

Chris Chaplin

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Salafi Islamic piety as civic activism: Wahdah Islamiyah and differentiated citizenship in Indonesia

Chris Chaplin

Department of Methodology, London School of Economics, London, UK

ABSTRACT

Islamic renewal is having a considerable impact on politics and society in Indonesia. This article discusses the way in which Islamic movements shape the nature and interpretation of citizenship by focusing on Wahdah Islamiyah, a Salafi organisation with over 120 branches nationwide. By examining how Wahdah Islamiyah promotes an idea of citizenship amongst followers and the community, it seeks to show how Islamic and national identities can overlap. Wahdah Islamiyah does not see Indonesian nationalism as anathema to adherence to strict Islamic faith; instead they have been actively synthesising Islamic identity with national pride, often using the ‘secular’ terminology of state, citizenship and security to do so. Yet, Wahdah Islamiyah’s interpretation of citizenship differentiates between Muslim and non-Muslim Indonesians. They inevitably aim to foreground the position of Sunni Muslims by calling on the state and civil society to regulate public spaces to free them from non-Muslim elements.

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So citizenship is an identity, our identity, we are Indonesian citizens. Since we are born, grew up and will die in Indonesia, Indonesia is our homeland ... so therefore, we have an obligation to improve the citizens that are here

– Founding member of Wahdah Islamiyah, 4 July 2016

Islamic activism within Indonesia is increasingly influencing how segments of the Muslims community come to understand notions of citizenship and identify themselves as Indonesian citizens. Foregrounding the importance of their faith, Muslims have sought to influence the public sphere through religious commodities (Lukens-Bull 2008), or increased philanthropy and acts of social welfare (Latief 2013). More controversially though, the country has simultaneously witnessed ever-more vocal campaigns by religious conservatives who seek – often successfully – to create alliances with political institutions in order to influence political debate and regulate public norms. Such acts, frequently done on grounds of ‘religious morality’, have negatively influenced the quality and depth of citizenship amongst the country’s religious minorities or anyone deemed of ‘immoral’ character. Taking account of

CONTACT Chris Chaplin  c.chaplin@lse.ac.uk

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this latter trend, this article aims to explicitly address how Salafi Islamic activists inform perceptions of citizenship in the republic, examining how they come to interpret the state within their doctrine and activism.

While there has been a growing number of accounts pertaining to what religious activism means to studies of citizenship across the globe, these have been predominantly concerned with how religion is managed by states (Iqtidar and Lehmann 2012), or the impact of the market on religion and citizenship (Turner 2011). The aim of this paper is to contribute to these works by examining how non-state religious organisations are reformulating commonly accepted notions of state citizenship, specifically in relation to what Isin and Turner have described as its *extent* (the practices of inclusion and exclusion), *content* (by which they mean rights and duties) and *depth* (how citizens come to identify with their political community and the thickness of their interconnectivity) (Isin and Turner 2002). They do this, I argue, by giving it a more pronounced ethical loading and by introducing new membership boundaries.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2012 and 2016, I examine the transformation and activism of Wahdah Islamiyah, a Salafi Islamic organisation with approximately 120 branches across Indonesia. Specifically, I aim to scrutinise the way leaders and cadres have come to understand the Indonesian state, national security and citizenship. There is timely analytical value in focusing on Salafism, as the growth of the Salafi movement across the globe has been a cause of mounting concern for scholars and policy-makers alike. In Indonesia, a budding network of Salafi schools (Wahid 2014), study circles (Nisa 2012), radio stations (Sunarwoto 2016) and violent militias (Hasan 2006) denote a multi-layered movement that has sustained itself and matured since it first arrived in the country during the 1980s. Such expansion has not gone unnoticed. Indonesia's largest Islamic organisation, Nahdlatul Ulama, have accused Salafis of spreading a transnational, and intolerant Islam that has little in common with the traditions or history of maritime South-East Asia (NUOnline 2012). That Nahdlatul Ulama see Salafism as a threat is of no surprise as not only do Salafis denounce practices that Nahdlatul Ulama hold dear, such as the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday (*maulid*), but they have made inroads into rural Java that Nahdlatul Ulama considers its heartlands.

