave pilgrimage), Sufi activities, and the destruction of the tombs of the Prophet and the Companions by the Wahabis around Mecca were feared.

Moreover, due to the failure to raise protests and opinions regarding Wahabi rule in several Islamic congresses in Indonesia, the traditionalists formed the Hijaz Committee, which enabled them to send delegates to Mecca. They also agreed to establish an organization called 'Nahdlatul Ulama' (NU) to represent traditional Islam. The NU's short-term goal was to increase the authority of the Committee's delegates, while its long-term goal was "to create an institution capable of coordinating and developing traditionalist responses to the modernist threat."⁷³ Thus, it can be assumed that the establishment of the NU was a response to the reformist movement in Indonesia and the rise of Salafi-Wahabism in Mecca.⁷⁴ Therefore, from the 1920s to the mid-1930s, Muslim traditionalists and modernists were engaged in intense debate. Tensions surfaced not only in Java but also in Sumatra.⁷⁵ Since the mid-1930s, however, there has been a growing realization in both groups to reconcile and forge unity. The modernists realized they could not abolish certain rituals (considered heresy) quickly, while the traditionalists accepted that they had to co-exist with the modernists.⁷⁶ In addition, the discriminatory actions of the Dutch government caused dissatisfaction among Islamic groups, leading to a lack of cooperation with the colonial government. The reconciliation of these two groups was seen through the joint formation of the MIAI (Majelis Islam A'laa Indonesia) on 21 September 1937 in Surabaya.

⁷² Dr Martin van Bruinessen, *NU; Tradisi, Relasi-Relasi Kuasa, Pencarian Wacana Baru* (Lkis Pelangi Aksara, 1994), 17–34.

⁷³ Fealy and Barton, "Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia," 27; Bruinessen, *NU; Tradition, Power Relations, Search for New Discourse*, 34.

⁷⁴ Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia*, 44; Fealy and Barton, "Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia," 39; Robin Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 1. publ (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), 41.

⁷⁵ Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia*, 237-241.

⁷⁶ Noer, 260.

The aim of the formation of the *majlis* was none other than to promote unity and cooperation among Muslims in Indonesia.⁷⁷

However, since the establishment of the Indonesian nation-state, the once-strong doctrinal dispute between modernists and traditionalists has gradually begun to subside. This reality was supported by NU's involvement in power politics, which led the organization to compromise with the government. NU's activities with the government experienced its heyday, especially when it broke away from Masyumi and became a political party in 1952. Between the 1950s and 1970s, NU leaders compromised with the restrictive guided democratic government of Soekarno and the authoritarian New Order regime of Soeharto.⁷⁸ But in 1984, NU withdrew from party politics and returned to its 1926 Khittah (original framework as a religious organization). During the 1980-1990 period, NU experienced significant development, especially in intellectuality. Many progressive intellectuals and activists emerged from NU by establishing institutions such as *Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat* (LSM) and study centers to promote pluralism and tolerance.⁷⁹ Despite these developments, NU leaders remained active in Indonesian politics. Their return to the formal political arena was marked by the establishing of four major NU-based parties in 1998. The largest party that still survives today is the Partai Kebangsaan Indonesia (PKB). With the increasing activities of prominent NU intellectuals and leaders in business and politics after the fall of Soeharto, the NU was no longer "the main force for religious and social reform or liberalization."⁸⁰

2.3 Habib and Kiai: The Leading Religious Authorities in Indonesia

a. Habib

Over the past decade, Indonesia's Muslim population has witnessed a proliferation of Hadhrami-Sayyid preachers. Known as Habib, these preachers claim to be descendants of the Prophet Muhammad and have their preaching groups (*majelis taklim*). The Habib calls for strengthening traditional Sunni Islam (*ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamā'ah*) and refers to Hadhramaut in Yemen as the center of Sunni Islam. The Bā'alawīs are regarded as 'Alawis'

⁷⁷ Greg Fealy and Robin Bush, "The Political Decline of Traditional Ulama in Indonesia: The State, the Umma and Nahdlatul Ulama," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 42, no. 5 (2014): 39; Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 41.

⁷⁸ Anthony Reid and Michael Gilson, eds., *Islamic Legitimacy in a Plural Asia* (London: Routledge, 2007), 154, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203933404>.

⁷⁹ Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 90.

⁸⁰ Faried F. Saenong, "Nahdlatul Ulama (NU): A Grassroots Movement Advocating Moderate Islam," in *Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements*, ed. Muhammad Afzal Upal and Carole M. Cusack (Brill, 2021), 142, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctv1v7zbv8.11>.

tracing their lineage from the Prophet Muhammad through Ahmad Al-Muhajir, who migrated from Basra, Iraq, to Hadramaut, Yemen, in 320H. Thus, their ancestors came from the valley of Hadhramaut. From the early nineteenth century, many people left Yemen and traveled across the Indian Ocean, resulting in the Hadhrami diaspora across South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Africa.⁸¹ They played an essential role in commercial activities and the spread of Islam, and over the years, they became highly respected for their religious knowledge. In Southeast Asia, some of them even gained political influence through marriages with local ruling families. Most Hadhrami in this region are concentrated in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore.⁸²

Meanwhile, the increasing popularity of Habib and young *majlis taklim* led by Habib among young Muslims has become a new phenomenon in post-Soeharto Indonesia. While the older generation of Habib prefers to keep a low profile, the latest generation is actively promoting themselves. Several things distinguish them from the previous generation of Habib preachers. Firstly, most new preachers are young, aged 20 to 30, at the start of their da'wah career. Many Habaib graduated from Hadhramaut, Yemen, and some graduated from traditional Islamic schools (*pondok pesantren*) in Java. Secondly, new preachers tend to establish their *majlis taklim*, become prominent figures in the organization, and use advertisements and the Internet to promote their preaching. Newly established assemblies often have a logo or brand, a flag, a head office, an official website, and religious merchandise. They also have multimedia teams, young staff members, and volunteers to help organize their events. Third, many young Habib preachers emphasize their distinctive status by wearing a white turban, a long white dress, and a shawl (primarily green) around their shoulders. Finally, most of the participants in these types of assemblies are young people, both male and female, aged between 12 and 30, and mostly from traditional Muslim families. The participants usually wear the uniform jacket of the *majlis*, which shows their commitment and association with the *majlis*.⁸³

⁸¹ Ismail Alatas, "SECURING THEIR PLACE: THE BĀ'ALAWĪ, PROPHETIC PIETY & ISLAMIC RESURGENCE IN INDONESIA" (Singapore, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE, n.d.); Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*, The California World History Library 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

⁸² Ahmad Muhajir and Afra Alatas, "The Debate on the Bā'alawī Lineage in Indonesia Highlighting Weaknesses in the Genealogical Records," *ISEAS Publishing*, 2023, 1, https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/TRS20_23.pdf.

⁸³ Syamsul Rijal, "Performing Arab Saints and Marketing the Prophet: Habaib and Islamic Markets in Contemporary Indonesia," *Archipel. Études Interdisciplinaires Sur Le Monde Insulindien*, no. 99 (July 15, 2020): 193, <https://doi.org/10.4000/archipel.1719>.

Young Habib in Jakarta tries to attract pilgrims by using various creative strategies. The most important strategies are billboards, banners, posters, and social media. Some congregants are attracted to the *majlis* after seeing information about the recitation on roadside banners and announcement posters on websites and social media. The *Majlis* website and community pages on social media, especially Facebook, usually announce and disseminate the schedule of activities for the following four weeks. Using the Internet, especially social media, for da'wah purposes is strategic in Indonesia.⁸⁴ Apart from the efforts made by the young Habib above, there are at least several factors related to the growth and development of Habib's authority in Indonesia, namely domestic and non-domestic factors. The increasing trend of Sufism in urban Islam is the domestic factor that boosts the popularity of Habib in Indonesia.⁸⁵ This assumption is strengthened by the argument that several Habib succeeded in modifying the *tarīqah alawiyyah* and adapted it to urban Islam after the fall of Soeharto.⁸⁶ Among them, the first is the existence of transnational connections between Indonesia and Yemen since the 1990s in education, and da'wah became the primary facility for the growth and development of Habib authority in Indonesia.⁸⁷ Second, By connecting themselves with Yemeni-Hadhrami scholars and their religious seminaries, as well as with holy places in Hadhramaut, Indonesian Habib increased their authority and presented their version of Sunni Islam as more authentic Islam than other variants of Islam.⁸⁸

b. Kiai

The traditionalist kiai, who have been the patrons of Indonesia's traditionalist Islamic religiosity, face these challenges. A history review shows that kiai occupy a central position and have been going on for a long time, especially since the Wali Songo era. Clifford Geertz explains the role of Kiai as a cultural broker between the national system and local realities.⁸⁹ Horikoshi criticizes and adds that cultural brokerage is not the only role of kiai.

⁸⁴ Syamsul Rijal, "Kaum Muda Pecinta Habaib: Kesalehan Populer dan Ekspresi Anak Muda di Ibu Kota," *Afkaruna* 14, no. 2 (2018): 176–78, <https://doi.org/10.18196/AIIJIS.2018.0086.166-189>.

⁸⁵ Julia Day Howell, "Sufism and the Indonesian Islamic Revival," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 60, no. 3 (2001): 701–5, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2700107>.

⁸⁶ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *What Is Religious Authority? Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia*, Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021).

⁸⁷ Syamsul Rijal, "Revitalising Hadhrami Authority: New Networks, Figures and Institutions among Habā'ib in Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 27 (August 3, 2020): 241–42, <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v27i2.9382>.

⁸⁸ Rijal, 242.

⁸⁹ Din Wahid, "CHALLENGING RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY: The Emergence of Salafi Ustadhs in Indonesia," *JOURNAL OF INDONESIAN ISLAM* 6, no. 2 (December 1, 2012): 249, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2012.6.2.245-264>. Clifford Geertz, "The Javanese Kijaji: The Changing Role of a Cultural Broker," n.d., 236.

In West Java, religious authorities equivalent to *kiai*, labeled *ajengan*, have a dual role. While serving as a cultural bridge, the *ajengan* is also involved in politics. Political activism positions *ajengan* to actively direct the speed of the national system concerning local circumstances rather than acting as a passive middleman. *Kiai* in Indonesia plays a similar role, perhaps even more complex. The position of *kiai* in Indonesia is not only that of a religious consultant but also a consultant for almost all multidimensional problems. However, it is difficult to have an impact in the political arena of the Indonesian State.⁹⁰

Even in Indonesia's history before Independence, *kiai* or *ulama* were involved in decision-making in sultanate matters such as Aceh, Palembang, Mataram, and Sambas in the pre-colonial period. However, during the colonial period, some *kiai* served the government, while others became educators by building educational institutions and focusing on reform.⁹¹ So, it is unsurprising that *kiai* can deal with various problems, from religious, social, economic, and political issues to the private sphere that the community questions.⁹² The average *kiai* in Indonesia is affiliated with the NU organization.⁹³ However, in the contemporary Indonesian context, religious authority in traditionalist—*Kiai* and *Ulama*—Indonesia seems to be on the verge of being replaced by more popular individuals who have social media accounts with millions of followers and are accepted by young people. Of the various religious authorities in Indonesia, *Kiai* occupy a central position and have done so for a long time, especially since the Wali Songo era. Clifford Geertz explains the role of *Kiai* as a *cultural broker* between the national system and local realities. Horikoshi criticizes and adds that cultural brokerage is not the only role of *kiai*. In West Java, the religious authority equivalent to *kiai*, labeled *ajengan*, has a dual role. On the one hand, *ajengan* acts as a cultural intermediary, but on the other hand, it is active in politics. Activeness in the political sphere places *ajengan* not passively as an intermediary but actively directs the pace of the national system vis-à-vis local realities. *Kiai* in Indonesia plays a similar role, perhaps even more complex. The position of *kiai* in Indonesia is not only that of a religious consultant but also a consultant for almost all multidimensional problems. Indonesians often *go to* *Kiai* to consult and ask for solutions to their problems.

⁹⁰ Andrée Feillard, “Indonesian Traditionalist Islam’s. Troubled Experience with Democracy (1999-2001),” *Archipel* 64, no. 1 (2002): 144, <https://doi.org/10.3406/arch.2002.3728>.

⁹¹ Moch Nur Ichwan, “Ulama, State and Politics: Majelis Ulama Indonesia After Suharto,” © *Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden* 12, no. Islamic Law and Society (2005): 45.

⁹² Zulkifli, “The Ulama in Indonesia: Between Religious Authority and Symbolic Power,” *Miqot* XXXVII, no. 1 (June 2013): 182–83.

⁹³ Abdul Chalik, *Nahdlatul Ulama Dan Geopolitik Perubahan Dan Kesenambungan* (Yogyakarta: Impulse dan Buku Pintar Yogyakarta, 2011), 11.

These problems range from religious, social, economic, and political to the private sphere.⁹⁴ The average kiai in Indonesia is affiliated with the NU organization.⁹⁵ This organization, whose genealogical roots lie in pesantren, has two orientations. *First*, to preserve Islamic norms. *Second*, being affirmative-appreciative-critical of local culture. The second orientation makes kiai tend to be accepted in the Indonesian environment, especially Java-Madura, because of their willingness to partner with citizens, not judge them. Recently, Indonesian Muslims have been faced with critical questions about the authenticity of Habib. Habaib (the plural form of Habib) are descendants of the Prophet, who, in Indonesian Islamic history, have had a harmonious relationship with the Kiai. It is common for habibs to be included in the NU management structure. The Habib-Kiai harmony is due to the existence of the same teacher as well as the same Islamic sect, namely Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah (Aswaja).⁹⁶

However, in the era of digital technology disruption, the challenge for religious authorities in Indonesia is the acceleration of change and the shrinking ability to adapt to findings. Religious authorities play a central role as guardians of values, social controllers, community consultants, etc. Such functions of authority face new challenges because the combination of disruption and digitalization presents the phenomenon of proliferation. Proliferation is the dissemination of expertise so that it no longer relies on specific parties and groups, including religious authorities. Religious authorities in Indonesia are generally divided into two. Coercion and persuasion are two types of authority in Borrowing Abou el Fadl's division. Coercive authority refers to structural and bureaucratic authority, while persuasive authority refers to individuals' prowess, expertise, and charisma.^c NU, Muhammadiyah, MUI, and several Islamic mass organizations are the holders of coercive authority, while kiai, Habib, and Islamic academics represent the carriage of persuasive authority.

Since the past, NU and Muhammadiyah have been competitive entities in guiding religious reality. Both have pretty striking differences, especially in terms of structure and management. If the former is often labeled traditionalist because of its emphasis on tradition, the latter is considered modernist because it focuses on managing people based on modern management. In 1975, MUI was formed through the initiative of the New Order

⁹⁴ Zulkifli, "The Ulama in Indonesia: Between Religious Authority and Symbolic Power," *Miqot* XXXVII, no. 1 (June 2013): 182-83.

⁹⁵ Abdul Chalik, *Nahdlatul Ulama and Geopolitics of Change and Sustainability* (Yogyakarta: Impulse and Buku Pintar Yogyakarta, 2011), 11.

⁹⁶ Aziz Miftahus Surur et al., "Memudarnya Otoritas Keagamaan? (Polemik Nasab Habaib Di Kalangan Pondok Pesantren Al-Nahdliyin)," *Asy-Syari'ah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 10, no. 1 (February 16, 2024): 34, <https://doi.org/10.55210/assyariah.v10i1.1542>.

regime to carry out four tasks. *Firstly*, it aims to translate national concepts and activities or local developments for the people. *Second*, to provide the government with views on religious realities. *Third*, to be an intermediary between the government and the ulama. *Fourth*, it was a forum for the ulama on issues related to their mandate.⁹⁷ In its journey, instead of representing the problems of citizens, especially religiously, MUI was a front for the New Order in legitimizing its policies. The New Order controlled the ulama through this institution. Therefore, this institution was formed hierarchically according to the region. Even though MUI is a delegation of several mass organizations, the parties in this institution cannot fully represent the interests of mass organizations. Thus, MUI is undoubtedly different in orientation from NU and Muhammadiyah. Besides the multidimensional differences between the three, MUI is the third contestant, which is relatively opposite to NU and Muhammadiyah.

Furthermore, the digital era has transformed the topography of contestation of religious authority in Indonesia. Whereas the pre-digital phase marked a religious phenomenon relatively concentrated in a few religious institutions and figures, digitalization creates a democratization of knowledge and insight.⁹⁸ Anyone can appear to speak about religion with religious insights that tend to be mediocre but are decorated with rhetorical and persuasive abilities over viewers. The individual can gain many followers without clarifying their organizational affiliation or scientific background (*sanad*). Of course, this is quite challenging for conventional religious authorities, so some traditional-conventional religious figures have jumped into cyberspace to compensate or keep up with this *trend*. Kiai is a traditional religious authority. Coercively, most kiai are affiliated with NU, but persuasively, each kiai has his *jama'ah*, depending on the area where he lives. Proliferation makes the *jama'ah* less dependent on the kiai in religious and other matters. The emergence of *entertainment* and digital ustadz can attract the attention of ordinary people across regions. Their opinions, views, and ability to quote arguments captivate public awareness, especially among those who have not mastered Islamic treasures.

Concerning proliferation, persuasive traditional religious authorities are trying to capitalize on digital platforms. Some of them cite concerns about the fate of religion when people learn about it from those who do not have a transparent chain of transmission. The

⁹⁷ Moch. Nur Ichwan, "Ulama, State and Politics: The *Islamic Law and Society* 12, no. 1 (2005): 48.

⁹⁸ Nicholas noted that in this era, anyone can feel like a repository of knowledge no matter what their scientific background or level of depth of understanding. Read Tom Nichols, *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 13.

emergence of pesantren kiai into the digital realm extends this concern. The presence of Gus Baha, Gus Kautsar, Gus Iqdam, Buya Yahya, Gus Mus, and so on show that traditional authorities are proactive in the digital era and contesting religious understanding. The number of new figures diversely shows a contestation of Islamic rule. Each camp realized or not, competes to propose acceptable Islamic knowledge to the public, while sectarian-ideological authority also plays a role.⁹⁹ Although different in terms of scientific background, level of understanding of religious texts, and Islamic orientation, all parties relatively agree to reject a fundamental and radical understanding of Islamic sources.

2.4 Relation Between Traditionalists (NU) and Bā'alawī

The relationship between Habaib and Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia is necessary to start with the history of the arrival of Habib, which historians have different opinions. However, in a more straightforward historical record, it is said that Habib has been active and has had an essential role since the 18th century in Indonesia. The official positions of the Habib reinforce this assumption in several Islamic sultanates in Southeast Asia, including being *qadi* (religious judge), mufti, son-in-law of the king, and even becoming the king himself. For example, in Aceh, a Sayyid from the *Bilfaqih* family married the 4th Sultanah of Aceh. Another fact can also be seen in several sultanates in the archipelago founded by Habib. For example, a scholar, Habib Husain al-Qadri, preached among the Dayak people in West Kalimantan. His son then married one of the Bugis nobles. In this marriage, the offspring have two clans of high social status: Bugis nobles and Habib. It was from this family line that was later able to establish a sultanate in West Kalimantan and also founded Pontianak City. In addition, we can find the *Alaydrus* family, who founded the Kubu emirate in Central Kalimantan.¹⁰⁰ Thus, it can be concluded that Habib has been active in sultanates in the archipelago since the 18th century.

However, until the 19th century, when the Islamic structure was dominated by the teachings of Tarekat Syattariyah and was based in the palace, Javanese books such as *Fiber*, *babad*, *suluk*, and others experienced changes. These changes made the Islamic authority at that time controlled by several native people such as Yasadipura, and there were Yasadipura I, Yasadipura II, and his grandson named Ranggawarsita. These figures

⁹⁹ Sectarian contestation occurs in Aceh. See Noviandy Muhammad Amin, Zubir and Muhammed Sahrin Bin Haji Masri, "Contestation of Religious Authority in Study Groups: Between Religious Authority and Mass Authority in Aceh," *Religious: Journal of Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies* 7, no. 1 (2023).

¹⁰⁰ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, Muhammad As'ad, and Fathurrochman Karyadi, "Sejarah Hubungan Habaib dan Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)," *Tebuireng: Journal of Islamic Studies and Society* 2, no. 2 (July 31, 2022): 89, <https://doi.org/10.33752/tjiss.v2i2.2388>; Marc Gaborieau et al., eds., *The Encyclopaedia of Islam: Three*, 3rd ed. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007).

occupied the peak of religious authority by producing Islamic treasures, which were then disseminated. This historical reality is much debated. After all, it is considered un-Islamic because it is different from Islam as it is understood today. This is because Islam was then spread through *Kejawen* texts with the influence of the *Syattariyah* Order, and the palace was the center of Islam from the 18th to 19th centuries.¹⁰¹ Based on this phenomenon, the initial relationship between the Habaib and the Kiai (whose network later gave birth to NU) was formed as a resistance to palace-style Islam. This network of traditional clerics called Habib became more solid in the 19th century. It took on the role of unraveling the stagnant Islamic tradition derived from the old Javanese Islamic tradition.

A more apparent context for the relationship between *Kiai* and Habib is the defeat of Prince Diponegoro in the Java War of 1825-1830, which also marked the final chapter of palace Islam.¹⁰² The collapse of this center of palace Islam became the starting point for the role of Habib on the one hand and ulama on the other. The cooperation between the two was due to their shared vision and mission of reorienting Islam in Java, especially in the palace circle. Efforts such as converting Javanese texts to Arabic texts were efforts that had a significant impact on the way the Islamic community viewed Islam itself. So, the logical consequence is when the *santri*—understanding Islam—return to Arabic texts such as *Kitab Safinah al-Najah*, *Risalah al-Jami'ah*, and *Sullam al-Taufiq* and begin to leave palace-centric texts. In addition, the similarity of the paradigm between the Habib and the traditional ulama is becoming more vital because it is supported by the existence of an intellectual lineage relationship and the relationship between teacher and student intellectual kinship. After all, they have the same teacher. However, when the traditional scholars agreed to establish Nahdlatul Ulama, many habibs chose not to be part of the organization despite their similarities in vision-mission, theology, and religious practice.

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The choice of some Habaib who do not want to be in the NU circle can be explained by the representation of several well-known Habaib, such as Habib Ali Kwatang and Habib Salim Bin Jindan.¹⁰⁴ They chose not to be part of NU because they prioritize cross-border

¹⁰¹ Nancy K. Florida, "ShaShattāriyya Sufi Scents: *Buddhist and Islamic Orders in Southern Asia*, ed. R. Michael Feener and Anne M. Blackburn, *Comparative Perspectives* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2019), 84-153, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvsrgsm.10>.

¹⁰² Peter Carey, "The Origins of the Java War (1825-30)," *The English Historical Review* 91, no. 358 (1976): 52-78.

¹⁰³ Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern "Ulamā" in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, 1. publ, Southeast Asia Publications Series (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2004).

¹⁰⁴ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, "Becoming Indonesians: The Bā 'Alawī in the Interstices of the Nation," *Die Welt Des Islams* 51, no. 1 (2011): 45-74.

and cross-organization da'wah. Joining one particular *jamiyah* makes them worried that its existence will alienate other organizations. Even so, they continue to support NU even though they are not formally members. NU itself is an umbrella community in the form of an organization. Still, it focuses on belonging and being part of NU despite not having an NU Member Card (*kartanu*). With these two different options, the Habaib and the traditionalist ulama, in some cases, have different views, especially outside of religious matters, such as politics, economics, and culture. Relationships that were all one-way are now changing because the structure of Islamic society is also changing. After the 1998 reformation, after the collapse of the New Order, with the influence of global politics with the disruption of digital technology, where significance, dominance, and legitimacy are judged by the number of followers and masses who support them, the role of *kiai* and Habib began to be contested. This assumption can be proven by the birth of celebrity ustad who have religious authority with millions of followers without having a scientific lineage and lineage, such as Habib and *Kiai* in Indonesia. This means that the structure of modern Indonesian Islamic society presupposes contestation of religious authority and is open to anyone.

2.5 Challenges the Traditionalist Islamic Authority

The reality of Indonesian Islam after Independence was a broader, more comprehensive, and more heterogeneous development. Many historical literatures mention that Islam experienced rapid progress in all fields, so the Islamic community was proud of it. However, Islam has also experienced setbacks and backwardness, especially during the colonial period in Indonesia. The manifestation of nationalism was more evident in the fight against colonialism, but nationalism did not depend solely on colonialism. National consciousness exists even in the absence of colonialism or after it has disappeared. Nationalism flourishes in the absence of colonialism. That is free nationalism, meaning without the pressure of colonialism. However, when Independence was achieved on 17 August 1945, there was an upheaval among those who wanted to determine the ideology of the Indonesian nation-state. The upheaval was divided into two camps, namely Muslims and Nationalists, one of whom tried to make the Indonesian State an Islamic State, but this was challenged by other groups who wanted to make the Islamic State into a Pancasila State.

The history of Islamic life in Indonesia has been recognized as a cultural force, but Islam has been prevented from formulating the Indonesian nation according to the Islamic

version.¹⁰⁵ As a moral and cultural force, Islam was recognized, but not as a real political force. Subsequent developments during the Old Order, Islam has been placed in a paradoxical configuration, especially in the political world. As for the New Order, Islam was recognized only as a moral foundation for nation and state-building. The discrimination of Islam had already begun when the face (ideology) of Indonesia was to be determined, so various anti-government Islamic movements and oppositions emerged due to disappointment with the formation of the Pancasila State as the basis of the Indonesian State. These movements include the Islamic State of Indonesia (NII), whose emergence was blamed by various parties as a result of the hurt feelings of the Islamic community and was spontaneous, born during a vacuum of power in the Republic of Indonesia (RI). Since 1926, there has been a gathering of scholars in Arabia from various parts of the world, including H.O.S Tjokroaminoto, to discuss the reconstruction of the Islamic caliphate that collapsed in 1924. Unfortunately, the scholars' issues did not produce results and were unsustainable.¹⁰⁶

Not only this, but other movements also emerged, such as the *Darul Islam* movement. *Darul Islam* comes from Arabic and al-Islam, meaning Islamic home or family, Islamic world or territory. The term *Darul Islam* in Indonesia is used to denote movements after 1945 that attempted violently to realize the ideals of an Islamic State. These violent Islamic movements occurred in various regions in Indonesia, including West Java in 1949-1962, Central Java in 1965, Sulawesi in 1965, Kalimantan in 1963, and Aceh in 1953, which ended with a compromise in 1957. These Islamic movements received strong resistance from the Indonesian Republic army because they were considered not obedient and subservient to the government and committed rebellion everywhere, including the West Java DI/TII Movement led by Sekarmaji Kartosuwiryo, the Central Java DI/TII Movement led by Amir Fattah, the Rebellion in South Sulawesi led by Kahar Muzakkar, the Rebellion in South Kalimantan led by Ibnu Hadjar and the Rebellion in Aceh led by Daud Beureuh.¹⁰⁷

Not only did Indonesian Islam struggle with the new schools of Islam mentioned above, but it also struggled with Socialism, Nationalism, and Communism. After Indonesian Independence, conflicts began about differences and competition for

¹⁰⁵ Fauziah Nasution, "The Arrival and Development of Islam to Indonesia," *Mawaizh: Journal of Da'wah and Social Humanitarian Development* 11, no. 1 (June 4, 2020): 4-6, <https://doi.org/10.32923/maw.v11i1.995>.

¹⁰⁶ Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 340.

¹⁰⁷ Chiara Formichi, "Pan-Islam and Religious Nationalism: The Case of Kartosuwiryo and the Islamic State of Indonesia," 2024, 126-31.

Independence. Some disputes that occurred then were generally harmless movements and the emergence of parties, among others: Conflicts between parties (1950-1955). The fight in this phase was even sharper, characterized by divisions between parties due to dissatisfaction and differences in understanding. Namely, several Masyumi members led by Wondoami Seno and Aruzi Kartawinata broke away by establishing the old Indonesian Islamic Union (PSII) party to sit in the cabinet, the split between the religious socialist Masyumi Party and the conservative group in April 1952 Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) left Masyumi as a political party which fought for the position of minister of religion in the cabinet and in April 1955 the PKI agreed with PSII to prevent the public's view that the PKI was anti-religion. This ideological conflict led to the formation of two blocks: the formulation of the basis of the State between the State based on Pancasila and Islam. The situation of Muslims at that time was still awful because their unity was divided, so the ideals of establishing an Islamic State as the primary goal were constrained due to political upheaval that Islamic leaders could not stop. But in reality, even though the Islamic parties had different views when facing anti-Islamic parties, they formed a front together to achieve the main goal, namely the Islamic State.¹⁰⁸

So, what is the nature of Indonesian Islam after the 1998 reformation that ended with the end of the New Order? The 1998 reformation was like a time bomb for Indonesia and Islam in particular. The reformation can be considered a turning point in the structure of Indonesian Islam because ten years after the phenomenon, many radical Islamic movements with transnational character were born in various regions.¹⁰⁹ In addition, these movements encouraged the structure of Indonesian Islamic society to form a theocratic "religious communalism" over the pluralistic reality of society. Of course, this contradicts democracy, a sub-system of Indonesia's unitary republic. The reformation backflow occurred because the new government was in the democratic transition from the New Order authoritarian system of government to a democratic system of government but did not have strong stability and legitimacy in the structure of society.¹¹⁰ This means that the transition to democracy in Indonesia, which offered comprehensive freedom, led to a phase where the stability of the Indonesian government was shaken. So, freedom runs freely without any control from the State. With this pretext, another face born from the structure of

¹⁰⁸ Chiara Formichi, "Pan-Islam and Religious Nationalism: The Case of Kartosuwiryo and the Islamic State of Indonesia," *Indonesia*, no. 90 (2010): 135.

¹⁰⁹ Azyumardi Azra, *Islam Nusantara: Global and Local Networks*, 1st Edition (Bandung: Mizan, 2002), 44.

¹¹⁰ Irfan Noor, "Transnational Islam and the Future of Indonesia: A Political Philosophy Perspective," *Scientific Journal of Ushuluddin Science* 10, no. 1 (March 10, 2016): 2, <https://doi.org/10.18592/jiu.v10i1.742>.

Indonesian society was the development of identity politics. This post-New Order Islamic identity politics can be read in three main phases, namely the "inter-religious conflict" in Maluku and Poso, the Islamisation project of the national public space, and the attacks on cults and anti-Christianisation.

The inter-religious conflicts in Maluku and Poso were the first phase of post-New Order Islamic identity politics. The religious horizontal conflicts throughout 1997 culminated in Maluku and Poso, which ended in 2002. These conflicts changed religious perspectives and tensions in communities across Indonesia, legitimizing the emergence of some radical Islamic organizations. Beginning with the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) established in 1998 in Jakarta, other Islamic organizations emerged, such as the Reformist Islamic Movement (GARIS) in Cianjur in 1998, the Taliban in Tasikmalaya in 1999, the Indonesian Mujahidin Council in Yogyakarta in 2000, and the Islamic Forum (FUI) in Jakarta in 2005. Transnational Islamic organizations were also born in the context of the birth of these Islamic organizations. There was the Forum for the Communication of Ahlul Sunnah Waljamaah (FKASWJ), which later gave birth to Laskar Jihad (1999), Ikhwanul Muslimin, and Hizbut Tahrir. The presence of these Islamic organizations marked a new Islamic movement in Indonesia that was different from the earlier Islamic organizations, such as Muhammadiyah, Islamic Unity (Persis), Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), al-Irsyad, Jami'atul Khoir, and others.¹¹¹

Furthermore, the second phase of post-New Order Islamic identity politics is the Islamisation of the nation's public space in the form of the enforcement of Islamic Sharia. The effort to Islamise the nation's public space was visible in the political constellation after the collapse of the New Order regime in 1998,⁶ where the *modus operandi* started from the national polemic in the Annual Session of the MPR in 1999 and continued to roll in the next Annual Session about the insistence on the re-inclusion of seven words that had been crossed out from the Jakarta Charter, namely "with the obligation to implement Islamic Shari'at for its adherents," into the constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the 1945 Constitution 7. After experiencing this failure at the national level, a new scenario emerged in the struggle for the enforcement of Islamic Shari'a, namely the battle at the regional level through the inclusion into the Regional Regulation (*Perda*) or other legislation at the regional level, especially at the district/city level. Therefore, from 2000-2009, there have been various Sharia local regulations that regulate morality, such as Muslim dress, reciting the Qur'an, *khulwat*, alcohol, prostitution, and gambling.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Buehler, "Islam and Democracy in Indonesia," 54-47.

¹¹² Buehler, 55.

This second phase of post-New Order, Islamic identity politics, coincided with the emergence of political parties with various streams.⁹ In the 1999 elections, 48 political parties competed. Eleven Islamic parties were competing in the 1999 elections, such as PBB (Bulan Bintang Party), PK (Justice Party), PKU (Kebangkitan Umat Party), PNU (Nahdlatul Ummat Party), PUI (Umat Islam Party), New Masyumi Party, PSII, PSII 1905, Masyumi (Masyumi Islamic Political Party), and PP (Unity Party), and PPP (United Development Party). The third phase of Islamic identity politics after the New Order is the attack on cults, anti-Christianisation, and anti-miscegenation. The main targets were the Ahmadiyah congregation and other cults (Lia Eden and Mushaddiq), Christian places of worship, and places and practices that were considered immoral. The attack by radical Islamic groups on the Ahmadiyah congregation in Parung was a master action that, in turn, spread to other areas.¹¹³

The most noticeable dynamic of this phenomenon is the mainstreaming of radical enforcement of Islamic law, often referred to as "radicalism." The leading indicator is the emergence of groups or organizations that are violent and tend to be uncompromising in achieving particular agendas related to certain Muslim groups or even with a specific Islamic worldview. Groups that fall into this radical category include Jundullah (the army of Allah), Laskar Jihad, Hizbullah (the party of Allah), or larger organizations, such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI).¹⁰ Ironically, this new movement has penetrated traditionalist Islamic groups, especially ulama and Islamic Boarding School students. The mass base that used to be recruited from youths from various backgrounds (unemployed, thugs, fanatic youths) is now mixed with Islamic Boarding School youths who are mobilized by the ulama. This radical Islamic movement, in recent years, has shown its strength as an opposition to regimes that are not aspirational to Islam. At a later point, the issue of "Islamic State" and "Islamic Sharia" became crucial propaganda about the relationship between Islam and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) during the nation's democratic transition process.¹¹⁴ The reality of the structure of modern Indonesian Islamic society is a negation of the significance of Islam and its actors, the dominance of Islam and its actors, and the legitimacy of Islam and its actors that change and continue to undergo transitions.

¹¹³ Buehler, 56.

¹¹⁴ Martin van Bruinessen, "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *Southeast Asia Research* 10, no. 2 (2002): 119-22. See Noorhaidi Hasan, *Laskar Jihad: Islam, Militancy, and the Quest for Identity in Post-New Order Indonesia*, Studies on Southeast Asia, no. 40 (Ithaca, N.Y.): Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 2006). And another article by Robert W Hefner, "Islam in Indonesia, Post-Suharto: The Struggle for the Sunni Centre," *Cornell University Press*, 2024.

At this point, contestation of religious authority is also inevitable. In the Indonesian context, at least three causes have influenced the recent contestations of authority: globalization, democratization after the 1998 reformation, and the growth of private television and social media users (*Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube*). These three factors significantly impact contemporary Indonesian religious authority's construction, contestation, fragmentation, and pluralization.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, in Islam itself, spiritual authority is never monolithic, and among Sunni Islam, it is always decentralized and contested.¹¹⁶ Thus, the emergence of the Salafi movement in the last decade of the 20th century, which received support from the global mainstream movement, has given birth to new Salafi leaders known as *ustads*.¹¹⁷ They are graduates of Salafi educational institutions in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Also, some are graduates of higher education institutions sponsored by Saudi Arabia, such as LIPIA (Institute of Islamic and Arabic Studies) in Jakarta.¹¹⁸ This means that their emergence, the *ustads* who actively convey the Islam they believe in mosques, offices, and private homes, is a real challenge to the authority of *kiai* and *ulama*, originally the religious authorities in Indonesian traditionalist Islam.¹¹⁹

Not only because of the emergence of Salafis and *ustads* as their representatives but religious authority in contemporary Indonesian Islam has also not escaped the challenge of progressive Islam-based political groups. For example, groups that have the support of many Islamic masses such as Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), Laskar Jihad, and Forum Umat Islam (FUI), which push religious authority to the center of the arena contested by many groups.¹²⁰ Next

¹¹⁵ Norshahril Saat and Ahmad Najib Burhani, eds., "The New Santri," in *Challenges to Traditional Religious Authority in Indonesia*, 1st ed. (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2020), 2; and see the book review by Anggi Afriansyah, "Construction, Contestation, Fragmentation and Pluralisation of Contemporary Indonesian Religious Authority," *Studia Islamika*, Vol. 28, no: 230, <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.36712/sdi. v28i1.20514>.

¹¹⁶ Andrée Feillard, "Indonesian Traditionalist Islam's. Troubled Experience with Democracy (1999-2001)," *Archipel* 64, no. 1 (2002): 117-44, <https://doi.org/10.3406/arch.2002.3728>; Norshahril Saat, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (Singapore), eds., *Islam in Southeast Asia: Negotiating Modernity* (Islamic Developments in Southeast Asia (Workshop), Singapore: ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, 2018).

¹¹⁷ Martin van Bruinessen, "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *Southeast Asia Research* 10, no. 2 (2002): 117-54.

¹¹⁸ Din Wahid, "Challenging Religious Authority: *JOURNAL OF INDONESIAN ISLAM* 6, no. 2 (December 1, 2012): 246, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2012.6.2.245-264>.

¹¹⁹ Clifford Geertz, "The Javanese Kijaji: The Changing Role of a Cultural Broker," n.d., 242-47.

¹²⁰ Amin Abdullah, "Religious Authority in Indonesian Islam: Mainstream Organisations Under Threat?" 17; Hasan, *Laskar Jihad*, 5-6; Carool Kersten, *A History of Islam in Indonesia* (London-Holyrood Road 12 (2f) Jackson's Entry Edinburgh EH8 8PJ: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2017), 215.

is the phenomenon that has been discussed by many people recently, namely the reaction and rejection of the Habib lineage, especially Bā'alawī in Indonesia.¹²¹ The rejection by some traditionalist figures against Bā'alawī, who are also traditionalists, can be highlighted as a sociological phenomenon that leads to the contestation of religious authority in the context of contemporary Indonesian Islam.¹²² This latest phenomenon is interesting to discuss because the influence of Habaib in Indonesia, whose existence is not rejected, is now getting new challenges from several traditionalist figures who were once equally engaged in preaching Islam in Indonesia. Speaking of Habib and traditionalist kiai in Indonesia, there are at least five things that make and position them into the vortex of religious authority: religious knowledge, genetic relationship with previous kiai or Habib, hereditary factors (his ancestors were kiai or Habib), and managerial skills (can manage Islamic Boarding School), and the last is his involvement in *tarekat* (Sufi order).¹²³ However, the equality of the five elements above is no longer the primary basis for not contesting religious authority in contemporary Indonesia.

Pros and cons regarding their authenticity as descendants of the Prophet (peace be upon him) flared up in Indonesia, so the *Kiai* faced a dual attitude. Some of them are still loyal to the authenticity of Bani Bā'alawī as descendants of the Prophet, while others reject and sometimes even hit the Habaib equally. Regardless of the debate, the Habib, in terms of religious strata, is above the *Kiai* because the *Kiai* greatly respect the Prophet and his descendants. The critical question about the legitimacy of Habib Bā'alawī as a descendant of the Prophet at least adds to the *Kiai's* response task. If previously the *Kiai* were authoritative agents of the religious world, active actors of social and political improvement, and even economic empowerment of the people, then clarifying the status of Bā'alawī adds to the series of socio-religious responsibilities of the *Kiai*. The above description tries to briefly record religious authority in Indonesia, which generally consists of institutions and figures. *Kiai* are in the group of figures but have patent ties to institutions, especially NU. The role of kiai is quite complex, as they must maintain religious teachings and actively adapt and respond to current developments.

¹²¹ Imaduddin Utsman al-Bantani, *Menakar Kesahihan Nasab Habib di Indonesia* (Maktabah Nahdlatul Ulum, 2022).

¹²² Ahmad Muhajir and Afra Alatas, "The Debate on the Bā'alawī Lineage in Indonesia Highlighting Weaknesses in the Genealogical Records."

¹²³ Imron Rosidi, Yasril Yazid, and Amril, "The Fragmentation of Religious Authority in Provincial Towns in Indonesia: The Case of the Mui (Indonesian Muslim Scholar Council) in Pekanbaru and Pontianak," *MANUSYA: Journal of Humanities* 24, no. 2 (December 6, 2021): 186, <https://doi.org/10.1163/26659077-24020001>; Robert Pringle, *Understanding Islam in Indonesia: Politics and Diversity* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i press, 2010), 132.

2.6 Conclusion

The article examines the transformation of traditional Islamic authority in Indonesia, focusing on the roles of Kiai and Habib in preserving and disseminating traditional Islamic teachings. In Indonesia, Kiai and Habib are central authority figures within the traditionalist Muslim community, known as "aswaja" or ahl al-sunnah wa al-jama'ah. Kiai, typically associated with the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) organization, act as religious and social consultants addressing various societal issues. Meanwhile, Habib, who claims descent from the Prophet Muhammad, holds significant authority in propagating traditional Sunni teachings and often establishes religious study groups (majelis taklim). The transformation of Islamic authority in Indonesia faces challenges from reformist and modernist movements that criticize traditional practices as bid'ah (innovation) and advocate a return to the primary sources of Islam, such as the Qur'an and Hadith. Furthermore, the digital era and globalization have opened new arenas for contesting religious authority, with celebrity preachers on social media challenging the traditional roles of Kiai and Habib. Despite these challenges, traditionalist Islam demonstrates significant adaptability, with Kiai and Habib increasingly utilizing digital media to disseminate their teachings and maintain relevance in a continuously evolving society.

Additionally, the article explores how the digital era and globalization have created new arenas for contesting religious authority, with the emergence of celebrity preachers on social media challenging the traditional roles of Kiai and Habib. This transformation highlights the flexibility of conventional Islam in maintaining relevance in modern times. In this context, the article delves deeper into how religious authority in traditionalist Islam in Indonesia transforms and adapts to various challenges and how the interaction between Kiai and Habib influences the dynamics of religion in Indonesia. The article emphasizes the importance of understanding the complex sociocultural context in evaluating changes and continuity in traditional Islamic authority in Indonesia. As the relationship between Kiai and Habib is often influenced by historical, genealogical, and educational factors, the digital era has brought new challenges requiring continuous adaptation to maintain authority. This transformation underscores the flexibility of traditional Islam in maintaining relevance in the contemporary era and addressing challenges from various reformist, modernist, and digital movements.

CHAPTER III: RESISTANCE TO THE BĀ'ALAWĪ IN INDONESIA: GENEALOGY AND DYNAMICS

3.1 Introduction

In this era of globalization, Muslims face increasingly complex challenges regarding religious authority. One of the intriguing phenomena that has emerged is the resistance against Bā'alawī authority in Indonesia. The Bā'alawī, descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, have long held a significant position within the traditional Islamic community in Indonesia. However, their presence has not been free from criticism and rejection by some traditionalist factions questioning the legitimacy of their lineage and authority. From the perspective of the sociology of religion, this phenomenon cannot be separated from the dynamics of social structures and community agents that influence it. According to Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, this resistance and contestation of religious authority can be linked to the structures of signification, domination, and legitimacy. These three elements help us understand the process of authority contestation between traditionalists (NU) and the Bā'alawī within the framework of the religious discourse and practices utilized by both parties.

Islam in Indonesia has never been a monolithic authority. The fragmentation of religious authority has become increasingly apparent with the emergence of various organizations such as MUI, NU, Muhammadiyah, and others. Globalization, democratization post-1998 reform, and the proliferation of mass media have enriched Indonesia's religious authority's diversity. This has resulted in new dynamics within traditional Islamic society's structure, which must now adapt to these changes. These changes have also impacted the perception of Bā'alawī's religious authority. As a community claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammad, the Bā'alawī often become the subject of criticism regarding the legitimacy of their lineage. This criticism comes from modernist circles and some traditionalist groups who feel their authority is threatened. In this context, it is essential to study how this contestation dynamics unfold and its impact on Indonesia's social and religious structure.

The approach to religious authority in the digital era has also undergone significant changes. Digitalization allows individuals or groups to claim religious authority through social media, blurring the traditional boundaries of authority previously monopolized by large organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah. This opens space for new contestations between traditional authority and authority arising from the popularity of

digital media. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how structural changes in traditionalist religious authority in Indonesia can be analyzed through structuration theory, particularly in the context of resistance against the Bā'alawī. Thus, we can see how the interaction between agents and structures creates new dynamics in religious authority's complex and ever-evolving landscape.

3.2 Resistance on the Traditionalist Indonesia

The fragmentation of religious authority in Indonesian traditionalist Islam, in the form of reactions and rejection (by some actors) of traditionalists against Bā'alawī, who traditionalists are also, can be presented as a sociological phenomenon that cannot be separated from the influence of community structures, agents, and other secondary influences that are dynamic. Within a sociological framework, especially Antony Giddens' theory of structuration, resistance, and contestation of traditionalist Islamic religious authority in Indonesia can be associated with several theoretical elements. Among these theoretical elements are the structure of signification, the structure of domination, and the structure of legitimacy. These three elements are used to understand the process of authority contestation between traditionalists (NU) and Bā'alawī, who are also traditionalists—through the stages of understanding the discourse used, the terms often used between the two, the configuration of language in articulating religious authority between the two.¹²⁴ In the context of the study of the sociology of religion, efforts to understand actions in the form of reactions and rejection of Bā'alawī result from a combination of personal motivation and the guidance of the interpreted structure. Individual motivation and structural demands presuppose each other, so both have a dual relationship rather than dualism.¹²⁵ Both have an equal position, influence each other, and have the same significance in realizing an action in the reaction and rejection of Bā'alawī.

Actors who react and reject Bā'alawī are actors who take action and give birth to new events in the context of Indonesian Islam. At the same time, the structure is the rules and resources that are formed from and form the repetition of rejection by some traditionalist actors against the existence of Bā'alawī. In the analogy of structuration, it is clear that the relationship between agents or actors who react and reject Bā'alawī with the structure of Indonesian traditionalist Islam is not dualistic external and has a restriction on

¹²⁴ Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Polity Press, 1984), 17.