However, denouncing Salafism as alien fails to critically evaluate its popular appeal, or examine exactly how Salafis adapt their message so as to resonate within the Indonesian public sphere. As this article explains, activists like those in Wahdah Islamiyah have become adept at combining religious and national terminology in order to 'locate' themselves within nationally orientated narratives of Islamic revival. As I argue, Wahdah Islamiyah actively synthesises their concept of Islamic identity with national pride, and often use the 'secular' terminology of state and citizenship to do so. This is, in part at least, due to an increased level of collaboration between Wahdah Islamiyah's leaders and state institutions, but is also due to a more fundamental discursive shift within the organisation itself. Wahdah Islamiyah increasingly seeks to alter the membership boundaries of Indonesian citizenship so as to preference Muslims at the expense of non-Muslims. As Wahdah's leaders argue, Islam, as the majority religion of Indonesia, must be respected by prohibiting 'sin' and the influx of 'deviant' political and social ideas into the public sphere. Citizenship is thus differentiated, although Wahdah Islamiyah does not aim to establish this differentiation in law or through electoral politics. Instead, they believe the primacy of Islam to be implicit in the very foundations of the Indonesian state, and so anything deemed to be anti-Islamic must be restricted on grounds of posing a risk to the identity of the nation.

1. Religion and citizenship

Prior to examining Wahdah Islamiyah and Salafism, it is important to examine the convergence between understandings of citizenship and religious activism. In the non-European world, what constitutes ‘religion’ differs from our understanding of faith and practice in the European-Christian tradition. Yet, as recently as the 1980s, religion and its relation to the state was everywhere very much analysed in accordance with the European premise of secularisation. The effects of this linger when analysing the division between secular and religious spheres to this day (Iqtidar and Lehmann 2012). Religion, so the narrative went, was a pre-modern entity relegated to the private sphere, and separated from modern administrative practices that gave citizenship meaning. Citizenship, in this instance, is seen to emphasise a sense of affiliation to the nation-state, and in so far that religion plays a role this is of latent value. Religion could perhaps be referred in order to describe the nature of the state (a Jewish state, a Christian nation), but it rarely informed civil and political aspects through which citizenship was given substance.

Despite the visible growth of new religious movements across the globe, the above narrative, which is admittedly an oversimplified version of secularisation theory, denotes a lasting problem in conceptualising religion, secularism, state and citizenship. Although scholars have quite rightly argued that the separation of secular and religious spheres is problematic (for example Asad 2003), formal liberal definitions of citizenship continue to be overly reliant on a particularly Christian concept of the sacred and profane (Casanova 1994). If we are truly to understand the implications of religious activism on state-citizen relations, we must thus move beyond categories of public/private and secular/religious upon which liberal understandings of citizenship rely. This is all the more pressing when focusing on citizenship in the non-European world where, as Iqtidar and Lehman (2012) eloquently note, religious and secular domains can be defined and managed through means that vary drastically from the European experience. To paraphrase Chakrabarty (2000), there is a need to provincialise the European experience.

Our first priority is therefore to recognise that Islam in Indonesia follows a markedly different trajectory when compared to that of ‘private religion’ as per the European narrative. Islamic activists have been an important mobiliser of people and resources in both public and private aspects of life throughout Indonesia’s modern history. Islamic politicians and militias played a pivotal role in the founding of the state, and Islamic organisations – such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah – continue to inform public opinion about religion, tolerance and democracy. Religion very much remains in the public realm, and Islamic activism extends to the promotion of new Islamic consumer products, philanthropic ventures and social welfare.