¹²⁵ Nirzalin, "Mendamaikan Aktor dan Struktur dalam Analisis Sosial Perspektif Teori Strukturasi Antony Giddens," *Jurnal Sosiologi Universitas Syiah Kuala*, Vol. 3, No.3, Juni 2013 Vol. 3 (2013): 18; Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies*, 2., rev. ed., repr (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997).

other people also to respond and reject Bā'alawī in Indonesia. This is in line with what Giddens believes that the relationship between structure and agent is dualistic (reciprocal), such as internal within traditionalists and a few people (not all traditionalists reject Bā'alawī) and is restrictive towards some people who react and reject Bā'alawī. This limited and specific action is a duality of structures in social practices that are repeated and patterned across time and space.¹²⁶

According to Giddens, the three categories of structures above are resources that are the most fundamental properties of social systems, structured, generated, and produced by knowledgeable actors during interactions. In the context of traditionalist reactions and rejection of Bā'alawī, it can be said that the rejection of lineage, the rejection of the history of Indonesian Islamization, and the rejection of authority are efforts that are structured and produced by several traditionalist actors (NU). The linkage of the three structures above in social practice can be seen as saying that the Bā'alawī lineage is not connected to the Prophet, which is the same as an effort to undermine the domination of the Bā'alawī authority simultaneously, that the statement that the Bā'alawī lineage is not connected to the Prophet is the same as undermining the legitimacy that has been owned by the Bā'alawī, as well as undermining the (theological) statements of the Bā'alawī community in Indonesia. That is, stating that the Bā'alawī lineage is not connected to the Prophet undermines the structure of significance associated with Bā'alawī authority. The following also undermines the structure of domination that coincides with legitimacy, where it is bound as a religious authority by being a reference for its worshipers from various actions until they obey and are bound to Bā'alawī.

On the other hand, religious authority in Indonesian Islam has never been monolithic. Still, it consists of various fragmented religious authorities, such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, and others.¹²⁷ But lately, the fragmentation of religious authority in Indonesia has become more heterogeneous due to

¹²⁶ Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, 25–27; Nirzalin, “Mendamaikan Aktor dan Struktur dalam Analisis Sosial Perspektif Teori Strukturasi Antony Giddens,” 19; Anthony Giddens, “Teori strukturasi Anthony Giddens untuk analisis Sosial,” n.d.; Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method*.

¹²⁷ Andree Feillard, “9. From Handling Water in a Glass to Coping with an Ocean: Shifts in Religious Authority in Indonesia: Changes and Challenges in 20th Century Indonesian Islam,” in *Varieties of Religious Authority*, 2010, <https://doi.org/10.1355/9789812309518-012>; See the article by Norshahril Saat and ISEAS Publishing, *The State, Ulama and Islam in Malaysia and Indonesia* (Amsterdam University Press, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.5117/9789462982932>; And see article by Zulkifli Zulkifli, “THE ULAMA IN INDONESIA: Between Religious Authority and Symbolic Power,” *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 37, no. 1 (June 2, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v37i1.79>; and read the book by Peter Mandaville, “Globalization and the Politics of Religious Knowledge: Pluralizing Authority in the Muslim World,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, no. 2 (March 2007): 101–15, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276407074998>.

several factors, including globalization, Indonesian democracy after the 1998 reformation, private television channels, and the proliferation of mass media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube).¹²⁸ These three causes have a severe impact because they change the significance structure, domination structure, and legitimacy structure of contemporary Indonesian traditionalist Islamic society. The three elements of the structure of Indonesian society will also change the construction of Islamic civilization, which will give birth to the contestation of authority, fragmentation, and pluralization of religious authority in Indonesia. Changes in the structure of Indonesian Islamic society can be seen after the 1998 Indonesian reformation, where Indonesian democracy gave birth to several organizations such as FPI (Islamic Defenders Front), MMI (Indonesian Mujahidin Council), FUI (Islamic Forum), and many more, with different ideological influences. In contrast, some organizations that used to move secretly can now promote their Islamic visions freely. Among these organizations are JI (Jemaah Islamiyah), DDII (Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia), LPPI (Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengkajian Islam), and HTI (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia), whose existence challenges the religious authority of significant organizations such as Muhammadiyah and NU.¹²⁹

In addition, the existence of private television channels and mass media that can be managed by themselves seems to be a facility that helps the birth of fragmentation of authority with evidence of the birth of *ustads* celebrities. Such as Abdullah Gymnastiar, Arifin Ilham, Yusuf Mansur, Abdul Somad, Mamah Dedeh, Feliz Siau and many more. Their existence is concrete evidence that religious authority, limited initially to individuals from prominent organizations such as Muhammadiyah and NU, can now come from any organization.¹³⁰ This means that the media in a globalized world allows anyone to claim religious authority because religious authority has been democratized.¹³¹ In other words, the internet has changed traditional religious authority to be more heterogeneous and can be owned by anyone.¹³² In the context of conventional Indonesian Islamic religious authority, digitalization has also epistemologically altered the direction of all types of authority. There are several types of authority, including legal authority, which means authority based on belief in the "legality" of normative patterns and rules, where loyalty is

¹²⁸ Norshahril Saat and Ahmad Najib Burhani, eds., "The New Santri," in *Challenges to Traditional Religious Authority in Indonesia*, 1st ed. (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2020), 2.

¹²⁹ Saat and Burhani, 3.

¹³⁰ Saat and Burhani, 3.

¹³¹ Bryan S. Turner, "Religious Authority and the New Media," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, no. 2 (March 2007): 120, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276407075001>.

¹³² Heidi Campbell, "Who's Got the Power? Religious Authority and the Internet," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12, no. 3 (April 2007): 1044, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00362.x>.

given to the impersonal order established by law; traditional authority is built on a belief in the "sanctity of traditions that have existed since time immemorial," where obedience is given to the person occupying the traditionally approved position of authority; charismatic authority is based on devotion to an individual who exhibits specific characteristics, ideals, or exemplary qualities that motivate others to adhere to the normative patterns approved by that individual; charismatic authority is based on devotion to an individual who exhibits specific characteristics, ideals, or exemplary qualities that motivate others to adhere to the normative patterns approved by that individual.¹³³

Despite the complexity of the definition of religious authority, it can, by definition, refer to a position taking several forms and functions: the ability (by chance, power, or right) to determine correct beliefs and practices, or orthodoxy and orthopraxy; to shape and influence the views and behavior of others; to identify, marginalize, punish or exclude deviants, heresies and apostates and their agents and supporters.¹³⁴ Proper authority is based on allegiance to a legally established system, a particular position or role established through tradition or history, or the personification of a specific belief. This establishes three distinctions related to the concept of authority: Namely, authority is based on a system, in a role, or as an embodied value belief. Hence, Weber emphasizes how authority is conveyed rather than the result of authority. Weber's distinction is important because it highlights the need to distinguish between different forms of authority.¹³⁵ It should be noted that religious authority differs from the concept of authority in general, as it refers to a particular form of legitimacy, often attributed to a divine source. We will see that the same distinction of authority also occurs in research on online religion. This article does not intend to provide an in-depth discussion of the different definitions of authority or the relationship between power and authority. However, the need for a more detailed investigation of the concept of authority in Internet studies is highlighted, and a starting point for such a discussion is presented. Thus, the next section will reveal a distinctive multi-layered approach to authority.¹³⁶

¹³³ Turner, "Religious Authority and the New Media," 120.

¹³⁴ Campbell, "Who's Got the Power?" 1045–46; Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, Translated by A.M Handerson and Talcott Parsons (New York: The Falcon's Wing Press and Oxford University Press, 1947), 325–28.

¹³⁵ Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 326; GUDRUN KRÄMER and SABINE SCHMIDTKE, eds., "SPEAKING FOR ISLAM Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies" (Leiden: Boston: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2006), 2; Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women*, Repr (Oxford: Oneworld, 2010).

¹³⁶ Campbell, "Who's Got the Power?" 1046.

3.3 Chronic Arab-Hadhrami in Indonesia

a. Irsyadi Vis a Vis Bā'alawī

The Arab-Hadhrami diaspora has always referred to its connection to Hadramaut. For some, those believed to be the drivers of the diaspora are the Sadah (sg; Sayyid) *alawiyyin*.¹³⁷ Ultimately, however, the Arab-Hadhrami came to several parts of the archipelago, consisting of different tribes and groups. Their arrival to the archipelago usually left traces in travel records and several types of traditional records that vary.¹³⁸ It is widely mentioned that the Arab-Hadhrami's arrival to the archipelago in the early days was to preach and trade. Thus, in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Arab-Hadhrami played a significant role in politics and strengthened the reformation of Sufism in the archipelago.¹³⁹ The exact existence of Arab-Hadhrami has been known since the 19th century when the Dutch East Indies and British colonial governments conducted data collection. The existence of Arab-Hadhrami can also be found in colonial records, as evidenced by van den Berg's notes.¹⁴⁰

The turn of the 20th century was the most decisive period for Arab-Hadhrami existence. It was a time of significant change and a new direction for society. The decline of Islam in general, coupled with the colonial government's policies and treatment, cornered Islam and the Arabs. These realities led to reactions and were the cause of several discourses on Islamic revival and Islamic reform.¹⁴¹ Ultimately, the Arab-Hadhrami experienced a resurgence in Islamic Reform in Dutch-Hyde, characterized by the growth of voluntary associations or societies, modern schools, and periodically published

¹³⁷ Muhammad Agung Saeputro and Rabith Jihan Amaruli, "Mencari Identitas Reformisme Islam: Konflik dan Integrasi Orang Arab- Hadhrami di Pekalongan, 1905-1945" 2, no. 1 (2021): 1; Peter G Riddell, "ARAB MIGRANTS AND ISLAMIZATION IN THE MALAY WORLD DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD," n.d., 115.

¹³⁸ Saeputro and Amaruli, "Mencari Identitas Reformisme Islam: Konflik dan Integrasi Orang Arab- Hadhrami di Pekalongan, 1905-1945," 2; Engseeng Ho, *Genealogical Figures in an Arabian Indian Ocean Diaspora*, 2000, 25–27; Engseeng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*, The California World History Library 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

¹³⁹ Saeputro and Amaruli, "Mencari Identitas Reformisme Islam: Konflik dan Integrasi Orang Arab- Hadhrami di Pekalongan, 1905-1945," 2; Riddell, "ARAB MIGRANTS AND ISLAMIZATION IN THE MALAY WORLD DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD," 220; Radzie Sapiee; Muzaffar Dato Hj Mohamad; (Tun) Suzana (Tun) Hj Othman;, *Ahlul - Bait (Keluarga) Rasulullah SAW Dan Kesultanan Melayu = Ahlul - Bait (Family) of Rasulullah SAW Dan Malay Sultanates* (Crescent News, 2010), //103.142.62.240%2Fperpus%2Findex.php%3Fp%3Dshow_detail%26id%3D141066; Azyumardi Azra, *Islam Nusantara: Jaringan Global dan Lokal*, Cetakan 1 (Bandung: Mizan, 2002).

¹⁴⁰ L. W. C. van Den Berg, *Orang Arab di Nusantara/ L.W.C. Van Den Berg* (Komunitas Bambu, 1989), 95.

¹⁴¹ Sumit Kumar Mandal, "Finding Their Place: A History of Arabs in Java under Dutch Rule, 1800-1924" (Disertation, Amerika Serikat, Columbia University, 1994), 3–4.

magazines. Nevertheless, the Islamic Reformation did not proceed uniformly; differences and identity conflicts arose within the Arab-Hadhrami during the Dutch East Indies.¹⁴² The internal conflict began in 1901 when there was an initiative from the Arab-Hadhrami in the Dutch East Indies to form an association under the name Jamiat Khair. Only on 17 June 1905 the organization received official approval from the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies after the Jamiat Khair Articles of Association were also approved. However, the organization was prohibited from establishing many branches outside Batavia.¹⁴³

Jamiat Khair was the first Islamic organization founded by Arab-Hadhrami that focused primarily on education and social issues. Eventually, however, through Jamiat Khair's network of students, a school called Samail Hoeda was established in Pekalongan in 1911. This school was realized at the initiative of an association called *Djama'a Samail Hoeda*.¹⁴⁴ In its development, the Samail Hoeda institution was no less advanced than Batavia, where it brought in teachers from the Middle East, including Shaykh Ibrahim from Egypt. In social terms, the Jamiat Khair organization has acted as a strong supporter of Islamic Reform and has become the glue of the Muslim community. Thus, the Jamiat Khair supported Pan-Islam in some areas and raised solidarity aid for pilgrims affected by calamities in the holy land.¹⁴⁵ In the second quarter of the twentieth century, Jamiat Khair's teacher from Sudan, Shaykh Ahmad Sukarti, came, and he had different opinions from many in the organization. This was evidenced by one of his fatwas on the *jaiz* or permissibility of marriage between *Sharifah* and non-*Sayyid*.¹⁴⁶ The fatwa spread widely among the Arab-Hadhrami and sparked various opinions, debates, and propaganda, leading to mutual attacks within their ranks. The continuing tension led some Arab-Hadhrami to want to form a new organization. Before the organization was officially established,

¹⁴² Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadhrami Awakening: Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900–1942* (Cornell University Press, 1999), 38, <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501732522>.

¹⁴³ Saeputro and Amaruli, "Mencari Identitas Reformisme Islam: Konflik dan Integrasi Orang Arab- Hadhrami di Pekalongan, 1905-1945," 3; Author Husain Haikal, "Indonesia-Arab Dalam Pergerakan Kemerdekaan Indonesia (1900-1942)," Universitas Indonesia Library (Universitas Indonesia, 1986), 146–48, <https://lib.ui.ac.id>; Author Wasilah, "Jam'iyat Khair Gerakan Modern Islam Di Indonesia Dari Perkumpulan Sosial Menjadi Yayasan Pendidikan 1901-1919," Universitas Indonesia Library, 1997, 41, <https://lib.ui.ac.id>.

¹⁴⁴ Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadhrami Awakening*, 43.

¹⁴⁵ Saeputro and Amaruli, "Mencari Identitas Reformisme Islam: Konflik dan Integrasi Orang Arab- Hadhrami di Pekalongan, 1905-1945," 3.

¹⁴⁶ Hussein Badjerei, *Al-Irsyad Mengisi Sejarah Bangsa*, 1st ed., vol. 1, 1 (Presto Prima Utama, 1996), 29.

schools were the main movement built. That was Later, Madrasah Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah was established on 15 Shawwal 1332, coinciding with 06 September 1914.¹⁴⁷

The conflict intensified when people affiliated with the Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah organization identified themselves with a new identity: Irsyadi. Hostility was not only directed at the Jamiat Khair. Alatas School, as a modern school, received negative propaganda from Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah. However, its founder was a reformist named Abdullah bib Alwi al-Attas, who had also donated money to the establishment of Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah in its early days.¹⁴⁸ Apart from the influence of Pan-Islamism from Jamaluddin Al-Afghani and Islamic Reformism in general from Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida which was well received by almost all Arab-Hadhrami circles in the Dutch East Indies. Al-Irsyad's polemic, through the publication of *Azzahiratoel Islamijah*, can be characterized as a conflict and polemic between the Irsyadi and Sayyid (Alawi) groups. That is, it can be suspected that since its establishment, Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah has harbored anti-Sayyid sentiments. This allegation is evident in the organization's first statute in the fifth article, which explicitly states that Sayyids (Alawi) cannot hold any position in the organization's management. Al-Irsyad's rejection of the Sayyids continued to grow not only on the issues of *kafa'ah* (equality of Sayyid status), marriage, and *taqbil* (hand kissing tradition) but also the celebration of the Prophet's birthday. At this point, Riddell's assumption that the internal problems of the Arab-Hadhrami were due to the influence of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab's thought seems correct.¹⁴⁹

b. Salafi (with) The Bā'alawī

Departing from his argument, Syamsul Rijal (2024) states that one of the causes of the increasing popularity of Habib in Indonesia is the widespread influence of traditionalist Islam. The argument is an antithesis of Weber's view (1978), which argues that traditionalist religious practices will decline along with increasing modernization and

¹⁴⁷ Saeputro and Amaruli, "Mencari Identitas Reformisme Islam: Konflik dan Integrasi Orang Arab- Hadhrami di Pekalongan, 1905-1945," 3; Badjerei, *Al-Irsyad Mengisi Sejarah Bangsa*, 1:33; Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadhrami Awakening*, 239–40.

¹⁴⁸ Saeputro and Amaruli, "Mencari Identitas Reformisme Islam: Konflik dan Integrasi Orang Arab- Hadhrami di Pekalongan, 1905-1945," 4; Sholihatun, *Sejarah Jamiatul Khair dalam Pembentukan Masyarakat Islam Betawi (Studi Kasus Sejarah Islam Betawi Abad XX)*, 1st ed. (Jakarta, Indonesia: Yayasan Omah Aksoro Indonesia, 2018); Alwi Alatas, "Islamic Reformism in the Netherlands East Indies : The Role and Thought of Abd Allah B. Alawi B. Abd Allah al-Attas (1844-1929) /" (Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia, 2007).

¹⁴⁹ Riddell, "ARAB MIGRANTS AND ISLAMIZATION IN THE MALAY WORLD DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD," 115; Sholihatun, *Sejarah Jamiatul Khair dalam Pembentukan Masyarakat Islam Betawi (Studi Kasus Sejarah Islam Betawi Abad XX)*, 130; Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadhrami Awakening*.

rationalization. On the other hand, it is also the antithesis of the views of Ernest Gellner, who conducted a study on the reality of Marocco society, where he argued that traditional Islam (called tribal religion) is no longer relevant in the face of urbanization and modernization. He also claims that modernist Islam will replace the holders of religious authority because the style of faith in the sacred is modernized.

In contrast to his reasoning, Syamsul Rijal (2024) claims that one of the reasons for Habib's growing popularity in Indonesia is the broad influence of Traditionalist Islam.¹⁵⁰ The argument contradicts Weber's (1978) position, which holds that archaic religious behaviours will wane as modernization and rationalization increase.¹⁵¹ On the other hand, it contradicts Ernest Gellner's ideas, who did a research on Moroccan society and argued that traditional Islam (also known as tribal religion) is no longer relevant in the face of urbanization and modernization.¹⁵² He also says that modernist Islam will replace the custodians of religious authority because the manner of faith in the sacred has modernized. In its development, in the context of Indonesian Islam, especially in this study, traditionalists, including the *Alawiyyin* and the *Kiai* (NU), have been contending with each other. A recent phenomenon is the reaction and rejection of traditionalists against Bā'alawī, who also claim to be traditionalists. But what is more interesting is that Indonesian traditionalists have been significantly influenced by the transnational Islamic movement, commonly referred to as the *Salafi* Islamic right.

Remarkably, the non-Alawiyyin Hadhrami on a larger scale and the Alawiyyin on a smaller scale have been infiltrated by Salafi-Wahabiism in their internal circles, either Salafism coming from Saudi Arabia or madrasas in North Yemen.¹⁵³ There are at least several main factors that caused some Alawiyyin in Indonesia to be infiltrated by Salafi-Wahabiism, namely the outbreak of the Iranian revolution in 1979 with its various ramifications. After the revolution, the two currents of thought can be considered the boiling point of the Alawiyyin who affiliated or switched *mazhab* while undermining the standard Alawiyyin doctrine that had long been institutionalized. Finally, since the early 2000s, the attention and interest of the Indonesian people towards the Arab-Hadhrami has increased. This interest and concern arose because many Arab-Hadhrami figures began to

¹⁵⁰ Syamsul Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia: The Resurgence of Hadhrami Preachers*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2023), 3, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003358558>.

¹⁵¹ Max Weber, *Economy and Society an Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley, Lo"Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1967).

¹⁵² Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia*, 2; Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society*, 1st ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 58.

¹⁵³ Musa Kazhim Alhabsyi, *Identitas Arab Itu Ilusi*, 1st ed. (Bandung: PT Mizan Pustaka, 2022), 197, <http://www.mizan.com>.

appear in the political, religious, and activist stages. But the most horrendous was when some Alawiyyin participated in vigilante actions under the auspices of a mass organization called the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), led by a half-breed (*muwallad*) named Rizieq Shihab.¹⁵⁴ With the existence of FPI after the fall of Soeharto in 1998, Rizieq Shihab's popularity and acceptance among Alawiyyin increased along with the widening of FPI's political actions and participation. Slowly, the sweeping actions by FPI against dimly lit stalls increased its position by becoming one of the mass organizations that played a role in many socio-political events in Indonesia. Not only that, FPI's actions also coincide with some Salafi Wahabi Islamic elements such as HTI, Laskar Jihad, Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia involved in bloody inter-religious conflicts in Ambon, destruction of mosques belonging to minority groups and attacks on the National Alliance for Freedom of Religion and Belief (AKBB) in Monas in 2008.¹⁵⁵

FPI is a populist right-wing social and political organization dedicated to the Islamization of Indonesia. However, it is less popular than leading Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama.¹⁵⁶ The core purpose and message of FPI is that Indonesian Muslims are threatened by secular, liberal, and non-Muslim forces that conspire to corrupt the morals of the ummah. According to Mietzner (2020), Islamic radical groups like FPI want to assert that pious Muslims are being victimized by non-Muslim forces both in Indonesia and in the West. In the Indonesian context, devout Muslims are kept out of power through an interlocking conspiracy between non-Muslim countries and the Indonesian elite.¹⁵⁷ Thus, the purpose of the FPI founded in 1998 by Muhammad Rizieq Shihab, who was inspired by the influence of Salafism, an ideology that has been

¹⁵⁴ Alhabsyi, 195.

¹⁵⁵ Ben Sohib, "Nasib Tarekat Alawiyah Indonesia: Sudah Jatuh, Tertimpa Kaki Bahar bin Smith," *Alif.ID* (blog), December 13, 2021, <https://alif.id/read/ben/nasib-tarekat-alawiyah-indonesia-sudah-jatuh-tertimpa-kaki-bahar-bin-smith-b241203p/>; Ben Sohib, "Dinamika Habaib: Islam Politik Rizieq Shihab Dan Pedang Patah Faqih al Mukaddam (Bagian 3-Habis)," *Islami[dot]co*, July 31, 2018, <https://islami.co/dinamika-habaib-islam-politik-rizieq-shihab-dan-pedang-patah-faqih-al-mukaddam-bagian-3-habis/>; Ben Sohib, "Dinamika Habaib: Islam Politik Rizieq Shihab Dan Pedang Patah Faqih al Mukaddam (Bag-2)," *Islami[dot]co*, July 31, 2018, <https://islami.co/dinamika-habaib-islam-politik-rizieq-shihab-dan-pedang-patah-faqih-al-mukaddam-bag-2/>; Ben Sohib, "Dinamika Habaib: Islam Politik Rizieq Shihab Dan Pedang Patah Faqih al Mukaddam (Bag-1)," *Islami[dot]co*, July 31, 2018, <https://islami.co/dinamika-habaib-islam-politik-rizieq-shihab-dan-pedang-patah-faqih-al-mukaddam/>.

¹⁵⁶ Ihsan Yilmaz, Nicholas Morieson, and Hasnan Bachtiar, "Civilizational Populism in Indonesia: The Case of Front Pembela Islam (FPI)," *Religions* 13, no. 12 (December 12, 2022): 7, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13121208>; Abdullah M. Al-Ansi et al., "Rational Choice of Following Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama and Their Social and Political Role in Indonesian Society," *Open Access Library Journal* 6, no. 11 (November 5, 2019): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1105829>.

¹⁵⁷ Marcus Mietzner, "Rival Populisms and the Democratic Crisis in Indonesia: Chauvinists, Islamists and Technocrats," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 74, no. 4 (July 3, 2020): 425, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2020.1725426>.

developing since the 1980s, was to "*amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar*, or 'command the right and forbid the wrong.'¹⁵⁸ This means that Salafism heavily influences FPI's conception of Islam and, therefore, views Islamic civilization as a narrow space that allows little non-Islamic influence and prohibits non-Muslims from holding high positions in government.¹⁵⁹ Hence, with several habib (Alawiyyin-Bā'alawī) involved in Salafi-Wahabi affiliation, either under the umbrella of FPI or other organizations, it can be assumed that the internal Arab-Hadhrami circles are experiencing upheaval in the form of internal factions due to differences in *mazhab* and understanding.