To understand the implications of such activism, we must move beyond legal classifications of citizenship and focus on the forms of community membership that lead to both a formal and informal relation between structures of power and the practices of social lives (Holston 2011, 336). As Isin and Turner (2002) urge us to do, citizenship must be examined by articulating its *extent*, *content* and *depth*. Referring to these three characteristics offers a vehicle to refocus our analytical lens to prioritise the experiences through which the character of one’s citizenship is given substance. Citizenship is not simply a matter of either belonging or not belonging; it is fraught with ambiguity, and can rely on non-state and

personal relationships (McCargo 2012, 128). This is especially true in a state like Indonesia, where legal regulations and enforcement remain weak.

Explaining citizenship by looking at its extent, content and depth allows us a way to unpack the experiences and perceptions of citizens themselves. Utilising this approach, I examine how one Indonesian Islamic organisation, Wahdah Islamiyah, influences understandings of, and relations with, the state amongst their followers. To do so, this article follows Turner's assertion (2009, 2011) that the forces of modernity have altered the ways religious individuals come to organise themselves. Indeed, enacting one's religion can utilise the economic, social and political avenues not immediately identifiable with religious doctrine. Wahdah Islamiyah has, I argue, taken advantage of political developments in Indonesia so as to interact with political and social institutions outside the Salafi movement. This has provided logistical resources, but has also led to a significant doctrinal shift within the group, where Salafi teachings are synthesised with notions of Indonesian national belonging. To explain why this differs from accepted practice within the wider Salafi movement though, we must briefly turn to what Salafism and its doctrine represent.

2. Salafism and citizenship

The contrariety between Salafi Islamic discourse and ideas of the modern nation state denote that Wahdah Islamiyah's actions diverge from the broader global Salafi movement. Salafism, as understood in this paper, is a diverse Islamic revivalist movement that stresses a need to emulate the first three generations of Muslims (the *Salaf al-Salih*, who they believe consist of the *Sahabah*, *Tabi'un* and *Tabi' al-Tabi'in*) in every aspect of one's life through rigid study of the Qur'an and Sunna. The need to live in accordance with the teachings of previous pious generations is not in itself unique to Islam. Yet, the way Salafis formulate such a mission follows Muhammad Bin Abd' al-Wahhab's (1703–1792) teachings on monotheism or oneness (*tawhid*), Muhammad al-Shawkani's (d 1834) emphasis on following Hadith and the Asthari creed (Griffel 2015), and the work of more contemporary Hadith scholars such as Shaykh Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani (1914–1999). This interpretation of Salafism builds upon numerous recent studies that utilise the term to refer to a socially conservative Islamic movement that emerged, in its most recent format, from the Arabian Peninsula in the latter half of the twentieth century (for instance see Meijer 2009).

Given the expansion of Salafism across the globe over the past four decades, the movement is not without its detractors. Salafi followers are often denounced as promoters of an intolerant 'Saudi' controlled version of Islam. There is some truth to these claims; indeed important connections (both real and perceived) between the kingdom and Indonesia's Salafi community do exist (Chaplin 2014). However, we must take care not to oversimplify this relationship. Deducing Salafism as being dependent on the Saudi kingdom ignores the history of often tense relations among the Saudi royal family, Wahhabi clerics and Salafi activists (Lacroix 2011). It also ignores the prominent role non-Saudi-based Islamic bodies and scholars have played in facilitating its growth. In Indonesia, its spread is linked to the activism of local scholars who worked under the umbrella of the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council (*Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia*, DDII), a national organisation formed by former Prime Minister Mohammad Natsir in 1967.

More significantly though, the idea that Salafism is controlled by a (foreign) government is contradictory to the very ethos of Salafi doctrine. By aiming to return to a timeless and