It is different from the calls of Salafi figures circulating on social media for the Habib to re-establish faithful Islam. This is not Islam, with innovations often done by the Habib in worship, such as creating *solawat* lyrics, zikr with new methods, and many more. For Salafis who adhere fanatically to the words of *Salafush Salih*, then efforts in the form of innovation in worship are forbidden because, for them, the basis of worship is prohibited. In contrast, the basis of worldly law is permissible. As for what is considered *Salafush Salih*, it is the generation of companions, *tabiin*, *tabiut tabiin*. Salafis do not oppose the existence of Habib, whose lineage is connected to the Prophet Muhammad. They respect the existence of Habib by praying with *Salawat* during *tashahhud*.



Picture 03

Salafi Ustads who "often" attack Arabs (Bā'alawī). I took this screenshot from YouTube.

¹⁵⁸ Bamualim Chaider S., "Islamic Militancy and Resentment against Hadhramis in Post-Suharto Indonesia: A Case Study of Habib Rizieq Syihab and His Islamic Defenders Front," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 33, no. 2 (August 1, 2013): 270, <https://doi.org/10.1215/1089201X-2322336>.

¹⁵⁹ Marcus Mietzner, "Rival Populisms and the Democratic Crisis in Indonesia: Chauvinists, Islamists and Technocrats," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 74, no. 4 (July 3, 2020): 420–38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2020.1725426>; Chaider S., "Islamic Militancy and Resentment against Hadhramis in Post-Suharto Indonesia: A Case Study of Habib Rizieq Syihab and His Islamic Defenders Front"; Yilmaz, Morieson, and Bachtar, "Civilizational Populism in Indonesia."

On the other hand, Salafis do not glorify anyone, including Habib, because, according to them, the beginning of misguidance is the excessive glorification of people who are considered pious, primarily just because of their lineage.¹⁶⁰ The harshest Salafi attack on Habib in Indonesia comes from a video of Ustads Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawas. Yazid Abdul Qadir states unequivocally that one should not trust Habib. When a Habib claims to be a descendant of the Prophet, he should follow the Prophet Muhammad. But in reality, they do not because the Habib commit shirk, make pilgrimage to the graves of saints and beg there, and many other heresies. In addition, according to Yazid Jawas, Habib invites his congregation to glorify him because he is the most noble and heaven expert. On the other hand, Habib does not teach monotheism to Allah; he only trusts in himself. All of this is deception because Islam never teaches this.¹⁶¹

3.4 The Chronology: Traditionalist's Resistance Against Bā'alawī

The traditionalist reaction and rejection of Bā'alawī in Indonesia became the starting point of the discussion about Bā'alawī's existence in Indonesia. The phenomenon began with doubting the truth of his lineage, questionable claims of Islamization in Indonesia, and other narratives that received refutations and responses from various parties. The phenomenon of ongoing rejection, rejection, and support between traditionalists who reject Bā'alawī and Bā'alawī himself and some traditionalists who support Bā'alawī is a locus of study that needs to be examined. The argument that the majority of Habib in Indonesia has not been scientifically proven to have a bloodline to the Prophet is the oil that ignites the debate. The argument comes from Kiai Imaduddin Ustman's research results, which will sting many parties because it delegitimizes the Habib.¹⁶² Therefore, in this section, I will divide the genealogy of the reaction and rejection of several traditionalist figures against Bā'alawī into six months, from the first time you happened on 13 October 2022 to July 2024, the final limit of this research.

¹⁶⁰ *BENARKAH HABIB KETURUNAN NABI?? - Ustadz Dr Firanda Andirja, MA*, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyaHOJHrhlo>; *Apa Benar HABIB Keturunan NABI, Ust. Syafiq Reza Basalamah. Lc, MA*, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBjwRNq0xaE>.

¹⁶¹ *JANGAN PERCAYA PADA HABIB - Ustadz Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawas*, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvAipcUh-ew>.

¹⁶² Imaduddin Utsman al-Bantani, *Habaib Keturunan Nabi Benarkah? (Politik Identitas-Pengaruh-Keagungan)*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Onkor Semesta Alam, 2023); Imaduddin Utsman al-Bantani, *Kronik Perjalanan Ilmiah K.H Imaduddin Utsman Al Bantani dalam Mengungkap Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Banten: Maktabah Nahdlatul Ulum, 2024); Syafiq Hasyim, "Menyoal Genealogi Habib di Indonesia ke Rasulullah, Bukti Ilmiah Kyai Imaduddin Utsman," *GEOTIMES*, November 8, 2022, <https://geotimes.id/catatan-syafiq-hasyim/menyoal-genealogi-habib-di-indonesia-ke-rasulullah-bukti-ilmiah-kyai-imaduddin-utsman/>.

The first six months (13 October 2022- 20 March 2023) began on 13 October 2022 when Imaduddin Utsman wrote a short article on the website *Nahdlatululum. com*—currently inaccessible due to a hack—titled "*Pengakuan Para Habib Sebagai Keturunan Nabi Belum Terbukti Secara Ilmiah*."¹⁶³ The article begins with the most basic question: whether their lineage as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad can be scientifically proven and accounted for. Imaduddin Utsman attempted to answer this question by examining the methodology of confirming the book of lineage, then continued with the method of confirming Alwi bin Ubaidillah, which was then proven by arguments that cast doubt on the Bā'alawī lineage in Indonesia.¹⁶⁴ Imaduddin Utsman concluded that Ubaidillah, as the son of Ahmad, cannot be scientifically accounted for. Our oldest lineage, entitled *Tahdzib Al-Nasab* (written in the fifth century) and *Alyajarah Al Mubarakah* (written in the sixth century), state that Ahmad did not have a son named Ubaidillah until an older book can be found and can refute this thesis. The books that existed in later centuries state that Ubaidillah was the son of Ahmad ibn' Isa, but they are not referenced because of the discontinuity of transmission. The break in the transmission is the appearance of a new name in the tenth century that is not mentioned in the books of the previous century. Based on this thesis, all the descendants of Ubaidillah are in the same position because their lineage as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad has been disproved.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ But publish in other portal-news, see the inewsid, "Nasab Habib di Indonesia Belum Terbukti Secara Ilmiah," <https://banten.inews.id/>, accessed June 18, 2024, <https://banten.inews.id/read/283829/nasab-habib-di-indonesia-belum-terbukti-secara-ilmiah>.

¹⁶⁴ Utsman al-Bantani, *Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1:52.

¹⁶⁵ Utsman al-Bantani, 1:55. inewsid, "Nasab Habib di Indonesia Belum Terbukti Secara Ilmiah." "Bab V: Ulasan Cendikiawan Tentang Penelitian Kyai Imaduddin," *Terjemah Kitab Kuning* (blog), accessed June 18, 2024, <https://www.alkhoirot.org/2024/03/bab-v-ulasan-cendikiawan-tentang.html>.



Picture 04

Books written by Imaduddin Uthman in rejecting the Bā'alawī lineage. I collected from various sources.

On 06 November 2022, Syafiq Hasyim made a video posted by Cokro TV, which until now has been watched 241,021 times with a total subscriber of 2.28 million, by reviewing an article written by Imaduddin Utsman at *Nahdlatululum.com* with the title "*Pengakuan Para Habib Sebagai Keturunan Nabi Belum Terbukti Secara Ilmiah.*"¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, on 08 November 2022, Syafiq Hasyim published an article on *Geotimes. id* with the title "*Menyoal Geneologi Habib di Indonesia ke Rasulullah, Bukti Ilmiah Kiai Imaduddin Utsman.*"¹⁶⁷ Where the contents of the article are in the form of a review of Imaduddin Utsman's arguments and findings on the Bā'alawī lineage in Indonesia. Interestingly, Syafiq Hasyim remained objective and neutral by only conveying what Imaduddin Utsman found and invited anyone to refute the research results with scientific

¹⁶⁶ See YouTube video in title: *GENEOLOGIS HABIB DI INDONESIA KE RASULULLAH SECARA ILMIAH TIDAK TERBUKTI I* Catatan Syafiq Hasyim, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khMi0MPOPms>.

¹⁶⁷ Hasyim, "Menyoal Geneologi Habib di Indonesia ke Rasulullah, Bukti Ilmiah Kyai Imaduddin Utsman."

methods, as Imad did scientific research. At the end of his writing, he also stated that seemingly established historical constructions, including lineage, are historical materials that are constantly open to scrutiny. Those interested will explore and research the results, which may differ from the seemingly established history.¹⁶⁸ Then, on the same date and month, Maktab Daimi Rabitah Alawiyah (MDRA) issued a circular letter number 180/MD-RA/XI/202. The letter mentioned that Ubaidillah's name had been recorded in *Abnauil Imam* and *Bahrul Ansab (al-Musyajjar al-Kasyaf)*. These two books mentioned by Rabitah Alawiyah cannot be used as proof that Ubaidillah was Ahmad's so. This is because the book of *Bahrul Ansab* mentioned in the circular as being composed in the fifth century is a lie. This is because the book was written by Al-Sayyid Muhammad bin Ahmad Amiduddin Al-Husaini Al-Najafi, who died in the 10th century *Hijriah*.

And on 12 November 2022, Imaduddin Utsman's research book was published for the first time with the title "*Menakar Kesahihan Nasab Habib di Indonesia*" by being distributed to the public and can be downloaded at *Nahdlatululum.com*. However, on 17 March 2023, Jafar Assegaf wrote a book with a thickness of approximately 77 pages, intending to be a rebuttal to Imaduddin Utsman's book. The rebuttal book is "*Konektifitas Rijal al-Hadis dengan Sejarah dalam Menelusuri Nasab*."¹⁶⁹ Since the book contains a rebuttal, there are at least some emphases, such as explaining the method of confirming Ubaidillah as Ahmad's son with: first, oral history and Bā'alawī family records; second, is to use the technique of *Shuhral wal istifadloh* (well-known and comprehensive); third, is to use the testimony of the books; fifth, by using the marriage of Bā'alawī men with women from al-Hasani as a sign of the validity of the Bā'alawī lineage; fifth, by using archaeological evidence in the form of Ahmad bin Isa's tomb in Hadramaut as proof that the Bā'alawī lineage is connected to Ahmad bin Isa. This process of refuting each other will continue, either in the form of writings in the form of books or in the form of videos that are uploaded on their respective channels either in favor of Imaduddin Utsman or in favor of the Habib and believe that their lineage is connected to the Prophet. Within a year and a half, the mutual responses can be tracked on several media, such as YouTube and the news portals of each group.

On 20 March 2023, a social phenomenon was persecution against Gus Fuad Pelered, Bantul, Yogyakarta by Habib and the *muhibbin*. The persecution was nothing but an act of violence over some of Gus Fuad's remarks that the Habib should stop preaching. The action

¹⁶⁸ Hasyim.

¹⁶⁹ Ja'far Assegaf, *Konektifitas Rijal al-Hadis dengan Sejarah dalam Menelusuri Nasab* (alkhairaat-ternate.or.id, 2023).

was the second boiling point in the first six months of the Bā'alawī lineage cronies in Indonesia. With the persecution, the negative sentiment towards Habib became more straightforward and blatant on social media, where simultaneously, Imaduddin Utsman's writings were picked up by many YouTubers and became increasingly talked about.¹⁷⁰ Then, on 7-8 April 2023, there was again a rebuttal article by Muhammad Lutfi Rohman on Imaduddin Utsman's thesis. In this article, Lutfi doubts that there is a kiai who does a writing which, in essence, denies the lineage of Habib, especially in Indonesia, which has been ratified by the competent lineage institution, in this case is Rabithoh Alawiyah. Furthermore, there are responses to Imad's research on the book of lineage that he refers to.¹⁷¹ On the same date, there was also a rebuttal from Bahar Smith to Imaduddin Utsman's thesis in a *YouTube* channel called *Sayyid Bahar bin Sumaith Official* titled "*Live! Bantahan Habib Bahar Atas pernyataan Imaduddin Utsman dan Bagi yang Mengaku Cucu Walisongo.*"¹⁷² This is the genealogy of the first six months since the emergence of the debate between traditionalists and fellow traditionalists regarding the Bā'alawī lineage in Indonesia.

The second six months (15 April 2023-03 October 2023) began on 15 April 2023 with the writing of a response and rebuttal to Imaduddin Utsman's thesis by Amjad bin Salim bin Abdullah Abu Futaim bin Sheikh Abu Bakar bin Salim using Arabic.¹⁷³ Four days later, on 19 April, a response book to Imaduddin Utsman's thesis by Hanif Alatas was also published, approximately 45 pages thick. The rebuttal book was titled "*Risalah Ilmiah Jawaban atas Syubhat Imaduddin Utsman Seoutar Keabsahan Nasab Bā'alawī.*"¹⁷⁴ Next, on 27 April, Hanif Alatas again made an answer and responded to Imaduddin's rebuttal of his books. It was a 20-page response entitled "*Bingkisan Lebaran untuk Imaduddin*

¹⁷⁰ Utsman al-Bantani, *Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*; Hasan, "Bikin Kacau dan Menakuti Pribumi, Gus Fuad Pleret Meminta Habaib Berhenti Berdakwah di Indonesia!," *Keuangan News*, March 19, 2023, <https://keuangannews.id/bikin-kacau-dan-menakuti-pribumi-gus-fuad-pleret-meminta-para-habaib-berhenti-berdakwah-di-indonesia/>; "Bikin Kacau dan Menakuti Pribumi, Gus Fuad Pleret Minta Para Habaib Berhenti Berdakwah di Indonesia," *KONTENISLAM.COM Berita Terupdate* (blog), March 19, 2023, <https://www.kontenislam.com/2023/03/bikin-kacau-dan-menakuti-pribumi-gus.html>.

¹⁷¹ Muhammad Luthfi Rochman, "Meluruskan Imamuddin Utsman Yang Mengingkari Nasab Habaib Di Indonesia," *Fakta Kini* (blog), accessed June 18, 2024, <https://www.faktakini.info/2023/04/meluruskan-imamuddin-utsman-yang.html>; Muhammad Luthfi Rochman, "Bantah Imaduddin, Gus Luthfi: Para Ulama Sejak 5-6 Abad Lalu Mengaku Nasab Sayid Ubaidillah bin Ahmad," *Fakta Kini* (blog), accessed June 18, 2024, <https://www.faktakini.info/2023/04/bantah-imaduddin-gus-luthfi-para-ulama.html>.

¹⁷² *Bantahan Habib Bahar Atas Pernyataan Imaduddin Utsman Dan Bagi Yg Mengaku Cucu Walisongo*, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwGGvZxOzyo>.

¹⁷³ Utsman al-Bantani, *Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1:83.

¹⁷⁴ Muhammad Hanif Bin Abdurrahman Alathas, *Menjawab Tuntas Syubhat Imaduddin Utsman Seputar Keabsahan Nasab Bani Alawi* (Jakarta, 2003).

Utsman." But not long after, Imad responded to the reaction with his article "*Rengginang Dari Banten untuk Hanif Alatas.*" Responses continue to come from Habib to Imaduddin Utsman's thesis, this time coming from the Chairman of Naqobatul Asyrof al-Kubro, Habib Ali Zainal Abidin, with his video uploaded on Sikam TV.¹⁷⁵ Presumably, Imad also responded to all of these responses in many of his writings, which, as far as the author's search is concerned, were published by *rminubanten.or.id*. Interestingly, almost all of the news portal's content is Imad's responses and responses to several responses from all parties. Not only that, but the media also contains Imad's new writings that support his first thesis about the Bā'alawī lineage in Indonesia."¹⁷⁶

In addition to the responses and rebuttals to Imad's thesis, there was a lot of support from some traditionalist (NU) figures for Imad's findings and thesis. This can be seen on 21 May, when the Big Family of *Bani Rancang* from Jember Regency expressed support for the conclusion of his thesis on the Bā'alawī lineage in the form of a declaration that was videoed and read out.¹⁷⁷ Further support came from the Caretaker of the Garut Regency Islamic Boarding School by making a statement on Imaduddin Utsman's research, which was read out by K. H.R Muhammad Amin in the form of a video and uploaded by the *Garda Walisongo* channel.¹⁷⁸ With the many support from several parties for Imaduddin Utsman's thesis, he did not hesitate to publish his second book, which was about 96 pages thick in only PDF format and was distributed freely by many people, one of which was by a *YouTube* channel named Hanif Farhan.¹⁷⁹ While the book is entitled "*Terputusnya Nasab Habib Kepada Nabi Muhammad SAW.*"

Furthermore, on 09 June, an article was published by a female writer named Nurul Azizah, where the title of the article was in support of Imaduddin Utsman, namely "*Kiai Imaduddin Ustman Simbol Kebangkitan Pribumi Karena Ulah Oknum Habib yang Merendahkan Bangsa ini.*"¹⁸⁰ On subsequent dates, Imaduddin Utsman responded to many

¹⁷⁵ *Ketua Naqobatul Asyrof Al Qubro Angkat Bicara.!! AlHabib Zainal Abidin Assegaf*, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSJ25s5vI5M>.

¹⁷⁶ "Home," RMI PWNU Banten, accessed June 18, 2024, <https://rminubanten.or.id>.

¹⁷⁷ *Jika Bani Rancang Kab Jember Sdh Deklarasi - Bergerak DUKUNG Kyai Imaduddin !!*, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqPUoiO-O_0.

¹⁷⁸ *Dukungan Para Kiai Kab. Garut Untuk KH. Imaduddin Utsman Al-Bantani - YouTube*, accessed June 18, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/>.

¹⁷⁹ *Hanif farhan - YouTube*, accessed June 18, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/>.

¹⁸⁰ Nurul Azizah, "Kiai Imaduddin Simbol Grassroots NU Menghadapi Arogansi Habib Bā'alawī Yaman - Portal Berita OPINI Medan - Sumatera Utara," MUDANEWS.COM - Portal Berita Indonesia Terkini Hari Ini, May 9, 2024, <https://mudanews.com/opini/2024/05/09/kiai-imaduddin-simbol-grassroots-nu-menghadapi-arogansi-habib-baalawi-yaman/>; Nurul Azizah, "Kiai Imaduddin Simbol Kebangkitan Pribumi Karena Ulah Oknum Habib Yang Merendahkan Bangsa Ini.," *RMI PWNU Banten* (blog), June 9, 2023, <https://rminubanten.or.id/kiai-imaduddin-simbol-kebangkitan-pribumi-karena-ulah-oknum-habib-yang-merendahkan-bangsa-ini/>.

responses and rebuttals from both the Habib circle and traditionalists. For example, on 13 June, 02 July, 05 July, and 06 September, he wrote to answer and refute Rumail Abbas' questions.



Picture 05

Books written by some Bā'alawī Habibs in response to and rejection of books which deny the Bā'alawī lineage.

Rumail Abbas himself is a young figure from NU who is "not" from the Bā'alawī circle. He supports the truth of the Bā'alawī lineage by conducting extensive research to answer Imaduddin's thesis. Rumail has written a book entitled "Menakar Kesahehan Nasab Bā'alawī"¹⁸¹ and a presentation on a *YouTube* channel called *Pamitnya Ngantor* on the findings of his research on lineage. In addition, he often responds to the statements of people who are pro-Imad's thesis or pro-nullification of the nasab.¹⁸² On Imaduddin Utsman's side, besides being busy giving lectures from various institutions in several regions, responding, answering, and explaining, he is very productive in writing books or books in Indonesian or Arab. For example, on 10 June, he published a book entitled "*Ilmu Nasab: Istilah dan Metodologi*" which is about 61 pages thick; on 16 June, he again

¹⁸¹ Rumail Abbas, "MENAKAR KESAHIHAN PEMBATALAN BAALAWI," 2023.

¹⁸² *Pamitnya Ngantor - YouTube*, accessed June 18, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/>.

published his book entitled "*al-Mawahib al-Laduniah fi Inqitai Nasab ba Alwi bin Ubaidillah*." Then, on 03 August, he published another book entitled "*I'anutul Akhyar*," where all the books he wrote were distributed freely in many media.

However, in the second six months, there are several other essential markers of Imaduddin Utsman's productivity in working and sharing freely. This can be marked on 06 July, when the Rois Syuriah of PCNU Serang Regency, KH Tb. Ahmad Khudari Yusuf wrote an article urging the habibs not to publicly claim to be descendants of the Prophet. The article is entitled "*Mengakhiri Polemik Nasab Ba Alawi*," which contains an appeal that the lineage polemic is ended or ended; it also requests that the Habib Bā'alawī no longer claim to be descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. The article is a conclusion based on three rebuttals written by Habib Ja'far Assegaf, Habib Hanif Alatas, and 'Isma'il Al-'Aschaly, according to which there are still no contemporaneous references that mention 'Abd Allah or 'Ubayd Allah (the father of 'Alwi—'Alwi's descendants are called Bā'alawī, as the top of the clan of "almost" all Habib in Indonesia).¹⁸³ And no less interesting to note was the Banten debate on 29 August. It was probably the first open debate held in Banten involving elderly *kiai*. However, Imaduddin could not attend the debate but sent an article hypothesizing the rejection of the Ba'alawi lineage to be answered in the debate. Through this debate, the chronicle of the Bā'alawī lineage became increasingly heated and was responded to by many people in various mass media or even in everyday conversations in multiple places.

The third six months (October 2023–23 February 2024) of this final period began with Imaduddin Utsman's response to Hanif Alatas and Wafi, who were considered to have misunderstood the book of lineage by Imaduddin. Thus, Imaduddin responded to this by reviewing each sentence based on *ibarah*, the primary source for determining lineage. Furthermore, on 04 October, a meeting was held in Yogyakarta between Imaduddin Utsman and Fuad Plered, KRT. Fakhri, KRT. Joko, Tb. Mogy and Alun. In the same month, on the 6th, there was a declaration of Laskar Walisongo at the Bumi Sholawat Kanjeng Sunan Ampel Rawajay Islamic Boarding School, Bantasari District, Cilacap Regency, led by K.H. Salim. Also present at the event were KH Abbas Buntet, KH Syarif (Tegal), Tengku Qori (Aceh), T.B. Nurfadil (Depok), KH Yusuf Mubarak (Serang), KRT. Fakhri (Pasuruan), Putri Mojopoahit, Gus Alizen Bendakerep, Gus Mas (Banyumas), Raden Diptyo (Jakarta), KH. Jaelani Pandeglang, KH. Zaenudin well Pandeglang, Mbah Dowi, Gus Aziz Jazuli (Cinangka), Cahnel Diam (Banyumas), Gus Muhson (Banyumas), and

¹⁸³ Utsman al-Bantani, *Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1:136.

many more traditionalist figures who participated in the event.¹⁸⁴ After the event, Imaduddin was again busy writing many manuscripts such as "Silsilah Gunung Jati ke Musa Al-Kadzim," "Kronologis Nasab Azmat Khan Ba Alwi," and "Manuskrip Halu dan Isnad Palsu."

Besides being busy writing responses to questions and research results conducted by Rumai Abbas, Imaduddin Utsman was also busy attending various invitations in several places and regions in Indonesia. Then, on 04 November 2023, Imaduddin Utsman sent a letter to Rabitah Alawiyah and Rumail Abbas regarding the many descendants of Bā'alawī who publicly claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad. The letter asserted that they could not prove concrete evidence that those who claimed to be descendants of the Prophet were connected to the Prophet. Significantly marked on 07 November 2023, PCNU Garut, based on the deliberations between Shuriyah and Tanfidziyah officials, issued an appeal letter with the number 0048/PC/A. II/D-21/11/2022. The appeal letter contained a ruling that NU. Citizens should not invite Habib to their event. After the Garut issued an appeal letter on 02 December 2023, the Wonogiri PCNU also instructed the NU MWC and NU branches not to invite Habib to their event. The instruction was numbered 023/PC/A. II/11.19/XII/2023, which contained a prohibition on inviting Habib, also included support like an appeal to all NU. Citizens respond to the results of Imaduddin Utsman's research related to Bā'alawī's lineage, and the last contained an order to re-routine NU's *amaliyah: Mujahadah, Tahlil, Yasinan, Barzanji, Diba', Istighasah, Manaqib, Suluk, Toriqoh, and Hizib*.¹⁸⁵

In addition to the essential dates above, the next important one was on 05 December 2023, when there was an invitation to Imaduddin Utsman from PBNU to discuss the lineage of Habaib in Indonesia. In the event, NU leaders who are currently NU administrators and structurally bound under the leadership of KH Yahya Cholil Staquf were present, including K.H. Zulva Mustofa (Vice President), KH. Cholil Nafis (Deputy Rais), K.H. Silahudin (Deputy Katib), KH. Mahbub Maafi (Chairman of LBM), KH. Fahrurroji (Ketum PBNU Bid. Keagamaan), Dr Ginanjar Sya'ban (Deputy Secretary), and KH. Hafidz Kurniawan (LBM).¹⁸⁶ At the same time, subsequent meetings with several NU leaders and administrators continued to occur in several places with the same theme and topic of discussion, namely, related to the Bā'alawī lineage in Indonesia. The meeting can be marked on the following dates, such as on 29 December 2023 in Yogyakarta with KH Irwan

¹⁸⁴ Utsman al-Bantani, 1:222.

¹⁸⁵ Utsman al-Bantani, 1:272.

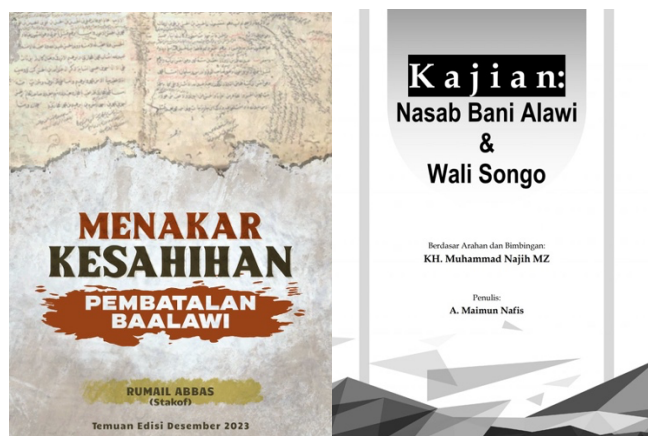
¹⁸⁶ Utsman al-Bantani, 1:275.

Masduki and KH. Jadul Maula and several other NU figures attended the meeting. However, Imaduddin Utsman's meetings with several NU figures did not mean that all *nahdiyin* (a term for people affiliated with NU) accepted the results of Imaduddin Utsman's research. Many of the *nahdiyin* still believe that Ba'alwi's lineage is connected to the Prophet. Also, many of the *nahdiyin* believe that Bā'alawī's role in the Islamisation of Indonesia cannot be rejected.

Subsequently, in the third six months, Imaduddin Utsman responded to many of Rumail Abbas' responses and rebuttals with writings published in several media. One of his writings on 14 August, which was in the form of an answer to Rumail in a discussion held on the Padasuka TV channel, the following writing on 24 October for Rumail with the title "*Gus Rumail dan Alwi bin Thahir Al Haddad, Siapa yang Berdusta?*", "*Untuk Gus Rumail: Al-Jauhar Al Syafaf dan Manuskrip Palsu*," "*Menjawab Tujuh Pertanyaan Rumail Abbas*," and many more writings by Imaduddin to respond to the research results produced by Rumail Abbas. In addition to responding to Rumail's writings, Imaduddin also responded to Said Aqil Husin Al-Munawwar about the Bā'alawī lineage. In the end, on 21 November 2024, an article was published by Imaduddin Utsman with a title that connotes the finality that the Bā'alawī lineage is not connected to the Prophet Muhammad. The article's title was "*Polemik Nasab Ba Alwi Selesai: Terbukti Bukan Cucu Nabi Muhammad*."¹⁸⁷ Imaduddin Utsman's book on 14 February 2024 reinforced this statement in "*Membongkar Skandal Ilmiah Geneologi dan Sejarah Bā'alawī: Finalisasi Keterputusan Nasab Bā'alawī kepada Nabi Muhammad SAW*." In this book, which is not necessarily the end of the lineage chronicle that continues social media from one forum to another, it is explained that there has been a lot of new evidence compiled by Imaduddin Utsman to show that the Bā'alawī lineage is not descended from the Prophet Muhammad.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Imaduddin Utsman al-Bantani, "Polemik Nasab Habib Ba Alawi Selesai: Terbukti Bukan Cucu Nabi Muhammad SAW," *RMI PWNU Banten* (blog), November 21, 2023, <https://rminubanten.or.id/polemik-nasab-habib-ba-alawi-selesai-terbukti-bukan-cucu-nabi-muhammad-saw/>; Utsman al-Bantani, *Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1:269.

¹⁸⁸ Utsman al-Bantani, *Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1:333.



Picture 06

Books that are written by traditionalists who accept and support the truthfulness of the Bā'alawī lineage.

Who is the Imaduddin Utsman? I will show the leading actor's profile in Indonesia's Bā'alawī nasab polemic. I compiled his profile from various sources spread across social media because there is no biodata of him in some of the main books. KH Imaduddin Utsman Al Bantani is a Nahdlatul Ulama scholar in Banten who has written a lot about the history of Habib in the archipelago. As a scholar, he studied Islamic disciplines in Jurisprudence, Ushul Jurisprudence, Tafsir, and Hadits. In addition, he is famous for his mastery of *nahwu*, *shorof*, *bayan*, and *ma'ani*, which are scholars' main requirements and capital to explore the law from the Qur'an, Hadith, and previous books. He is the founder and caregiver of Salafiyah Nahdlatul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, established in 2002. Initially, this boarding school organized education using the pure *salafiyah* method without formal education. Only on 18 December 2009 did the boarding school accommodate formal education in the form of *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* and *Madrasah Aliyah*, which followed the national standard curriculum.¹⁸⁹

Born into a family of Nahdliyin scholars, he was religiously educated from childhood. He was born to Ki Sarman and Mrs Hj. Syu'arah in Kampung Cempaka, Kresek Village, Kresek District, Tangerang Regency, Banten Province on Sunday, 15 August 1978 (19 Sha'ban 1396). Raised in a pesantren environment in his home village, Imaduddin received religious guidance from his uncles' scholars who graduated from Tebuireng Jombang, namely K.H. Mahfudz bin Muhammad and KH. Syarif Jauhari bin Naib. At the age of seven, little Imaduddin learned the basics of religious knowledge under the tutelage of KH Rashihun Fil Ilmu, a scholar who graduated from Tebuireng. At Madrasah Diniyah

¹⁸⁹ "Profil Pimpinan Pesantren Kami," Nahdlatul Ulum, accessed June 19, 2024, <https://www.nahdlatul-ulum.com/pimpinan-pesantren/>.

Al-Hikmah Pendawa, he knew the basics of religious sciences, including reading the Qur'an, Khat science, Imla, Isya, Nahwu, and Kitab al-Jurumiyah. Only at 15 did the teenage Imaduddin begin his travels to various Islamic boarding schools.¹⁹⁰

Here is a list of the boarding schools he has traveled to:

1. Ashhabul Maimanah Islamic Boarding School in Serang, under KH Muhammad Syanwani al Bantani.
2. Riyadul al-Alfiyah Islamic Boarding School in Pandeglang under KH Sanja.
3. Darul Hikmah Sheikh Ciliwulung Islamic Boarding School under KH Mufti Asnawi, Cakung Careng.
4. Pondok Pesantren At-Thahiriyah in Kaloran, Serang under KH Tubagus Hasuri Bin Tohir.
5. Pondok Pesantren al-Hidayah in Cisantri under KH Ahmad Bustomi Pandeglang.
6. Cidahu Islamic Boarding School under Abuya Dimiyati, Pandeglang.
7. Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School, Rengasdengklok, Karawang under KH Obay Hasan Bashri.
8. Pondok Pesantren al-Wardayani in Sukabumi under KH Badru.
9. Pertapan Islamic Boarding School in Binuang, Serang under KH Wasi bin Anwar.
10. Gaga Islamic Boarding School in Kronjo.
11. Buniayu Islamic Boarding School in Balaraja.
12. Ruwaq al-Azhar in Iskandaria, Egypt, and several other Islamic boarding schools in the market recitation.

Although he likes to study religion in various Islamic boarding schools, Imaduddin did not neglect his formal education. He was a student at Kresek III State Elementary School (SDN), Kresek State Junior High School (SMPN), Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Ashhabul Maimanah in Tirtayasa District, Serang Regency. Imaduddin continued his higher education with a Bachelor of Religion at the Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin State

¹⁹⁰ Taufik Hidayat at-Tanari, "Profil dan Biodata Lengkap KH Imaduddin Utsman Al Bantani, Menguak Sejarah Habib di Nusantara melalui Karyanya - Distrik News - Halaman 3," Profil dan Biodata Lengkap KH Imaduddin Utsman Al Bantani, Menguak Sejarah Habib di Nusantara melalui Karyanya - Distrik News - Halaman 3, accessed June 19, 2024, <https://www.distriknews.com/nasional/3828903860/profil-dan-biodata-lengkap-kh-imaduddin-utsman-al-bantani-menguak-sejarah-habib-di-nusantara-melalui-karyanya?page=3>; Yayasan DIA, "Biografi KH. Imaduddin Utsman Al Bantani, Pendiri Pesantren Nahdlatul Ulum Tangerang," <http://purl.org/dc/dcmitype/Text>, Biografi KH. Imaduddin Utsman Al Bantani, Pendiri Pesantren Nahdlatul Ulum Tangerang (laduniid, January 10, 2024), <https://www.laduni.id/post/read/525373/biografi-kh-imaduddin-utsman-al-bantani-pendiri-pesantren-nahdlatul-ulum-tangerang.html>.

Islamic Institute (STAIN), now UIN Banten. Then, he obtained a Master of Religion degree after studying at the Jakarta Institute of Qur'anic Sciences (IIQ). Young Imaduddin is known to be actively involved in managing the Nahdlatul Ulama organization. He was once trusted to be the Chairman of the Kresek Sub-District Nahdlatul Ulama Vice Branch Council from 2006-2011. He also served as Deputy Katib of the Banten Province Nahdlatul Ulama Regional Board in 2018. Since 2020, Imaduddin has served as Chairman of Rabithah Ma'ahid Islamiyah (RMI) of the Regional Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (PWNU) of Banten Province, as well as being an Advisor to the Young Generation of Nahdlatul Ulama (GMNU) of Banten Province and Rijalul Ansor Tangerang Regency. In fact, in the 2022-2027 PBNU Management, he was entrusted as a member of the Bahtsul Masail Institute (LBM) of the Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board.¹⁹¹

KH Imaduddin Utsman Al Bantani wrote in Arabic, Indonesian, and Banten Javanese. The following are the works (books) he wrote:

1. The book "Al-Fikrah al-Nahdliyyah fi Ushuli wa Furu'I Ahl al-Sunnah wa al Jama'ah" (Arabic: Jurisprudence, Akidah and NU-ness).
2. The book "Al-Syarah al-Maimun fi Syarh al-Jawhar al-Maknun," (Arabic: Balaghah Science).
3. The book "Al-Ibanah fi Syarh Matan al-Rahbiyah" (Arabic: Science of Inheritance).
4. The book "Al-Jalaliyah fi al-Qawaid al-Fiqhiyyah" (Arabic: Rules of Jurisprudence).
5. The book "Talkhis al-Hushul fi Sharh Nadzom al-Waraqat fi Ilm al-Ushul" (Arabic: Ushul Jurisprudence).
6. The book "Al-Fath al-Munir fi Sharh Nadzam al-Tafsir li al-Shaikh al-Zamzami" (Arabic: Science of Interpretation).
7. The book "Nihayat al-Maqshud fi Sharh Nadzom al-Maqsud (Arabic: Shorof)
8. The book "Al-Anwar al-Bantaniyah fi Ikhtilaf Ulama al Basrah wa al-Kufah," (Arabic: Science of Nahwu).
9. The book "Al-Burhan ila Tajwid al-Qur'an" (Arabic: Science of Tajweed).
10. The book "Al-Ta'aruf lil Muftadi'in li suluk al-Tasawwuf," (Arabic: Science of Tasawwuf).

¹⁹¹ Ade Kurniawan, "Profil KH Imaduddin Utsman Al Bantani Sosok Dibalik Buku Sejarah Habib - Kata Logika," Profil KH Imaduddin Utsman Al Bantani Sosok Dibalik Buku Sejarah Habib - Kata Logika, accessed June 19, 2024, <https://www.katalogika.com/referensi/1448455129/profil-kh-imaduddin-utsman-al-bantani-sosok-dibalik-buku-sejarah-habib>.

11. The book "Al-Nail al-Kamil fi Syarh Matn al-Awamil" (Arabic: Science of Nahwu).
12. Al-Qawl al-Mufid fi Hukmi al-Mukabbir al-Shaut fi al-Masajid (Arabic: Fiqh on the Law of Speakers).
13. The book "Al-Qawl al-Labib fi Hukm al-Talaqub bi al-Habib," Arabic: Fiqh on the ruling of the Habib title).
14. The book "Fath al-Gafur fi Abyat al Buhur" (Arabic: Arabic verse).
15. The book "Ilmu waris; Ilmu Waris Terjemah Matan al-Rahbiyah," (Indonesian: Ilmu Waris).
16. Book "Sejarah Pendiri Tangerang; Raden Aria Wangsakara" (Indonesian: History).
17. Book "Dari Banten Ku Sebut Namamu" (Indonesian: Novel).
18. Book "Buku Induk Fiqih Islam Nusantara" (Indonesian: Fiqh).
19. The book "Menakar Kesahihan Nasab Habib di Indonesia" (Indonesian: History).
20. The book "Terputusnya Nasab Habib Kepada Nabu Muhammad SAW" (Indonesian: History).¹⁹²

Reaction and rejection of the Bā'alawī, as described, is by no means the locus of the voice of most Indonesian traditionalists. The pros and cons of Imaduddin Utsman's research on the Bā'alawī lineage in Indonesia is a new phenomenon and has yet to find common ground. Thus, traditionalists who still believe that the Bā'alawī lineage is connected to the Prophet Muhammad and will be maintained until the Day of Judgement are clear evidence that Indonesian traditionalists are in a stage of contestation. They are coupled with the assumption that the basis and cause of Imaduddin Utsman's research, which rejects the Bā'alawī lineage as descendants of the Prophet, originated from the phenomenon of one of the Habib on social media who openly stated and claiming the descendant of the Prophet. Therefore, there are various traditionalist responses related to the Bā'alawī lineage polemic, which causes fragmentation of authority within the traditionalist body to be increasingly unhelpful. One of them is a statement of attitude and appeal from the Al-Anwar Islamic

¹⁹² See the sort article or news on portal media about Imaduddin Utsman profil: at-Tanari, "Profil dan Biodata Lengkap KH Imaduddin Utsman Al Bantani, Mengungkap Sejarah Habib di Nusantara melalui Karyanya - Distrik News - Halaman 3"; DIA, "Biografi KH. Imaduddin Utsman Al Bantani, Pendiri Pesantren Nahdlatul Ulum Tangerang"; "Profil Pimpinan Pesantren Kami"; Amrullah, "7 Fakta KH Imaduddin Utsman, Ulama Banten yang Mempertanyakan Nasab Habaib di Indonesia," Berita Bantul, accessed June 19, 2024, <https://beritabantul.pikiran-rakyat.com/tokoh/pr-2446715939/7-fakta-kh-imaduddin-utsman-ulama-banten-yang-mempertanyakan-nasab-habaib-di-indonesia?page=all>.

Boarding School, which wrote a reason posted on the official website of its boarding school with the title "Ta'dzim *Habaib Bani Alawi*."¹⁹³

The content of the writing stated that based on the results of in-depth research by *Lajnah Tarbiah wa at-Tastqif* Pondok Pesantren al-Anwar, there are at least six points in terms of rejecting the results of Imaduddin Utsman's research and still believing in the Bā'alawī lineage: There is no evidence of a single Ulama' who requires proof of contemporaneity for the determination of a person's lineage; Continuing the *manhaj taslim* and trusting the Ulama; Believing that not being mentioned does not mean denying; Exemplifying the attitude of *Masyayikh* and previous Ulama'; Doubting the lineage of Bani Alawi is an attitude that is *suul adab*; and Not getting caught up in political efforts behind this issue. The pro and contra evidence presented merely shows that the structures and actors in contemporary Indonesian traditionalist Islam are changing under the influence of globalization and digitalization. How can each person, educational institution, boarding school, and anyone else respond to the polemic and become a spice or a fire for a phenomenon? On the other hand, in the context of the Bā'alawī polemic, both parties still seem to respond to each other on social media such as *YouTube*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and other media without any efforts to sit together, discuss together, and find bright spots for the future of Indonesian traditionalist Islam.

3.5 Conclusion

The phenomenon of resistance to Bā'alawī authority in Indonesia underscores the complex social and religious dynamics. The Bā'alawī, as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, face criticism regarding the legitimacy of their lineage from some traditionalist factions questioning their authority. From the perspective of the sociology of religion, this phenomenon is inseparable from the influence of dynamic social structures and community agents. According to Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, this resistance and contestation of religious authority can be linked to the structures of signification, domination, and legitimacy that help us understand the process of authority contestation between traditionalists (NU) and Bā'alawī within the framework of religious discourse and practices used by both parties.

Islam in Indonesia has never been a monolithic authority. The fragmentation of religious authority has become increasingly apparent with the emergence of various

¹⁹³ Aziz Miftahus Surur et al., "Memudarnya Otoritas Keagamaan? (Polemik Nasab Habaib Di Kalangan Pondok Pesantren Al-Nahdliyin)," *Asy-Syari'ah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 10, no. 1 (February 16, 2024): 33–47, <https://doi.org/10.55210/assyariah.v10i1.1542>; Al-Anwar Media, "Ta'dzim Habaib Bani Alawi," *Pondok Pesantren Al-Anwar* (blog), November 9, 2023, <https://www.ppalanwar.com/tadzim-nasab-bani-alawi/>.

organizations besides MUI, NU, and Muhammadiyah. Globalization, democratization post-1998 reform, and the proliferation of mass media have enriched the diversity of religious authority in Indonesia, resulting in new dynamics within the traditional Islamic society's structure that must now adapt to these changes. Digitalization allows individuals or groups to claim religious authority through social media, blurring the traditional boundaries of authority previously monopolized by large organizations like NU and Muhammadiyah. This study aims to analyze how structural changes in traditionalist religious authority in Indonesia, particularly in the context of resistance to Bā'alawī, create new dynamics in the complex and ever-evolving landscape of religious authority.

CHAPTER IV:

CHALLENGING THE AUTHORITY: REACTION AND REJECTION OF THE BĀ'ALAWĪ IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA

4.1 Introduction

In the context of traditional Islam in Indonesia, religious authority often becomes a complex arena of contestation. One form of this contestation is evident in the reaction and rejection of Bā'alawī, a group claiming direct descent from the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Social changes and political dynamics have influenced the perspectives of traditionalist communities towards Bā'alawī, who were previously respected and regarded as having high status in society. This phenomenon raises questions about the reasons and motivations behind some traditionalists' efforts to challenge Bā'alawī's authority in contemporary Indonesia. Changes in the structure of traditional Islamic society in Indonesia, especially under the framework of structuration theory, demonstrate that actions and structures mutually influence each other in the formation of social reality. Reactions and rejections against Bā'alawī cannot be separated from personal motivations and the demands of social structures as interpreted by traditionalists. This study will explore how Imaduddin Utsman, as the main actor in this research, seeks to prove Bā'alawī lineage and how the structure of traditional Islamic society before and after this research influences traditionalist reactions towards Bā'alawī.

The religious authority of Bā'alawī, historically accepted and recognized in Indonesia, now faces new challenges. Articles and research questioning the validity of Bā'alawī lineage have sparked widespread debate among traditionalists. Imaduddin Utsman, in his writings, attempts to undermine Bā'alawī's dominance and legitimacy by examining the scientific evidence supporting their lineage claims. This research not only focuses on Imaduddin's arguments but also considers the traditionalist community's response to these efforts. The acceptance and recognition of Bā'alawī as a significant part of the development of Islam in Indonesia are now being tested. Despite their important roles in various fields, such as economics, politics, education, and religion, their claim of descent from the Prophet Muhammad remains a crucial point in maintaining their authority and legitimacy. This study will analyze how social structural changes and political dynamics in Indonesia affect the acceptance of Bā'alawī, as well as the broader implications of this religious authority contestation on the structure of traditional Islamic society in Indonesia.

4.2 Questioning the Lineage of Bā'alawī

Social reality is constantly shifting in the context of Indonesia's traditionalist Islam and the contestation of religious authority, which is typified by the response and rejection of traditionalists (NU) against Bā'alawī traditionalists. The change seemed to overhaul society's long-established structure, such as Habib's position, who had long held a particular position in traditionalist circles, to the point that he received specific respect because of his high status.¹⁹⁴ However, the emergence of the reaction and rejection of some traditionalists against Bā'alawī due to the actor's motivation and the changing structure of traditional Islamic society within the framework of structuration theory can raise the next question. Namely, what does some traditionalists make the efforts in contesting Bā'alawī's authority in contemporary Indonesia? To answer that question, we need to see how Imaduddin Utsman (as the leading actor) reasons for researching the Bā'alawī lineage. Still, we must also pay attention to the structure of traditionalist Islamic society before and after Imaduddin's research. The two elements of actor and structure must be considered simultaneously in understanding the traditionalist reaction and rejection of Bā'alawī because the birth of action in the form of response and rejection of Bā'alawī is a combination of personal motivation and the demands of the interpreted traditionalist Islamic structure. Both presuppose each other so that both have a duality relationship rather than dualism.¹⁹⁵ Thus, duality in the framework of structuration can be seen from the efforts made by Imaduddin Utsman to undermine the significance, dominance, and legitimacy of Bā'alawī in Indonesia.

a. Imaduddin Utsman: Argument Invalidation

Starting from an article based on Imaduddin Utsman's research, some traditionalists' reactions to and rejection of Bā'alawī in Indonesia seem to have no end. The pros and cons related to Bā'alawī continue to be discussed. The article was uploaded to the Nahdlatululum.com website titled "*Pengakuan Para Habib Sebagai Keturunan Nabi Belum Terbukti Secara Ilmiah*."¹⁹⁶ Imaduddin's article cuts the roots of all aspects of Bā'alawī in Indonesia, including their religious authority. Imad began the article by returning to the history of the arrival of the Habibs to Indonesia, stating that in 1880, before

¹⁹⁴ Syamsul Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia: The Resurgence of Hadhrami Preachers*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2023), 3, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003358558>.

¹⁹⁵ Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Polity Press, 1984); Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies*, 2., rev. ed., repr (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997); George Ritzer, *Sociological Theory*, 8th ed (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011); George Ritzer and Jeffrey N Stepnisky, "Sociological Theory," n.d.