pure Islam, Salafi scholars leave little space for issues of national citizenship, democracy or international relations. Salafis claim the only valid authority for religion and life comes from the Qur'an and Sunna, and that this is sufficient to guide Muslims for all of time – past, present and future. Instead, there is a need to separate 'good' and 'evil' by emphasising the need for *hisba* (translated as the commanding of right and forbidding of wrong) and *al-wala' wa-l-bara'* (interpreted as the allegiance to Islam and renunciation of unbelievers). This latter concept is a key part of Salafi creed (*aqida*) and a constant theme of Salafi scholars. In Indonesia, it has led scholars to dissuade their followers from adopting local Islamic tradition and Javanese mysticism. Practices such as the Javanese zodiac (*ramalan Joyoboyo*), grave visits (*ziarah*) and visiting the spiritual healer (*dukun*) are all labelled as idolatry (*syirik*) and unIslamic innovations (*bid'a*) (HASMI 2011). Unsurprisingly, this brings Salafis into contention with other Muslims, but it also has led to numerous fractures amongst Salafis themselves, who disagree as to the extent and nature of the separation one needs to enforce from society.

While I do not wish to elaborate on the intricacies of Salafi competition in Indonesia, it is important to recognise that, given the difficulties of applying a 'pure' Islam within a given locality rich with numerous cultural and socio-political forces, the movement itself is rife with tension and disagreement. Indonesia has at least five Salafi 'strands', of which Wahdah Islamiyah is but one. The group continues to draw from Salafi doctrine and maintain links to international Salafi educational and donor institutions, such as the Islamic University of Madinah. Yet, it is far more proactive than other Salafi strands in assimilating an idea of Islamic identity with emerging political and social engagements. Decisions are not necessarily driven purely by Salafi doctrine but by a desire to spread a particular Islamic subjectivity across Indonesia. The combination of organisational and religious zeal may have proved advantageous, as Wahdah Islamiyah is now Indonesia's largest Salafi organisation, but this is not without claims that Wahdah Islamiyah has itself, by registering as a legal body while working with the government, engaged in *bid'a* (unIslamic innovations) (Interview, Yogyakarta, 4 June 2012). Nevertheless, the organisation continues to hold many of the primary tenets of Salafi doctrine.

3. Wahdah Islamiyah and Islamic activism in Indonesia

To evolution of Wahdah Islamiyah's activism cannot be understood outside the broader context of Indonesia's shift from authoritarianism to democracy. Since 1998, the country has generally witnessed the creation of a stable democratic political environment and the growth of a relatively free press. However, this period has also been marked by ever more vocal campaigns against religious minorities and public 'immorality'. Furthermore, the number of criminal charges for alleged blasphemy continues to increase, with approximately 89 people receiving convictions since 1998 (SetaraInstitute 2017). This has been linked to the rise of Islamic vigilantism and conservative lobby groups, who have increasingly moved to the centre of political debates. As the analyst Sidney Jones argues 'the biggest issue for Indonesian democracy ... is not terrorism but intolerance, which is moving from the radical fringe into the mainstream' (Jones 2013, 125). Accordingly, Wahdah Islamiyah offers a timely study through which to understand this shift.

As noticeable as the growth of Islamic activism has been, it does not equate to a successful attempt to create an explicitly Islamist polity. Democracy has certainly seen an increase in

Sharia-inspired laws, but, as Buehler (2016) has argued, this has more to do to with the personal relationships connecting Islamic activists and political figures. Politicians deem Islamic activists as useful vote getters rather than partners for a coherent Islamic project. This is not to understate the impact of Sharia-inspired legislation on the lives of Indonesians though. There are approximately 442 religiously inspired pieces of local legislation that enforce of Islamic dress codes; mandate Islamic teachings in public facilities; and prohibit gambling, alcohol, prostitution or unspecified sins (Buehler and Pisani 2016). To this one must add that it has become commonplace for Islamic activists to refer to older legal regulations, such as the 1965 Blasphemy Law and 1969 Regulation on Houses of Worship (amended in 2006), to demand individuals be tried for insulting religion or houses of worship be closed. By examining Wahdah Islamiyah, we can better understand the logic that drives such activism.

Emerging from a small campus-based study circle in Makassar during the late 1980s, Wahdah Islamiyah has expanded into an organisation with approximately 120 branches. Its original founders were initially linked to Muhammadiyah's student organisation, but broke away in 1985 due to concerns that Muhammadiyah was overly accommodative to the demands of President Suharto's New Order government. In the 1990s, these activists received scholarships via the DDII, to study in Saudi Arabia, returning to Indonesia as enthusiastic promoters of the Salafi method. Given their origins on the university campus, Wahdah Islamiyah's members are predominantly recruited from universities, and it is largely middle class in its social composition. Indeed, many of its leaders hold higher degrees, and believe education to be an important part of Wahdah Islamiyah's agenda. In this capacity, the organisation runs an extensive cadre training system and approximately 200 schools, including its own higher education institution, the Higher Learning Facility for Islam and Arabic (*Sekolah Tinggi Islam dan Bahasa Arab*, STIBA).

Wahdah Islamiyah continues to work with global Salafi educational institutions and donors including the Islamic University of Madinah, the al-Turath in Kuwait, the International Islamic Relief Organisation and Jamiyyat Dar al-Ber (Charity House Society) (Hasan 2006; ICG 2004; Nisa 2012). However, since 2002 the group has incrementally shifted its attention to partnering with Indonesian Government and civil society bodies. For instance, at present it has several collaborative projects including: providing religious education to police units in Makassar; counselling to prisoners on drug charges in the city's penitentiary; providing social welfare on behalf of the Ministry for Social Development to hard-to-reach villages in South Sulawesi; and organising blood drives amongst Wahdah's members for the Indonesian Red Cross. The logic behind this shift has been in part due to political transformations and a realisation amongst Wahdah Islamiyah's leaders of the benefits of working with government institutions and civil society.

Initial signs that the group was moving away from isolationist tendencies began after the collapse of Suharto's authoritarian New Order, which provided greater opportunity to promote an Islamic identity within the public realm. Wahdah Islamiyah's leaders joined other South Sulawesi-based Islamic activists to form the Preparatory Committee for Upholding Islamic Law (*Komite Persiapan Penegakan Syariat Islam*, KPSSI). This group sought to lobby the government to implement Sharia law throughout South Sulawesi Province. Although the KPSSI ultimately failed in its mission, it provided a forum within which Wahdah Islamiyah's leaders could interact with like-minded activists. This catalysed a shift towards a more collaborative agenda. If the 1990s saw an orientation towards a global Salafism at the expense

of broader social engagement, the new millennium was marked by a growing willingness to work with their co-religionists in order to infuse public debates with Islamic motifs.

This direction was evident in Wahdah Islamiyah's 2002 declaration that they 'hoped to expand and develop not only in South Sulawesi but also in every province in Indonesia' (Jurdi 2007, 131). Yet, it was only after the ascendancy of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Jusuf Kalla to the Presidency and Vice-Presidency in 2004 that Wahdah's intent to expand really began to accelerate. Where the previous president, Megawati Sukarnoputri, had pushed back against Islamic forces, Yudhoyono's administration supported the interests of religious activists while shielding their more violent elements from sanction and prosecution (Bush 2015). It was during Yudhoyono's presidency that the government began to offer significant logistical support, funds and protection to the quasi-government-sponsored Indonesian Ulama Council (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, MUI) (Mietzner and Muhtadi 2017, 7). For Wahdah Islamiyah, it was Jusuf Kalla who facilitated initial contact with the government. Kalla originates from the same province as Wahdah's leaders. He remains an important patron for the group, and has delivered the keynote speech at all three of their national conferences in 2007, 2011 and 2016.

On the surface, such collaboration may be perceived as pragmatic and opportunistic; a way to curry favour and resources. Wahdah Islamiyah's willingness to work with the government has certainly provided both. Muhammad Zaitun Rasmin, Wahdah Islamiyah's leader, has, for example, recently been promoted to a deputy-secretary general of the national MUI. However, there is a deeper organisational logic at play. Wahdah Islamiyah's leaders have increasingly come to see themselves as an inseparable part of the nation's social fabric. They have been explicit about this, expressing a desire to work with social and political institutions and become a 'national asset' much like the older established Islamic organisations Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah (Interview, Yogyakarta, 6 June 2012).