¹⁹⁶ Imaduddin Utsman al-Bantani, *Kronik Perjalanan Ilmiah K.H Imaduddin Utsman Al Bantani dalam Mengungkap Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Banten: Maktabah Nahdlatul Ulum, 2024), 51.

the arrival of Japan in 1943, the Habibs came to Indonesia. Imaduddin attempts to strengthen the argument of Habib's arrival to Indonesia by quoting a journal article by Miftahul Tawbah entitled "*Historiografi Etnis Arab di Indonesia*."¹⁹⁷ Imad stated that they claimed to come from the Bā'alawī family, namely the descendants of Alwi bin Ubaidillah "bin" Ahmad Al-Muhajir bin Isa Al-Rumi bin Muhammad An-Naqib bin Ali Al-Uraidhi bin Imam Ja'far Al-Shadiq bin Muhammad Al Baqir bin Ali Zaenal Abidin bin Husain bin Fatimah Azzahra bin Muhammad SAW. They, the Habib of Alawiyyin descent, according to Imaduddin, did not assimilate with the existing culture in Indonesia. Therefore, it is easy to recognize them only by the surnames placed behind their names, such as Assegaf, Allatas, Al-Idrus, bin Sihab, bin Smith, and many more.¹⁹⁸

Then Imaduddin Utsman began his proof based on the most basic question: Can their descendants of the Prophet Muhammad SAW be proven and scientifically accounted for or not? To answer this question, Imaduddin Utsman packs his writing into seven sub-chapters, including Methodology of Confirming the Book of Lineage, Methodology of Confirming Alwi bin Ubaidillah, Evidence that Ali Al-Uraidhi has a son named Muhammad An-Naqib, Evidence that Muhammad An-Naqib has a son named Isa, Evidence that Isa bin Muhammad has a son named Ahmad (Al-Muhajir), Evidence that Ahmad Al-Muhajir has a son named Ubaidillah? and the last is the conclusion.

¹⁹⁷ The reference that cited by Imaduddin Utsman is still problematic. When I track the title on google, I did not find the article, but the journal linked in to other article that wrote also by Miftachul Taubah, "BAHASA ARAB DAN MULTIKULTURAL DI INDONESIA" 4 (2021). Whereas another prominent scholars who wrote about the arrived of Arab in Indonesia such as Huub de Jonge, *Discord and Solidarity Among The Arab in The Netherland East Indies, 1900-1942*, n.d. Sumit K. Mandal, *Becoming Arab: Creole Histories and Modern Identity in the Malay World*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108164931>; Peter G Riddell, "Arab Migrants And Islamization In The Malay World During The Colonial Period," n.d.; Martin Van Bruinessen, "Najmuddin Al-Kubra, Jumadil Kubra and Jamaluddin al-Akbar: Traces of Kubrawiyya Influence in Early Indonesian Islam," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 150, no. 2 (1994): 305–29; Martin Van Bruinessen, "Studies of Sufism and the Sufi Orders in Indonesia," *Die Welt Des Islams* 38, no. 2 (1998): 192–219; Justus M. van der Kroef, "The Arabs in Indonesia," *Middle East Journal* 7, no. 3 (1953): 300–323; L. W. C. Van Den Berg, *Hadramaut Dan Koloni Arab Di Nusantara* (Jakarta : INIS, 1989., 1989); L. W. C. van Den Berg, *Orang Arab Di Nusantara/ L.W.C. Van Den Berg* (Komunitas Bambu, 1989); Engseng Ho, *Genealogical Figures in an Arabian Indian Ocean Diaspora*, 2000; Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, "The Arab Periodicals of the Netherlands East Indies, 1914-1942," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 152, no. 2 (1996): 236–56; Syed Farid Alatas, "Hadramaut And The Hadhrami Diaspora: Problems In Theoretical History," n.d.; Ismail Fajrie Alatas and Martin Slama, "Rethinking Diasporic Returns: Hadrami Trajectories in Indonesia's Religio-Political Field," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 178, no. 4 (2022): 410–39.; Koentjaraningrat, "Anthropology in Indonesia," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 18, no. 2 (September 1987): 217–34, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002246340002052X>.

¹⁹⁸ Imaduddin Utsman al-Bantani, *Habaib Keturunan Nabi Benarkah? (Politik Identitas-Pengaruh-Keagungan)*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Oncor Semesta Alam, 2023), 61–69; Utsman al-Bantani, *Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1:51–55.

In the Confirmation Methodology of the Book of Lineage, Imaduddin confirmed that many lineage books discuss the Bā'alawī family. However, the number of books does not guarantee and becomes the basis of the validity of the Bā'alawī lineage to the Prophet Muhammad. Because the book of lineage is only proof of validity for names from the same era as the book of lineage was written. An example is the book of lineage "*Nubzat Lathifah fi Silsilati nasabil Alwi*" written by Zainal Abidin bin Alwi Jamalul Lail, the book "*Ittisalu Nasabil Alwiyyin wal Asyraf*" written by Umar bin Salim Al Attas, then the book "*Syamsu Dzahirah*" written by Abdurrahman Muhammad bin Hussein Al Masyhur—where all of these books were written in the 13th century AH. Thus, the three examples of books of the lineage that have been mentioned are only a proof of reference for names that lived in that century, but not a proof and reference for names that lived in the 12th, 11th, 10th, H, and earlier centuries. To confirm the names of those who lived in the 12th century, one should also refer to the books of lineage written in the 12th century AH. Likewise, the names of those who lived in the 11th and 10th centuries H. should confirm and refer to the books written in the same centuries. Next, we will confirm Alwi bin Ubaidillah, the ancestor of Bā'alawī in Indonesia, Yemen, and some Southeast Asian countries. His whole lineage is Alwi bin Ubaidillah "bin" Ahmad Al-Muhajir bin Isa Al-Rumi bin Muhammad An-Naqib bin Ali Al-Uraidhi bin Imam Ja'far Al-Shadiq bin Muhammad Al Baqir bin Ali Zaenal Abidin bin Husain bin Fatimah Azzahra bin Muhammad SAW. In the lineage order, Alwi is the 12th of the names. To determine that their lineage is connected to the Prophet, it is necessary to use the "looking down" method by looking for evidence that the name above has children with names that will be detailed below.¹⁹⁹

The evidence about the Prophet Muhammad SAW up to Ali Al-Uraidhi can be confirmed from hadith books such as *Sunan Turmudzi* because Ali Al-Uraidhi is one of the inheritors of Turmudzi's hadith. From Ali Al-Uradhi, downward needs media confirmation from the books of lineage. Imaduddin Utsman's research results show that Ali Al-Uraidhi's lineage to the Prophet Muhammad has been scientifically proven. However, finding evidence about Ali Al-Uraidhi's children in the book of Hadith is very difficult, so it should be looked for in the primary book of lineage, which is the book written when the character being discussed was still alive. But if it is not found in the primary books, one should look for it in the secondary books, written after the oldest character's death, the closest to the time of the character's life. According to Ibnul Imad's book "*Syadzaratundzahab*," Ali Al-Uraidhi died in 210 Hijri, at the beginning of the third century Hijri. According to

¹⁹⁹ Utsman al-Bantani, *Habaib Keturunan Nabi Benarkah? (Politik Identitas-Pengaruh-Keagungan)*, 1:43. See the news one by Utsman al-Bantani, *Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1:52.

Imaduddin Utsman's statement, no book of ancestry written in the third century Hijri has been found, but what has been found is a book of ancestry written in the fifth century Hijri by Al Ubaidili under the title "*Tahdzibul Ansab*" and a book written by Imam Al-Fakhrurazi, a sixth-century scholar, under the title "*AL-Syajarah Al-Mubarakah*."²⁰⁰

"Al Ubaidili said in the book "*Tahdzibul Ansab*": the children who descended from Ali Al-Uraidi bin Ja'far Al-Shadiq s.a are four, they are Muhammad bin Ali, Ali Hasan bin Ali, Ja'far bin Ali, and Ahmad bin Ali." (*Tahdzibul Ansab*: 175).²⁰¹

"Imam Al Fakhrurazi said in his book "*Al-Syajarah Al-Mubarakah*": As for Ali Al-Uraidi b. Jafar Al-Sadiq regarding his children, there are three opinions; first, the opinion (on which everyone agrees) that they have descendants, and they are two children only, namely Muhammad al-Akbar (Al-Naqib) and Ahmad Al-Sha'rani." (*Syajarah al-Mubarakah*: 124).²⁰²

Based on the above information, it is confirmed that it is true that Ali Al-Uraidi had a descendant (son) named Muhammad.

"Imam Al-Fakhrurazi said in his book, "*Al-Syajarah Al-Mubarakah*": As for Muhammad Al-Akbar (Al-Naqib) bin Ali Al-Uraidi, he had seven sons who descended from him: Isa Al-Akbar An-Naqib, Al-Hasan, Yahya, Muhammad, Musa, Ja'far, Al-Husain, and the most numerous of his descendants was Isa, while the others had few descendants." (*Al-Syajarah Al-Mubarakah*: 125).²⁰³

This evidence confirmed that Muhammad An-Naqib had a son named Isa.

"Imam Al-Fakhrurazi said in his book "*Al-Syajarah Al-Mubarakah*": As for Isa, he had eleven children as follows: Al Azraq, Ja'far, Ishaq, Al-Ahnaf in Ray, Abdullah Al-Ahnaf in Sham, Al-Husain Al-Akbar, Ali, Al-Hasan, Yahya, Ahmad Al-Ibh, Isa and Moses." (*Syajarah Al-Mubarakah*: 125).²⁰⁴

Based on this information, it is confirmed that Isa had a son named Ahmad. With the evidence that has been mentioned, it can be concluded that the lineage of Ahmad Al-

²⁰⁰ Utsman al-Bantani, *Habaib Keturunan Nabi Benarkah? (Politik Identitas-Pengaruh-Keagungan)*.

²⁰¹ Al Ubaidili, تهذيب الأنساب ونهاية, n.d., 180. Utsman al-Bantani, *Habaib Keturunan Nabi Benarkah? (Politik Identitas-Pengaruh-Keagungan)*, 1:61–96; Utsman al-Bantani, *Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1:51–54.

²⁰² Imam Al-Fakhrurazi, الشجرة المباركة في أنساب الطالبية - الفخر الرازي, n.d., 124. Utsman al-Bantani, *Habaib Keturunan Nabi Benarkah? (Politik Identitas-Pengaruh-Keagungan)*, 1:61–96; Utsman al-Bantani, *Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1:51–54.

²⁰³ Al-Fakhrurazi, 125, الشجرة المباركة في أنساب الطالبية - الفخر الرازي, Utsman al-Bantani, *Habaib Keturunan Nabi Benarkah? (Politik Identitas-Pengaruh-Keagungan)*, 1:61–96; Utsman al-Bantani, *Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1:51–54.

²⁰⁴ Al-Fakhrurazi, 125, الشجرة المباركة في أنساب الطالبية - الفخر الرازي, Utsman al-Bantani, *Habaib Keturunan Nabi Benarkah? (Politik Identitas-Pengaruh-Keagungan)*, 1:61–96; Utsman al-Bantani, *Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1:51–54.

Muhajir bin Isa is connected to the Prophet Muhammad, meaning that it is scientifically confirmed. Then, the critical question in Imaduddin's research: how is the validity of Ahmad bin Isa to his "son" named Ubaidillah, who was the father of Alwi until he was called Ali bin Ubaidillah? Does Ahmad bin Isa have a son named Ubaidillah, Alwi's father?

"Imam Al-Fakhrurazi said in the book *"Al-Syajarah Al-Mubarakah"*: Ahmad Al-Ibh had three children, including Muhammad Abu Ja'far, who is in the city of Roy, Ali, who is in Ramallah, and Husain, who is in Naisabure." (Al-Syajarah Al-Mubarakah: 127).²⁰⁵

The above evidence is the primary source of Imaduddin Utsman's argument that Ubaidillah, as the son of Ahmad bin Isa, is not confirmed. Imam Al Fakhrurazi states that Ahmad b. Isa did not have a son named Ubaidillah. This means that the attribution of Ubaidillah as Ahmad's son cannot be scientifically justified because the oldest book of lineage, *"Tahdzibul Al-Ansab"* written in the fifth century, and the book *"Al-Syajarah Al-Mubarakah"* written in the sixth century, state that Ahmad did not have a son named Ubaidillah. To dispute this argument, a source or book of the same age or older must be used to prove that Ubaidillah was Ahmad ibn Isa's son. The books of later centuries, which mention Ubaidillah as the son of Ahmad ibn' Isa, cannot be used as a reference because of the *"Inqitourriwayat (discontinuity of narration)"*, i.e., the sudden appearance of a new name in the tenth century, which was not mentioned by the books of the previous century. Thus, Imaduddin Utsman's conclusion that all the descendants of Ubaidillah are of equal status because of their lineage to the Prophet Muhammad is rejected or refuted because it is not scientifically confirmed until the discovery of older books (written in the fourth or third centuries of H.) that suggest otherwise.²⁰⁶

b. Acceptance of Bā'alawī and the Urgency of Lineage

Historically, the existence of Habib-Bā'alawī in Indonesia has been accepted and recognized because they are essential factors in the development of Indonesia. They are involved and active in many fields, such as economics, politics, education, and religion. Especially in the field of religion, the role of Habib is indisputable with their efforts, such as the encampment of tarīqah *alawiyah*, in expanding, securing, and maintaining community appreciation.²⁰⁷ In addition, their existence is reinforced by the following: First, they have Arab blood that connects them to the birthplace of Islam; therefore, their

²⁰⁵ Al-Fakhrurazi, 127, *الفخر الرازي - الفخر الطالبيّة - الشجرة المباركة في أنساب الطالبية*; Utsman al-Bantani, *Habaib Keturunan Nabi Benarkah? (Politik Identitas-Pengaruh-Keagungan)*, 1:61–96; Utsman al-Bantani, *Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1:51–54.

²⁰⁶ Utsman al-Bantani, *Habaib Keturunan Nabi Benarkah? (Politik Identitas-Pengaruh-Keagungan)*, 1:41–58; Utsman al-Bantani, *Nasab Palsu Bā'alawī*, 1:51–55.

²⁰⁷ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, "Becoming Indonesians: The Bā 'Alawī in the Interstices of the Nation," *Die Welt Des Islams* 51, no. 1 (2011): 45–74.

understanding and practice of Islam are considered more authentic than that of non-Arabs. Second, they can trace their lineage to the Prophet Muhammad. For traditionalist Muslims, Habib inherits the Prophet's *salawat* through their descendants. Therefore, most lay traditionalists view the Habib not only as scholars (Islamic scholars) but also as saints (friends of God or guardians of Muslims).²⁰⁸ It does not end there; efforts to maintain the acceptance of the traditionalist community continue to be made, such as the spread of *majlis taklim* activities in various regions in Indonesia.²⁰⁹

Efforts to maintain the appreciation of acceptance and recognition have been carried out continuously by Habib-Bā'alawī until now. For example, when their popularity has increased in recent years, it has been planned and attempted systematically and structured by utilizing the media, the internet, and freedom in Indonesia.²¹⁰ Primarily, with a background believed to be the descendants of the Prophet, migrants from areas close to the centre of Islam, and their attachment to the scientific lineage of Indonesian scholarly teachers, their existence is increasingly irresistible. Acknowledgment after acknowledgment was verbally expressed by religious figures in Indonesia regarding their existence. Most importantly, their acceptance, recognition, and glorification are because of their lineage, which is considered connected to the Prophet Muhammad. It, of course, affects the way they are called anthropologically; for example, the call "Habib" is only reserved for descendants of the Prophet who came from Hadhramaut, while "Sayyid" and "Sharif" are special calls for descendants of the Prophet who did not come from Hadhramaut.²¹¹ In Indonesia, however, the titles and nicknames are very diverse, depending on the regions where they are located.

The Habib-Bā'alawī lineage, connected to the Prophet, is the main anchor that cannot be compared to their other efforts. Moreover, Bani Alawi is known as a meticulous

²⁰⁸ Syamsul Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia: The Resurgence of Hadhrami Preachers*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2023), 3, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003358558>.

²⁰⁹ Zeffry Alkatiri and Nabel A. Karim Hayaze, "Critical Literature Study on *Habaib* Identity in the Constellation of Islamic Studies in Indonesia from the Colonial Period to the Present," *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 9, no. 1 (December 31, 2022): 2096286, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2022.2096286>.

²¹⁰ Syamsul Rijal, "Performing Arab Saints and Marketing the Prophet: Habaib and Islamic Markets in Contemporary Indonesia," *Archipel. Études Interdisciplinaires Sur Le Monde Insulindien*, no. 99 (July 15, 2020): 189–213, <https://doi.org/10.4000/archipel.1719>; Syamsul Rijal, "Revitalizing Hadhrami Authority: New Networks, Figures and Institutions among Habā'ib in Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 27 (August 3, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v27i2.9382>; Syamsul Rijal, "FOLLOWING ARAB SAINTS Urban Muslim Youth and Traditional Piety in Indonesia," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 48, no. 141 (October 17, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2020.1729540>.

²¹¹ Abu Yazid Adnan Quthny and Ahmad Muzakki, "Urgensi Nasab dalam Islam dan Silsilah Nasab Habaib di Indonesia," *Asy-Syari'ah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 7, no. 2 (June 25, 2021): 135, <https://doi.org/10.55210/assyariah.v7i2.592>.

lineage selector who writes the nasab until it is recognized for its performance. Many scholars believe that Bani Alawi (Bā'alawī) are among the most *sahih "Ahl al-bayt"* whose lineage goes back to the Prophet because they have knowledge, charity, and virtue and are reflected in their noble manners. Even before 996 AH, many testimonies from scholars have stated the validity of the Bā'alawī lineage. Among these scholars: al-Imam al-Janadi (732 AH), al-Imam al-Yafi "i (768 AH), al-Imam ar-Rasuli (778 AH), al-Imam al-Khozroji (812 AH), al-Imam Hussein al-Ahdal (855 AH), al-Imam Abdurrahman al-Khothib (855 AH), al-Nassabah Kazdhim al-Musawi (880 AH), al-Imam As-Sharji az-Zabidi (893 AH), al-Hafidz al-Syakhawi (902 AH), al-Imam Bamakhramah (947 AH), Al-Mutawakkil "Allallah Yahya bin Sharafuddin al-Mahdi (965 AH), Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar al-Haitami (947 AH), his entire book Tuhfatutholib by an-Nassabah al-Samarqandi (996 AH) and after him.²¹²

The truth of the Bā'alawī lineage that is recognized and appreciated can be seen in the following genealogy:²¹³



Picture 07

Picture of the Bā'alawī lineage, which I have taken from the website of the Gana Islamika.

On the other hand, the importance of lineage can be seen in two ways, firstly from the Arab tradition and secondly from an Islamic perspective. Historically, in the tradition of the Arabs during the pre-Islamic era, as well as in other nations, many people attributed their lineage to others at will by adopting children. A man could choose a child to be his

²¹² Aziz Miftahus Surur et al., "Memudarnya Otoritas Keagamaan? (Polemik Nasab Habaib Di Kalangan Pondok Pesantren Al-Nahdliyin)," *Asy-Syari'ah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 10, no. 1 (February 16, 2024): 40, <https://doi.org/10.55210/assyariah.v10i1.1542>; Muhammad Hanif Alathas and M Pd, "Bingkisan Lebaran Untuk Imaduddin Utsman," n.d.

²¹³ "Gana Islamika – Mozaik Peradaban Islam," August 18, 2023, <https://ganaislamika.com/>; Musa Kazhim Alhabsyi, *Identitas Arab Itu Ilusi*, 1st ed. (Bandung: PT Mizan Pustaka, 2022), 86, <http://www.mizan.com>.

son and proclaim him as such. Then the child becomes one with his children and is of the same family, with the same joys and the same hardships, and has the same rights. Adopting a child in this way is not prohibited, even if the child has a clear father and his lineage is known.²¹⁴ The Arabs are a nation that pays close attention to their lineage and kinship because they do not forget their ancestors. That is why they always associate their names with their fathers and grandfathers and above. Therefore, the term bin or Ibnu must be used in their names, which means son. Our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) knew his lineage for several generations. His lineage is Muhammad bin' Abdullah bin' Abdul-Muthalib bin Hashim bin Abdul Manaf bin Qushay bin Kilab bin Murrâh bin Ka'ab bin Luay bin Ghalib bin Fihir bin Malik bin Nadhar bin Kinanah bin Khuzaimah bin Mudrikah bin Ilyas bin Mudhar bin Nizar bin Ma'ad bin Adnan.²¹⁵

It was not only the Prophet who was like that; almost all Arabs knew their lineage up to several generations before. The kinship and brotherhood between them was powerful. Allah made them an example to be emulated. Then what about other nations and our nation, which mostly knew only until grandfather and great-grandfather? From the Islamic perspective, lineage has a connection with *fiqh* issues. With the apparent status of a person's lineage, the laws relating to this matter will also be clear. For example, regarding marriage, With the certainty that a man has blood ties and is still the mother of a woman, it is forbidden for these two people to marry. Or to determine whether someone is entitled to inherit from a deceased person. The certainty of lineage has a very vital role because, in Islamic law, inheritance is regulated. However, the high mobility of society can cause two brothers who are still *muhrim* do not know each other. It could be because of the distance separating them or for other reasons, because they do not know each other.²¹⁶

But whatever the traditionalist community's position, recognition, and acceptance of the Bā'alawīs, when confronted with the reaction and rejection of Imaduddin Utsman and a few others, it is like contesting the integrity of a construction built over hundreds of years about them. Imaduddin Utsman not only questioned the Bā'alawī lineage by assuming that their lineage is not connected to the Prophet, but many other discourses have surfaced and become the subject of debate among traditionalists themselves. One of the discourses that is not an element and analyzed in this study is the claim to a tomb considered a guardian and a Bā'alawī ancestor. For example, one of the Bā'alawī descendants, Habib, claims that

²¹⁴ Abu Yazid Adnan Quthny and Ahmad Muzakki, "Urgensi Nasab dalam Islam dan Silsilah Nasab Habaib di Indonesia," 137.

²¹⁵ Sayyid Sabiq, *Fikih Sunnah - Jilid 3* (Cakrawala Publishing, n.d.), 76.

²¹⁶ Abu Yazid Adnan Quthny and Ahmad Muzakki, "Urgensi Nasab dalam Islam dan Silsilah Nasab Habaib di Indonesia."

Prince Depongoro is a descendant of Bā'alawī. A further claim is that the Wali Songo are Bā'alawī and are the ancestors of their ancestors. All these discourses received many responses from traditionalists on behalf of the descendants of the Wali Songo and firmly rejected the claims. The descendants of the Wali Songo united and stated that their ancestors, the Wali Songo, were not part of Bā'alawī. Eventually, Imaduddin Utsman's thesis supporters grew from individuals who felt called because they were descendants of the Wali Songo or even those who were not.

In addition, supporters of the thesis are also from among people who have been disappointed in one of the Habib and found momentum in the chronicle of the Bā'alawī lineage in the past two years. The anti-Habib campaign and rejecting the lineage came with many pretexts, one of which was to straighten out the history of the ancestors, the history of Indonesian Islam, which wanted to be distorted and monopolized by the Habibs, for the sake of the descendants, not to be fooled by Bā'alawī, and so on. Such pretexts can be found easily in various accounts on YouTube, Facebook, and other media of Bā'alawī's anchors. Even lately, in the past year, the Bā'alawī anchorites explicitly, in addition to asking for contemporary sources and proof in books of the same era, also requested the Bā'alawīs in Indonesia to take a DNA test. Not a few support and call for all Bā'alawī in Indonesia to take a DNA test. DNA is an acronym for "Deoxyribo Nucleic Acid" or "deoxyribonucleic acid." DNA can replicate itself to pass down genetic information for generations because all living things, animals, plants, etc, own it. DNA in humans can be likened to a genetic code that can guarantee that the child cells will inherit the same characteristics from their parent cells. Based on this function, there are many calls among Bā'alawī lineage invalidators to conduct DNA tests.