As Mohammad Zaitun Rasmin argues, becoming a national asset means that the organisation must act as a lecturer (*penceramah*) for society and government on issues of Islam and morality (Interview, Makassar, 1 October 2016). As another leading member of Wahdah Islamiyah put it:

We want to colour the political policies without engaging in partisan politics. We want to colour them, because political policies influence the good of the country; because we can give an example. (Interview, Makassar, 18 October 2016)

Wahdah Islamiyah along with other like-minded Sunni groups are seen almost like a religious 'second estate' (that between rulers and the ruled). Most recently, Wahdah Islamiyah has given substance to such a line of thought through the promotion of *Islam Wasathiyah* or moderate Islam. *Wasathiyah* derives from Qur'anic references to the *ummatan Wasathan*, or moderate people, and it has featured significantly in Wahdah Islamiyah's recent statements and organisational plans. While leaders are still formulating the nuances of *Wasathiyah* we must note that it is not new to contemporary Islamic thinking, but popular amongst followers of the Muslim Brotherhood, and Qatar-based Yusuf Qaradawi's preaching's (Shavit 2014).

Given Wahdah Islamiyah's Salafi loyalties, their interpretation of *Wasathiyah* does not reference the work of Qaradawi of the Muslim Brotherhood. Yet, it is not overly Salafi either, instead being framed in nationalistic terms. As Mohammad Zaitun Rasmin has defined it, it is a 'middle ground' between an alleged extreme left (communism or liberalism) and extreme right (Islamic militancy and ISIS) who seek to underline the unity of the Indonesian state (Observation, Jakarta, 17 July 2016). Interlinked to this latter point is organisational

support for what they call *Wasathiyah Democracy* (WahdahIslamiyah 2016). *Wasathiyah democracy*, as with *Wasathiyah* more broadly, marks a notable departure from Salafi mores, as well as Wahdah Islamiyah's previous pronouncements that democracy was dangerous as it promoted the rule of man over God (Jalil 2009). As with *Wasathiyah*, leaders describe *Wasathiyah democracy* more through the terminology of politics and national security than religious dictums. As they note, democracy must be based on consultation (*permusyawaratan*) which is proportional and follows a middle path between the democratic models of Indonesia's Sukarno era, the authoritarian New Order, and the current liberal model (WahdahIslamiyah 2016).

Exactly what such a middle road or democracy remains purposefully vague. While *Wasathiyah* certainly denotes tacit support for democracy, it does so with reservation, trying to find a balance between supporting the political structures that lend Wahdah Islamiyah their strength – and indeed have been pivotal to its expansion – while maintaining an emphasis on Islamic virtues. Importantly, Islam is not emphasised as the founding principle of the state, but, as made clear by Wahdah's members, is nevertheless inherent in the character of those who founded the state. As one stated: 'Frankly, since the state is set up by Muslims ... the principles [of Indonesia] stated the need for belief in one almighty God, which celebrate Islamic *Tawhid*' (Interview, Makassar, 14 July 2016). In striking this balance, Wahdah Islamiyah does not call for an Islamic political agenda, but instead argue that a principal aim of democracy must be to ensure people live in a (religious) moral environment free from drugs, alcohol, and sin as well as from 'extreme' and 'liberal' groups. Furthermore, democracy is supported in so far that it facilitates the election of individuals of good Islamic character, and it falls on activists such as Wahdah Islamiyah to ensure these precepts are met.

Wasathiyah has also provided a way for Wahdah Islamiyah's leaders to give name to a vision of the state amongst their own membership. As the organisation has grown closer to the government, it has had to acquiesce to political demands that they decrease the amount of revenue they receive from international donors, especially for public events, and to provide guarantees that they will not transform themselves into a political party.¹ By promoting an idea of *Wasathiyah* democracy, the organisation is able to emphasise a role for themselves as a social body that remains a key ally for politicians and political institutions. Not only do they assist government bodies in providing social services, but they can mobilise support for individual politicians when needed. Indeed, Wahdah Islamiyah's descriptions of *Wasathiyah* via the terminology of national security allude to a vision of Indonesian society where issues of morality are elevated to existential security threats. Fulfilling this vision requires the input of cadres and activists however, and so it is to their activism that we now turn.