4.3 Rejection of Bā'alawī's Role in Islamization Indonesia

As described above, the rejection of the Bā'alawī lineage triggered other reactions from figures who positioned themselves in one line with those who rejected the Bā'alawī lineage. Among the most strongly rejected issues besides the Bā'alawī lineage is the problem of the Islamization of Indonesia, where some Habib claim that their ancestors brought Islam to Indonesia. This claim has been challenged and rejected by some traditionalists. It is not surprising to find many historical responses, such as the spread of Islam in Indonesia by traditionalists to the claims of Islamization made by Bā'alawī. Meanwhile, the history of the spread of Islam in Indonesia is still very problematic because there are many different arguments between historians and other researchers regarding who, when, and where Islam was first brought to Indonesia.

For this reason, I will present the debate on the theory of the Islamization of Indonesia without defending the claims of Bā'alawī or the claims of NU traditionalists. I will also not present their different versions of the history of the Islamization of Indonesia, which in this paper only tracks according to the results of research that have long been widely recognized, and the researcher is likely to be a reference when talking about the history of the Islamization of Indonesia. By not presenting the historical versions of Habib Bā'alawī and the traditionalists (NU), this paper only wants to show that the history of Indonesian Islamization is very complex and problematic today. This means that one-sided claims from certain circles do not mean that the history of Indonesian Islamization is finished and changed.

In the Islamic civilization, after the Prophet Muhammad died, the leadership of Islam was replaced by the Caliphs (*Ar-Rashidun*), which began with the leadership of Caliph Abu Bakar al-Siddiq, followed by Caliph Umar bin Khattab. During Umar's time, Islam spread to Sham, Palestine, Egypt, and Iraq. During the time of the caliphs Uthman bin Affan, Ali bin Abi Talib, Bani Umayyah, and Bani Abbasiyah, Islam spread to China and worldwide.²¹⁷ This spread did not rule out the possibility of also reaching the Archipelago. The spread of Islam is clear evidence that Islam is a religion that is easily understood and accepted by various communities, especially the central teachings of Islam, such as *aqidah*, *sharia*, and morals.

On the other hand, the teachings of Islam do not differentiate between tribes, races, and countries, so Islam quickly enters the layers of human life wherever it is.²¹⁸ Although Islamic teachings entered Indonesia, many speculations from many theories are mentioned in trade, education, culture, and non-colonization. Due to the expansion of the trade area, Islam entered the Archipelago along with its teachings.²¹⁹ However, the history of the Archipelago is a contentious study due to the confusion of facts about the entry of Islam into Indonesia. From when Islam entered Indonesia, where it was, and who brought it, all these questions are challenging to find the most original answers.²²⁰ Apart from the

²¹⁷ Azyumardi Azra, *Historiografi Islam Kontemporer: Wacana, Aktualitas dan Aktor Sejarah*, Cetakan pertama: November 2002 (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2002), 5.

²¹⁸ Achmad Syafrizal, "Sejarah Islam Nusantara," *Islamuna: Jurnal Studi Islam* 2, no. 2 (December 5, 2015): 235–53, <https://doi.org/10.19105/islamuna.v2i2.664>. Other article written by Abon Ronaldi, Arief Subhan, and Arif Zamhari, "Indonesian Islam: History, Characteristics and Global Contribution," *Islamika Inside: Jurnal Keislaman Dan Humaniora* 9, no. 1 (July 4, 2023): 102, <https://doi.org/10.35719/islamikainside.v9i1.213>.

²¹⁹ Michael Francis Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past*, Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics (Princeton [N.J.]; Oxford [England]: Princeton University Press, 2011), 4–24.

²²⁰ Moeflich Hasbullah, *Sejarah Intelektual Islam di Indonesia*, Cetakan 1 April 2012, vol. xvii, 392 hlm.; illus.23 cm. (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2012), 1.

differences of opinion among historians of Islam in Indonesia, some unwritten facts and facts have not been traced until now. Thus, there are several theories about the entry of Islam into Indonesia. Since the early centuries AD, many inter-island and inter-regional shipping and trade routes have been throughout the Archipelago. The eastern region, which includes the East Indian islands and the South Coast of China, already has relations with the Arab world through trade.²²¹

Arab traders came to the Archipelago by sea route from Aden along the coast to Maskat, Raisut, Siraf, Guadar, Daibul, Malabar coast, which includes Gujarat, Keras, Quilon, and Kalicut, then along the Karamandel coast such as Saptagram to Chittagong (the largest port in Bangladesh), Akyab (now Myanmar territory), Malacca Strait, Peureulak (East Aceh), Lamno (West Aceh coast), Barus, Padang, Banten, Cirebon, Demak, Jepara, Tuban, Gresik, Ampel, Makasar, Ternate, and Tedore. The items traded were bronze necklaces from Vietnam, spread to all corners of the Archipelago. Apart from necklaces, the goods also traded were Barus Lime, where Maluku became an essential region in the trade. In addition to Maluku, many other ports became trade centers and were visited by foreign traders, including Lamuri (Aceh), Barus, and Palembang. On the island of Java, Sunda Kelapa and Gersik, among others.²²²

Thus, it can be indicated that as early as 674 AD, there was an Arab colonial presence on the west coast of Sumatra or, most likely, Barus, an area that produced and traded camphor. The Arabs are said to have been leaders over other Arab colonies and the local people. Therefore, Islam likely entered the Archipelago as early as the Hijri century.²²³ Nonetheless, the foreigners continued to practice Islam, and at the time, the local Muslims did not acknowledge it. With the pretext of questions such as the certainty of the arrival of Islam, its carriers, and the locations visited with historical evidence, there are several theories of the entry of Islam into Indonesia.²²⁴ Based on geography, there are five theories about the entry of Islam into the Archipelago, including the following: *First*, the Arab theory, which states that Islam was brought and spread in the Archipelago directly from Arabia in the 7th/8th century AD. when the Srivijaya Kingdom developed its power. The

²²¹ Carool Kersten, *A History of Islam in Indonesia* (London-Holyrood Road 12 (2f) Jackson's Entry Edinburgh EH8 8PJ: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2017), 1–5.

²²² Kersten, 1–26.

²²³ Bambang Budijanto, "Islam in Indonesia," *Transformation* 20, no. 4 (2003): 216–19.

²²⁴ Dalimunthe, "Kajian Proses Islamisasi di Indonesia (Studi Pustaka)," *Jurnal Studi Agama dan Masyarakat* 12, no. 1 (March 20, 2017): 115–25, <https://doi.org/10.23971/jsam.v12i1.467>. In other article by Rahayu Permana, S Ag, And M Hum, "Sejarah Masuknya Islam Ke Indonesia," n.d., 02. Fauziah Nasution, "Kedatangan Dan Perkembangan Islam Ke Indonesia," *Mawaizh : Jurnal Dakwah Dan Pengembangan Sosial Kemanusiaan* 11, no. 1 (June 4, 2020): 28–36, <https://doi.org/10.32923/maw.v11i1.995>.

figures of this theory include Crawford, Keijzer, Niemann, de Hollander, Hashmi, Hamka, Al-Attas, Djajadiningrat, and Mukti Ali.²²⁵

Much evidence also supports the theory, as evidenced by many figures in historical records. In the 7th/8th century AD, the Malacca Strait was already a busy crossing point for Muslim traders on their voyages to Southeast and East Asian countries. According to one Tang period Chinese story, Muslim communities already existed in Kanfu (Canton) and Sumatra in that century. There is an opinion that they were emissaries of Bani Umayyah who aimed to sell trade. Another opinion states that Islam entered Indonesia in 674 AD. Based on Chinese records, at that time, an envoy of the Arab king named Ta Cheh or Ta Shih (possibly Muawiyah bin Abu Sofyan) came to the kingdom of Ho Ling (Kalingga) in Java, which at that time was ruled by Queen Shima. In the Japanese version of the story written in 748 AD, Ta-Shih Kuo can also be proven to have been on board the Po-Sse. Some researchers say Po-sse denotes a Malay language type, while Ta Shih denotes Arabs and Persians rather than Indian Muslims. The story is reinforced by clear evidence that in 670 AD, a tomb inscribed with Hamim was found in Barus Tapanuhi. The above facts are not surprising because, in the 7th century, Southeast Asia was indeed a place of trade and political interaction between three major powers, namely China under the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the Srivijaya Kingdom (7th-14th centuries), and the Umayyad Dynasty (660-749).²²⁶

Based on the above information, it can be assumed that Islam came to the Archipelago with China. However, this theory does not explicitly explain the beginning of Islam other than the role of China in the news, which is supported by evidence that Islam entered the Archipelago in the early Hijri century. *Second*, the Chinese theory states that ethnic Chinese Muslims played an essential role in the process of spreading Islam in the Archipelago. As explained in the first theory, the relationship between Muslim Arabs and Chinese occurred in the first century Hijri. Because of the connection between Muslim Arabia and China, the arrival of Islam to the western part of the Archipelago and China was in line with the trade route. On the other hand, the entry of Islam into China began in Canton (Guangzhou) during the reign of Tai Tsung (627-650) of the Tang Dynasty and entered the Archipelago in Sumatra during the reign of Srivijaya, which then entered Java in 674 AD. The entry of Islam into the Archipelago coincided with the arrival of an envoy

²²⁵ M.C. Ricklefs, "Islamisation in Java to c. 1930," in *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java, A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History, c. 1930 to Present* (NUS Press, 2012), 9–20, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1qv3fh.9>. Another article by Syafrizal, "Sejarah Islam Nusantara." Another article by Rahayu Permana, S Ag, and M Hum, "Sejarah Masuknya Islam Ke Indonesia," n.d.

²²⁶ Ricklefs, "Islamisation in Java to c. 1930," 20–32.

of the Arab king, Ta Cheh or Ta-Shih, to the kingdom of Kalingga, which at that time was ruled by Ratu Sima.²²⁷

Third, the Persian theory is different from the first and second theories because this third theory emphasizes the language aspect, which shows that Islam has entered the Archipelago with the language that has been absorbed. One example is the phrase 'Abdas' used by the Sundanese, where the word is an absorption from Persian, which means 'whudu.' Other evidence besides the influence of the Persian language is also influenced by the Arabic language used by the people of the Archipelago, such as words ending in *ta* 'marbūthah' when in a state of waqf read 'h' such as *shalātun* read *shalah*. But in the Nusantara language, it is read and becomes prayer, zakat, repentance, and others. *Fourth*, the Indian theory states that Islam came to the Archipelago not directly from Arabia but through India in the 13th century. This theory states that there are five places of origin of Islam in India: Gujarat, Cambay, Malabar, Coromandel, and Bengal. According to this theory, it is assumed that Islam originated in Gujarat, and this theory has weaknesses that are still debated today.²²⁸

It has been argued that although the tombstones found in certain places in the Archipelago may indeed be from Gujarat or Bengal, it does not mean that Islam also came from there. This counter-assumption refers to the historical fact that even during the Islamization of Samudera Pasai, where the first king died in 698 AH/1297 AD, Gujarat was still a Hindu kingdom. One year later, Gujarat was conquered by Muslim rule. If Gujarat was the centre of Islam, it was undoubtedly well-established and flourishing before Malikush Shaleh's death. Based on G.E. Marrison's assumptions, it is clear that Islam did not originate in Gujarat but was brought by Muslim propagators from the Coromandel coast in the late 13th century.²²⁹ The above argument seems to corroborate the opinion of T.W. Arnold, who has long assumed that Islam entered the Archipelago from Coromandel and Malabar, among others. Arnold's view is based on the similarity of fiqh schools between the two regions. The majority of Muslims in the Archipelago are followers of the Shafi'i Mazhab, which is also quite dominant in the Coromandel and Malabar regions, as witnessed by Ibn Battuta (1304-1377), a traveller from Morocco when he visited these regions. It is also stated that traders from Coromandel and Malabar played an essential role in the trade between India and the Nusantara. Many of these traders came to the trading

²²⁷ Ricklefs, 20–32.

²²⁸ Ricklefs, 20–32.

²²⁹ Kuntowijoyo, *Dinamika sejarah umat Islam Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2017).

ports of the Nusantara-Malay world, not only trading but also involved in the spread of Islam.²³⁰

Fifth is the Turkish theory, cited in Moeflich Hasbullah's opinion and put forth by Martin Van Bruinessen. In this theory, it is explained that in addition to the Arabs and Chinese, the Archipelago was also Islamized by the Kurds and Turks. This argument is proven by several data sources, including the number of Kurdish scholars who have an essential role in teaching Islam, with evidence from books written by Kurdish scholars being the primary source and widely influential in Indonesia. One example is the book "*Tanwīr al-Qulūb*" by Muhammad Amin al-Kurdi, which is popular among the *Naqsyabandi* order in Indonesia. Second, among the scholars in Medina who taught Indonesian scholars the *Shattariyah tariqah*, which was then brought to the Archipelago, was Ibrahim al-Kurani. Ibrahim al-Kurani was a Kurdish scholar, most of whose students were Indonesians. Third, the famous "*barzanji*" tradition in Indonesia recited every *Maulid Nabi* on 12 Rabi'ul Awal, *akikah*, thanksgiving, and other traditions are the names of influential families and famous *syekh* in the Kurdistan tariqah. Fourth, Kurdish is a prevalent term in Indonesia, such as Haji Kurdi, Kurdish Street, Kurdish Alley, and so on. Based on these facts, it can be assumed that the Kurds played a role in the spread of Islam in Indonesia.²³¹

With several theories about the entry of Islam into Indonesia, as well as the facts described above, which are represented by not distinguishing between the beginning of entry and development, it can be assumed that Islam entered Indonesia through many stages. Islam entered Indonesia through the stages of individuals, groups, communities, and royal states to form a majority that now reaches 86.93% based on the 2021 census. All of these theories explain the influences after many communities and people chose to embrace Islam in Indonesia. Therefore, with their different versions, all the theories lead the history of Indonesian Islam to a course that is never finished to be studied and used as research material. On the other hand, the strategy of spreading Islam in Indonesia includes other variables that also affect the structure and agents of Islam in Indonesia to date. Giddens does not believe that social reality, which ultimately becomes a historical reality as the entry of Islam into Indonesia is diverse, will fail to be fully understood if the analysis does not link the behaviour of actors with structures that can be understood.²³²

²³⁰ Fauziah Nasution, "Kedatangan Dan Perkembangan Islam Ke Indonesia," *Mawaizh: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Pengembangan Sosial Kemanusiaan* 11, no. 1 (June 4, 2020): 26–46, <https://doi.org/10.32923/maw.v11i1.995>.

²³¹ Martin Van Bruinessen, "Studies of Sufism and the Sufi Orders in Indonesia," *Die Welt Des Islams* 38, no. 2 (1998): 192–219.

²³² Anthony Giddens, "Teori strukturasi Anthony Giddens untuk analisis Sosial," n.d.

Historical phenomena such as how previous actors disseminated Islam show that the structure of significance, a symbolic structure, discourse, and mention relating to the whole religion of Islam was successfully conveyed and accepted by the Indonesian people.²³³ This can be seen from the spread of Islam with several strategies carried out by Islamic agents. Among these strategies, the *first* is through the trade route. The early Islamic community was small and did not receive much attention. However, the interaction between Islamic traders from various Arab countries, Persia, the Indian subcontinent, Malay, and China took place intensively and for a long time, making the Islamic community bigger and broader. However, in addition to trade, Islamic agents spread Islam by using the most popular means of shipping in their day; secondly, through the path of *da'wah bil al-hal*, this was carried out by preachers who also doubled their role as traders. This da'wah process is carried out individually by carrying out the obligations of Islamic law, paying attention to cleanliness, and using simple associations and attitudes. *Third*, through marriage, namely marriage between Muslim traders, preachers, and the children of nobles of the Archipelago. This originated from the knowledge and medical skills gained from the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, and among them was the qualification to participate in a competition held by the kings of *Nusantara* with the promise that whoever could treat his daughter, if she was a woman, would be made a brother. At the same time, if he were a man, he would be made a son-in-law. This method allowed Islam to spread to all levels of society in Indonesia and gave these immigrants an essential position in the history of Islam in Indonesia.

Fourth, the strategy is the education route. After the Trader had a steady position and a vast network supported by the control of economic power by becoming ports in several areas, such as Gresik, they succeeded in developing financial and educational centres to spread Islam. Therefore, the centre of education and Islamic propagation in Samudra Pasai Kingdom had an important role as well as the first because it was visited by students and sent local *muballiagh* such as Maulana Malik Ibrahim to Java. Fifth, the cultural route. In the beginning, the spread of Islam in Java always dealt with Javanese traditions that Hindu-Buddhism heavily influenced during the Majapahit kingdom. With the collapse of the Majapahit kingdom, which was later replaced by the Islamic kingdom, the spread of Islam continued to expand significantly into the layers of Indonesian society. Even so, the spread of Islam cannot forget the role of agents or actors who continue to preach tirelessly in spreading Islam.²³⁴

²³³ A. Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, Outline of the Theory of Structuration (University of California Press, 1984), <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=x2bf4g9Z6ZwC>.

²³⁴ Van Bruinessen, "Studies of Sufism and the Sufi Orders in Indonesia," 1998.

Likewise, the structure of domination is divided into two, namely authoritative and allocative, where the actors carrying Islam, such as Wali Songo and his descendants, succeeded in forming religious and allocative authority with their role in spreading Islam.²³⁵ The proof of this is the support of powerful kingdoms in shaping the structure of Indonesian society. On the other hand, the authority of para-actors or agents cannot be forgotten and separated from the process of Islamization in Indonesia because they are one unit. Based on early 16th-century news from Tome Pires, Sumatra has many large and small Islamic kingdoms, especially along the coast of the Strait of Malacca and the west coast of Sumatra. These kingdoms include Aceh, Biar and Lambri, Pedir, Pirada, Pase, Aru, Arcat, Rupert, Siak, Kampar, Tongkal, Indragiri, Jambi, Palembang, Andalas, Pariaman, Minangkabau, Tiku, Panchur, and Barus. All of these Islamic kingdoms developed, but some failed and collapsed. In addition, there was also an Islamic kingdom that grew for two centuries before the presence of Tome Pires, namely the Sultanate of Samudera Pasai. The Sultanate of Samudera Pasai is located approximately 15 kilometres east of Lhokseumawe, Nanggroe Aceh, which was established around 1270 and 1275 or in the middle of the 13th century. The first sultan was Malikush Shaleh (died 696 AH/1297 AD). Geographically, the kingdom of Samudra Pasai was located at the center of international trade and shipping, and this position also encouraged it to become a fast-growing kingdom. In addition to these reasons, the development of Samudra Pasai was also supported by efforts to develop power in West Asia under the Umayyah Dynasty, East Asia under the Tang Dynasty, and Southeast Asia under the Srivijaya Kingdom.²³⁶

The influence of the relationship between the kings of the Archipelago, such as Sultan Malikush Shaleh during his reign with China - as reported in the history of the Yuan Dynasty - that in 1282, the Chinese envoy met with a Minister from the kingdom of Sumatra Quilon. The meeting was an invitation for cooperation, which would later affect the structure of Islam in Indonesia. The news stated that the envoys were named Sulaiman and Syamsudin. Another instance of what Ibn Battuta described was that the intellectuals who arrived from Persia, Syria, and Isfahan were extremely pious in their religious beliefs. Ibn Batutah even told us how devoted the Sultan of Samudera Pasai was to Islam from the Shafi'e Madhhab and was always surrounded by Islamic scholars. Thus, the role of the Sultanate of Samudera Pasai in the spread of Islam and in shaping the structure of Islamic society in Indonesia cannot be denied. Another case is the spread of Islam in Java, which started from the island's north coast, which archaeological data, sources of chronicles,

²³⁵ Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*.

²³⁶ Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*, 4-5.

hikayat, legends, and foreign news can prove. The process of Islamization that occurred in several cities on the north coast of Java, starting from the east to the west, indirectly led to the emergence of Islamic kingdoms such as the Sultanate of Demak, Cirebon, Banten, Pajang, and the Sultanate of Mataram. On the other hand, the many born kingdoms cannot deny the scholars' role on Java Island, where they acted as a unifier of local culture with Islam. This role is the logical reason that the scholars who are the heirs of the prophets have religious authority that is irreplaceable until now.²³⁷

The structure of domination, which is control over people and allocative control over goods or the economy, can be seen from the various stories and roles of sultanates and their kings who succeeded in forming colonies while spreading Islam throughout Indonesia.²³⁸ One of the most substantial pieces of evidence is the history of the spread of Islam in Java, which the birth of the Demak Sultanate can characterize. The Sultanate of Demak became the first Islamic kingdom in Java that was established at the end of the XV century, after the collapse of the capital of the Majapahit Kingdom in Trowulan by the Girindra Wardhana Dynasty of the Kediri Kingdom in 1474. The Sultanate of Demak was led by Raden Fatah, the son of Brawajiya, and his mother, a princess from Cempa. The Sultanate originated from a village referred to in local chronicles as Gelagahwangi. This place is said to have become a Muslim settlement under the leadership of Raden Fatah, whose presence was at the direction of Raden Rahmat or Sunan Ampel. After Raden Fatah, the second king of Demak was Prince Sabrang Lor, and the third king was Sultan Trenggono. It is explained in many histories that the Sultanate of Demak was known as the protector of Islam, and its kings were closely related to the scholars, especially the Wali Songo. This assumption is strengthened by the evidence of the construction of the Great Mosque of Demak, built by the Wali Songo, whose architect was Sunan Kalijaga, as a center of Islamic preaching for the saints.²³⁹

After the Demak Sultanate, the Pajang Sultanate was an Islamic sultanate born out of a power struggle by Sultan Trenggono's family against Demak's rule. The regent of Pajang, named Adiwijaya (Joko Tingkir), became the ruler of the Sultanate after killing Raden Penangsang. Joko Tingkir himself was the brother-in-law of Sunan Prawoto, who was the son of Sultan Trenggono. Joko Tingkir was crowned sultan of Pajang and given Sultan Adiwijaya for his services in expanding Jipang and Demak. Not only that, but Joko Tingkir also influenced other areas such as Jepara, Pati, and Banyumas. Islamization in

²³⁷ Laffan, 5–6.

²³⁸ Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*.

²³⁹ Ricklefs, "Islamisation in Java to c. 1930," 3–20.

Java was not only completed during the Pajang Sultanate, but there were still many phases and periods, including the Cirebon Sultanate led by Syarif Hidayatullah Sunan Gunung Jati. Next were the Wali Songo figures who became the locomotive of the spread of Islam in the Archipelago, including Syaikh Maulana Malik Ibrahim, Sunan Ampel (Raden Rahmat), Sunan Bonang (Maulana Mahdum Ibrahim), Sunan Kalijaga (Raden Sahid), Sunan Gunung Jati, Sunan Drajat (Raden Qasim), Sunan Giri (Raden Paku), Sunan Kudus (Ja'far Shadiq), and Sunan Muria (Raden Umar Said).²⁴⁰

Given the many theories of Islam's entry into Indonesia, as explained, there is no significant reason for either traditionalists or Bā'alawī to claim unilaterally that only one of their ancestors brought Islam. However, it cannot be denied that Islam is a religion that still has a vital significance in the structure of Indonesian society. This can be proven by the role of religion in the socio-cultural landscape of Indonesian culture to this day. Likewise, the dominance of actors spreading Islam has been passed down from generation to generation, which continues to shape the structure of Indonesian Islamic society until now. Their role can prove this, as can actors such as *Kiai* and *Habib*, whose lineage is connected to their past, in maintaining and spreading Islam until now.²⁴¹ Thus, logical consequences such as the legitimacy of religiosity are still owned by certain people with a lineage and lineage connected to their past. But even so, the history of Islam in Indonesia cannot be easily understood as anything other than a fragment of a long history.²⁴² On the other hand, the influence of colonialization on the history of Islam in Indonesia also caused the history of Indonesian Islam to experience ups and downs. If a periodization is made, it can be divided into two periods: the development of Islam before Western and Japanese colonialism, as explained above, and the development of Islam during the colonialism of Goods and Japan.

4.4 Religious Authority in Contemporary Indonesia

The above reactions and rejection cannot only be seen as a contestation of religious authority but must be positioned as a sociological phenomenon. This means that the issue of religious authority is a social construction, not a theological construction. In other words, the problem of religious authority is a form of mutual influence between the construction of religious beliefs and social reality itself. If analogized, the particular position and role (authority) obtained by Hadhrami Arabs (Bā'alawī) affects the construction of traditionalist

²⁴⁰ Sunyoto, *Atlas Walisongo*, 20.

²⁴¹ Nirzalin, "Mendamaikan Aktor dan Struktur dalam Analisis Sosial Perspektif Teori Strukturasi Antony Giddens," *Jurnal Sosiologi Universitas Syiah Kuala*, Vol. 3, No.3, Juni 2013 Vol. 3 (2013): 11.

²⁴² Ricklefs, "Islamisation in Java to c. 1930," 20.

Muslim religious beliefs with their social reality. This happens because they position themselves as special agents, channelers, and representations of God's power by being able to control religious life. This is because they are supported by their Arab blood, which can connect them with the birthplace of Islam. This, coupled with their ability to trace their lineage and families back to the Prophet Muhammad, meant that they were considered more authentic in their understanding and practice of Islam than non-Arabs. For this reason, most lay traditionalists view them not only as scholars (experts in Islamic knowledge) but also as saints (friends of God or guardians of Muslims).²⁴³

According to Syamsul Rijal (2024), one of the factors contributing to the growing popularity of Habib in Indonesia is the extensive influence of traditionalist Islam.²⁴⁴ This argument serves as an antithesis to Weber's view (1978), which posits that traditionalist religious practices will wane with increasing modernization and rationalization.²⁴⁵ Rijal's argument also counters the perspectives of Ernest Gellner, who, in his study of Moroccan society, asserted that traditional Islam (referred to as tribal religion) becomes irrelevant in the face of urbanization and modernization. Gellner claims that modernist Islam will supplant traditional religious authorities as the faith in the sacred modernizes.²⁴⁶ However, in the context of Indonesian Islam, particularly in this study, traditionalists, including Bā'alawī and Kiai (NU), have engaged in internal contests, leading to a fragmentation of authority. A recent phenomenon is the reaction and rejection by NU traditionalists against Bā'alawī, who also identify as traditionalists. Interestingly, Indonesian traditionalists have been significantly influenced by the transnational Islamic movement, commonly referred to as the Salafi (Islamic right).

With the influence of these various things, religious authority in traditionalist Indonesia has received many new challenges. So, the fragmentation of religious authority that occurs is a logical consequence that cannot be rejected due to several factors, including globalization, Indonesian democracy after the 1998 reformation, the existence of private television channels, and the proliferation of mass media (*Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Instagram*, and *YouTube*).²⁴⁷ These three causes have a severe impact because they change the significance structure, domination structure, and legitimacy structure of contemporary

²⁴³ Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia*.

²⁴⁴ Rijal, 3.

²⁴⁵ Max Weber, *Economy and Society an Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley, Lo"Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1967).

²⁴⁶ Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia*, 2; Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society*, 1st ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 58.

²⁴⁷ Norshahril Saat and Ahmad Najib Burhani, eds., "The New Santri," in *Challenges to Traditional Religious Authority in Indonesia*, 1st ed. (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2020), 2.

Indonesian traditionalist Islamic society. The three elements of the structure of Indonesian society will also change the construction of Islamic civilization, giving birth to contestation of authority, fragmentation, and pluralization of religious authority in Indonesia. Changes in the structure of Indonesian Islamic society can be seen recently, especially in the case of the reaction and rejection of some traditionalists against Bā'alawī in Indonesia. Not only because of external influences but also because of new trends such as the emergence of the Salafi school and *ustadz* as its representation, religious authority in contemporary Indonesian Islam has not escaped the challenge of progressive Islamic-based political groups. For example, groups that have the support of many Islamic masses such as Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), Laskar Jihad, and Forum Umat Islam (FUI), which push religious authority into the center of the arena contested by many groups.²⁴⁸

Therefore, the next question is, how is the authority of traditionalist Kiai, the patron of Indonesian traditionalist Islamic religiosity, faced with these challenges? A history review shows that kiai occupy a central position and have been going on for a long time, especially since the Wali Songo era. Clifford Geertz explains the role of Kiai as a cultural broker between the national system and local realities.²⁴⁹ Horikoshi criticizes and adds that cultural brokerage is not the only role of kiai. In West Java, religious authorities equivalent to *kiai*, labelled *ajengan*, have a dual role. While serving as a cultural bridge, the *ajengan* is also involved in politics. Political activism positions *ajengan* to actively direct the speed of the national system concerning local circumstances rather than acting as a passive middleman. Kiai in Indonesia plays a similar role, perhaps even more complex. The position of kiai in Indonesia is not only that of a religious consultant but also a consultant for almost all multidimensional problems. However, it is difficult to have an impact in the political arena of the Indonesian state.²⁵⁰

Even in Indonesia's history before independence, in the pre-colonial period, kiai or ulama were actively involved in decision-making in sultanate matters such as Aceh, Palembang, Mataram, and Sambas. However, during the colonial period, some kiai served

²⁴⁸ Amin Abdullah, "Religious Authority In Indonesian Islam: Mainstream Organizations Under Threat?" 17; Hasan, *Laskar Jihad*, 5–6; Carool Kersten, *A History of Islam in Indonesia* (London-Holyrood Road 12 (2f) Jackson's Entry Edinburgh EH8 8PJ: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2017), 215.

²⁴⁹ Din Wahid, "CHALLENGING RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY: The Emergence of Salafi Ustadhs in Indonesia," *JOURNAL OF INDONESIAN ISLAM* 6, no. 2 (December 1, 2012): 249, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2012.6.2.245-264>. Clifford Geertz, "The Javanese Kijaji: The Changing Role of a Cultural Broker," n.d., 236.

²⁵⁰ Andrée Feillard, "Indonesian Traditionalist Islam's. Troubled Experience with Democracy (1999-2001)," *Archipel* 64, no. 1 (2002): 144, <https://doi.org/10.3406/arch.2002.3728>.

the government, while others became educators by building educational institutions and focusing on reform.²⁵¹ So, it is unsurprising that kiai can deal with various problems, from religious, social, economic, and political issues to the private sphere that the community questions.²⁵² The average kiai in Indonesia is affiliated with the NU organization.²⁵³ However, in the contemporary Indonesian context, religious authority in traditionalist—Kiai and Ulama—Indonesia seems to be on the verge of being replaced by more popular individuals who have social media accounts with millions of followers and are accepted by young people.²⁵⁴

What is the authority of the Bā'alawī-descended Habib who, in the last period, has become increasingly popular among Indonesians? The increasing popularity of Habib and Habib-led youth assemblies among young Muslims has become a new phenomenon in Indonesia after the fall of Soeharto in 1998. While the older generation of Habib prefers to keep a low profile, the latest generation is actively promoting themselves. Several things distinguish them from the previous generation of Habib preachers. First, at the start of their da'wah career, most new preachers are young, ranging from 20 to 30. Many graduated from Hadhramaut, Yemen, and some graduated from traditional Islamic schools (Islamic Boarding Scholl) in Java. Second, new preachers tend to establish their *majlis taklim*, become prominent figures in the organization, and use advertisements and the internet to promote their preaching. Newly established assemblies often have a logo or brand, a flag, a headquarters, an official website, and religious merchandise. They also have multimedia teams, young staff members, and volunteers to help organize their events. Third, many young Habib preachers emphasize their distinctive status by wearing a white turban, a long

²⁵¹ Moch Nur Ichwan, "Ulama, State and Politics: Majelis Ulama Indonesia After Suharto," © *Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden* 12, no. Islamic Law and Society (2005): 45.

²⁵² Zulkifli, "The Ulama in Indonesia: Between Religious Authority and Symbolic Power," *Miqot* XXXVII, no. 1 (June 2013): 182–83.

²⁵³ Abdul Chalik, *Nahdlatul Ulama Dan Geopolitik Perubahan Dan Kesenambungan* (Yogyakarta: Impulse dan Buku Pintar Yogyakarta, 2011), 11.

²⁵⁴ The term 'ulama' denotes a broader scope than the term kyai. However, these terms are used interchangeably. The titles, kyai, 'ulama and ustad, are given by the community. They are given after deliberate consideration based not only on the depth of the person's knowledge, but also on their ethics and good behaviour. See the article by Wahid, "CHALLENGING RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY." Cited Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern "Ulamā" in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, 1. publ, Southeast Asia Publications Series (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2004). And see the differentiation of the definition Kiai and Ulama by Hiroko Horikoshi in his article titled *Kyai dan perubahan sosial* (Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat, 1987).; and Martin van Bruinessen, *Rakyat kecil, Islam, dan politik*, Cetakan I (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Gading, 2013).

white dress, and a shawl (primarily green) around their shoulders.²⁵⁵ The identity they constructed suggests a discursive assertion and is an attempt to expand influence among Indonesian Muslims.

Young Habib in Jakarta tries to attract worshipers by using various creative strategies. The most crucial strategy is billboards, banners, posters, and social media. Some congregants are attracted to the *majlis* after seeing information about the recitation on roadside banners and announcement posters on websites and social media. The *Majelis* website and community pages on social media, especially Facebook, usually announce and disseminate the schedule of activities for the following four weeks. Using the internet, especially social media, for da'wah purposes is strategic in Indonesia.²⁵⁶ Apart from the efforts made by the young Habib above, there are at least several factors related to the growth and development of Habib's authority in Indonesia, namely domestic and non-domestic factors. The domestic factor that boosts the popularity of Habib in Indonesia is the increasing trend of Sufism in urban Islam.²⁵⁷ This assumption is strengthened by the argument that several Habib succeeded in modifying the *tarīqah alawiyah* and adapted it to urban Islam after the fall of Soeharto.²⁵⁸ First, the transnational connections between Indonesia and Yemen since the 1990s in education and proselytization became the primary facility for the growth and development of Habib authority in Indonesia. Second, by connecting themselves with Yemeni-Hadhrami scholars and their religious seminaries and holy places in Hadhramaut, Indonesian Habib increased their authority and presented their version of Sunni Islam as more authentic than other variants of Islam.²⁵⁹

But what about the authority of Kiai or Habib Bā'alawī, as well as the authority of traditionalists in general with the reaction and rejection of traditionalists? Imaduddin Utsman's efforts are actually like breaking the anchor of traditionalist Islamic authority into two camps. Like a tree, when cut into two parts, it is no longer sturdy but easily broken. Moreover, the efforts of some of NU's traditionalists to attack Bā'alawī's authority by questioning Ba'lawi's lineage. Imaduddin Uthman's research results, even claiming his lineage is not scientifically proven, are the same as pruning the main Bā'alawī tree.

²⁵⁵ Syamsul Rijal, "Performing Arab Saints and Marketing the Prophet: Habaib and Islamic Markets in Contemporary Indonesia," *Archipel. Études Interdisciplinaires Sur Le Monde Insulindien*, no. 99 (July 15, 2020): 193, <https://doi.org/10.4000/archipel.1719>.

²⁵⁶ Syamsul Rijal, "Kaum Muda Pecinta Habaib: Kesalehan Populer dan Ekspresi Anak Muda di Ibu Kota," *Afkaruna* 14, no. 2 (2018): 176–78, <https://doi.org/10.18196/AIJIS.2018.0086.166-189>.

²⁵⁷ Julia Day Howell, "Sufism and the Indonesian Islamic Revival," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 60, no. 3 (2001): 701–5, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2700107>.

²⁵⁸ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *What Is Religious Authority? Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia*, Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021).

²⁵⁹ Rijal, 242.

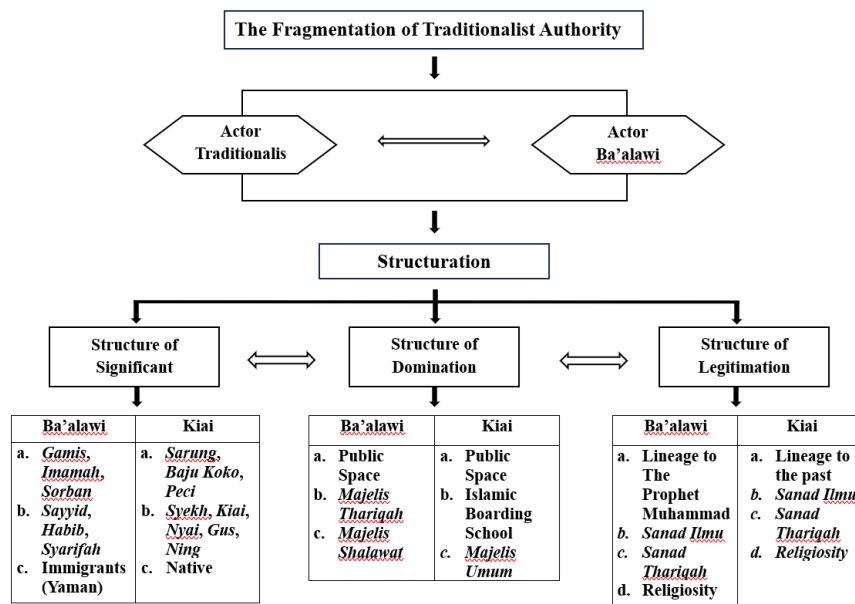
Imaduddin's effort, if seen in the framework of structuration, is the same as cutting three theoretical elements at once: the structure of signification, the structure of domination, and the structure of legitimacy owned by Bā'alawī in Indonesia. Of course, because lineage is the spirit of the Islamic tradition.

On the other hand, lineage is a custom of the Arabs, even known as a nation that is very concerned about lineage, and lineage received serious attention from the Prophet Muhammad. With a person's lineage, the laws relating to him will be apparent, such as marriage, inheritance, and mahram relationships.²⁶⁰ The urgency of lineage is because it became the principle and legal basis of the scholars in the following period. Regardless of how vital a lineage is in Islam, in the context of the phenomenon of reaction and rejection of the Bā'alawī lineage, it remains a social action influenced by Imaduddin Utsman's motivation and the factor of the structure of traditional Indonesian society, which continues to change. It should be emphasized that Imaduddin Utsman's thesis does not necessarily represent all Indonesian traditionalists. Indonesian Islamic traditionalists themselves support and reject Imaduddin Utsman's thesis. These dynamics cause religious authority in contemporary Indonesian traditionalist societies to face serious problems.²⁶¹

The following chart illustrates the fragmentation of religious authority within Indonesian traditionalists, particularly between traditionalists (NU) and Bā'alawī traditionalists in Indonesia:

²⁶⁰ Aziz Miftahus Surur et al., "Memudarnya Otoritas Keagamaan? (Polemik Nasab Habaib Di Kalangan Pondok Pesantren Al-Nahdliyin)," *Asy-Syari'ah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 10, no. 1 (February 16, 2024): 41, <https://doi.org/10.55210/assyariah.v10i1.1542>; Abu Yazid Adnan Quthny and Ahmad Muzakki, "Urgensi Nasab dalam Islam dan Silsilah Nasab Habaib di Indonesia," *Asy-Syari'ah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 7, no. 2 (June 25, 2021): 131–51, <https://doi.org/10.55210/assyariah.v7i2.592>.

²⁶¹ Aziz Miftahus Surur et al., "Memudarnya Otoritas Keagamaan? (Polemik Nasab Habaib Di Kalangan Pondok Pesantren Al-Nahdliyin)," *Asy-Syari'ah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 10, no. 1 (February 16, 2024): 42–43, <https://doi.org/10.55210/assyariah.v10i1.1542>.



Picture 08

Theoretical implications, which I myself drew up, based on the results of analysing Antony Gedeens' Structuration Theory.

The chart above illustrates the recent fragmentation of religious authority within traditionalist bodies between Bā'alawī and NU traditionalists. The chart can be seen as an example of how structure and agency interact in a particular social context. In the actor picture between NU traditionalists and Bā'alawī, traditionalists can be seen as actors who represent certain social groups that differ in their respective norms, values, and practices. In the structuration space, the two actors interact with each other and form different social structures. This can be seen in how the structural processes of significance, domination, and legitimacy are formed between them, who both claim to be traditionalists. Bā'alawī with symbols such as *gamis*, *imamah*, and *turban*, and with identities that are often used such as *Habib*, *Sayyid*, and *Sharifah*, in contrast to the symbols used by *Kiai* such as *sarong*, *koko*, and *peci*, with identities that are more often called *Sheikh*, *Kiai*, *Gus*, and *Nyai* and *Ning*. The symbols and social identities used between the two show how a social structure is constructed through symbols and identities that distinguish the two. And both are currently, as far as this research is concerned, in contestation with each other.

Within the scope of the structure of domination between NU traditionalists and Bā'alawī, they also have different times and spaces. Bā'alawī has public spaces such as *tarīqah* assemblies, prayer assemblies, educational institutions, and specific recitations. In contrast, *kiai* has public spaces like Islamic Boarding schools and more general and limited models. Within the scope of the legitimacy structure, Bā'alawī relies on its lineage, which

is claimed to be connected to the Prophet Muhammad, along with the *tarīqah alawiyah*, and its religiosity because it comes from an area close to the source of Islam, with Arabic as the language of Islam. On the kiai side, legitimacy is based on their lineage to their kiai ancestors, scholarly lineage, and religiosity built on their mastery of religious and other social sciences. This picture shows how the community applies and recognizes norms and values to support each other's authority.

At this point, the process of structuration between traditionalists and Bā'alawī can be seen in forming and producing social structures through symbols, identities, institutions, and legitimacy. Structure not only limits action, but it is also clear that agents (traditionalists and Bā'alawī) are not only influenced by structure but also influence and produce social structure through their social interactions. However, in the end, religious authority in traditionalist Indonesian Islam will be wholly transformed by its unstructured significance, its inappropriate and undirected domination, and its inadequate legitimacy and representation of the will of the Indonesian Islamic community as Weber (1978) and Ernest Gellner (1981) argued,²⁶² which states that traditional Islam is no longer relevant in the face of urbanization and modernization.²⁶³ The recent traditionalist reaction and rejection of Bā'alawī will undoubtedly affect the authority of Kiai and Habib, both anchors of contemporary Indonesian traditionalist religious authority.

4.5 Conclusion

The findings of this research reveal that the religious authority of Bā'alawī, which has long been recognized and respected within traditional Islam in Indonesia, faces significant challenges from a segment of the traditionalist community. Social changes and political dynamics influence public perceptions of Bā'alawī, particularly in the context of claims of descent from the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The research of Imaduddin Utsman, which questions the validity of Bā'alawī lineage, serves as a primary catalyst for reactions and rejection from certain traditionalist circles. The duality between actors and structures within the framework of structuration theory demonstrates that individual actions and social structures mutually influence each other in the formation of social reality, particularly in the context of religious authority. Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that the contestation of religious authority between Bā'alawī and traditionalist NU is not solely a theological issue but also a sociological phenomenon. The reactions and rejection towards Bā'alawī illustrate the fragmentation of religious authority within

²⁶² Surur et al., "Memudarnya Otoritas Keagamaan?"

²⁶³ Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society*, 1st ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 58.

traditional Islamic society in Indonesia. The influence of globalization reinforces this fragmentation, post-reform 1998 Indonesian democracy, and the development of mass media. In the long term, changes in social and political structures in Indonesia will continue to affect the acceptance and legitimacy of Bā'alawī, as well as the overall structure of religious authority within traditional Islam in Indonesia.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The emergence of rejection towards Bā'alawī' since October 2022 by specific individual leaders and scholars within the traditionalist Muslim community in Indonesia marks a new development in the historical landscape of Islam in Indonesia. The denial of the Bā'alawī lineage's connection to the Prophet Muhammad, initiated by Imaduddin Utsman through research on lineage books, has sparked larger-scale reactions and rejections. These narratives of rejection (Bā'alawī annulment) persist across social media, religious gatherings (majlis), and academic forums. The responses from the Bā'alawī themselves and some traditionalists (Bā'alawī acceptors) who affirm their lineage's authenticity continue to unfold. Historically, the presence of Arab-Hadhrami (Bā'alawī) was highly valued and even held a particular position within the traditionalist Muslim context, mainly due to their claimed lineage connecting them to the Prophet Muhammad. Additionally, they portrayed themselves as more authentic agents of Islam in understanding and practicing the faith compared to non-Arabs.

These reactions and rejections cannot be viewed merely as contests of religious authority but must be regarded as sociological phenomena. This implies that the issue of religious authority is a social construction rather than a theological one. In other words, the issue of religious authority involves mutual influence between the construction of religious beliefs and social reality itself. Analogously, the specific position and role (authority) obtained by the Arab-Hadhrami (Bā'alawī) influence the construction of traditionalist Muslim religious beliefs within their social reality. Furthermore, the dynamics of change brought by modernization, globalization, and digitalization influence or even underpin the emergence of reactions and rejections towards Bā'alawī.

On the other hand, religious authority has never been monolithic, but rather ubiquitous. As a result, the transition of Islamic authority in Indonesia, as well as the challenges that conservative Islam faces, will continue. Kiai and Habib, who play important roles in preserving tradition, are rapidly being supplanted by new personalities. With the development of celebrity preachers on social media challenging the traditional positions of Kiai and Habib, globalisation and the internet era have created new spaces for contesting religious authority. Furthermore, Kiai and Habib's roles face challenges from reformist and modernist forces as a result of global political dynamics.

This study explores how social structures and community agents shape public perceptions of Bā'alawī authority, particularly in relation to their lineage claims to the

Prophet Muhammad. The article explores resistance to Bā'alawī rule in Indonesia, emphasising genealogical dynamics and internal tensions. The study employs structuration theory to demonstrate how social structures and community agents interact in opposing authority. Internal disagreements between Irsyadi and Bā'alawī, as well as Salafī attacks on Bā'alawī, highlight the complexities of the resistance movement. The rejection of Bā'alawī authority is frequently linked to doubts about ancestry and Bā'alawī's claims of Islamizing Indonesia.

This study examines how actors and structures within traditionalist Islamic society generate discourse and influence the fragmentation of religious authority in contemporary Indonesia. It also shows how changes in social structures and political dynamics affect the acceptance of Bā'alawī and the implications of this contestation for the structure of traditionalist Islamic society in Indonesia. The study reveals how changes in social structures and political dynamics affect the acceptance and legitimacy of Bā'alawī. Reactions and denials of Bā'alawī's claims of Islamizing Indonesia generally address broader problems, including their relevance and validity. The study emphasizes the need for traditional Islamic authority to adapt and be flexible in the face of modernity and digitalization.

Overall, this study demonstrates that religious authority in Indonesia is a complicated phenomenon shaped by a variety of social, political, and technological elements. Arab-Hadhrami (Bā'alawī) have played key roles in the history of Islam in Indonesia. However, they face considerable challenges from reformist, modernist, and conservative forces due to changes in social and political systems. Therefore, understanding the interaction between agents and social institutions in the context of competing religious authority in Indonesia is critical. The objections and rejections of Bā'alawī demonstrate the fracturing of religious authority among orthodox Muslim society in Indonesia. The impact of globalisation, post-1998 changes, and the growth of mass media promotes this fragmentation. Long-term changes in Indonesia's social and political institutions will impact the acceptance and validity of Bā'alawī, as well as the structure of religious authority within orthodox Islam.

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