4. 'Agents of change' and moral citizens

Wahdah Islamiyah's engagements with Indonesian society are not limited to high-level interactions between the group's leaders and government representatives. Through their cadre and membership system, they also seek to alter society via grassroots activism. Wahdah Islamiyah runs extensive social welfare programmes, propagational activities (*da'wa*) and provides education – both formal and informal – across the country. Working in remote and urban communities, they hope to inspire 'correct' Islamic ethics and promote social development that, in turn, will contribute to society and motivate local Muslims to strengthen

the country's Islamic character (Interview, Makassar, 18 October 2016). The most crucial aspect of this activism is the training and mobilisation of cadres who form the backbone of Wahdah Islamiyah's membership. Indeed, leaders insist that their cadres must become social 'agents of change' that can influence Indonesian society (Interview, Makassar, 18 October 2016).

Cadres are predominantly recruited from university campus small study circles (*halaqah*). There is historical precedent for Wahdah Islamiyah's concertation on the university campus, as their leaders founded their organisation while enrolled at university in Makassar. It has, however, proved an advantageous place to pursue their particular vision of what cadres should be/become; professional Muslim citizens who actively participate in social activism. The campus provides a space in which it can reach out to young well-educated Muslim youth, many of whom are actively seeking new life experiences while at university. Wahdah Islamiyah aims to appeal to these students by arguing that by becoming cadres, individuals become 'professional and respectable Muslims' who are 'disciplined in their tasks and useful to others' and can assist in building a just society (Observation, Yogyakarta, 27 May 2012).

The appeal to a professional and educated Islamic community is not mere recruitment rhetoric; the organisation invests considerable resources in training and deploying cadres across its branches in numerous managerial roles. This aligns with their plan to train individuals to demonstrate what Wahdah Islamiyah call the 5 M's: *Mukmin*, *Muslih*, *Mujahid*, *Muta'awin* and *Mutqin*, which they define as piety, selflessness, knowledge of Islam, ability to work with others to build an Islamic society, and professionalism (Interview, Makassar, 13 July 2016). The way these principles are defined provide insight into how the group has reformulated Salafi teachings in order to foreground the need for its members to be socially active. This is most visible when examining *mukmin*. *Mukmin* is an integral part not solely of Salafi but of Islamic piety, encapsulating a category for one who has acquired a 'disposition of faithfulness' (Frisk 2009, 161, 162). The Salafi scholar Shaikh Abdurrozzaq bin Abdil Mahsin Alb Abbad has lectured extensively on *mukmin*, stating that piety amongst true Salafis can only be genuine if one separates oneself from worldly and unIslamic influences (Observation, Yogyakarta, 15 February 2012). For Salafis *mukmin* is thus linked to the concept of *al-wala' wa-l-bara*, leading many to live in enclaves and disconnect themselves from the majority of society.

Wahdah Islamiyah continues to place considerable emphasis on discussing *al-wala' wa-l-bara* within their *halaqah*, but they reformulate the boundaries of what the community of believers inevitably entails. While other Salafis separate themselves from non-Salafi society, Wahdah Islamiyah envision Indonesia to be, while not perfect, the basis of a Muslim society. *Mukmin*, as described by interlocutors, certainly underlines the need to develop certain dispositional and ethical capacities, but it has a very visible social significance too. This is further explained when examining the concept of *muta'awin*. *Muta'awin*, which derives from the Arabic *mutaeawin* denotes someone who cooperates, and is used by Wahdah Islamiyah to refer to someone involved in their social or *da'wa* work (Saguni 2009). According to one of Wahdah's founders, Qasim Saguni, a *muta'awin* is always willing to listen and take orders from one's superiors as long as they don't go against Islamic principles (Saguni 2009).

Wahdah Islamiyah's interpretation of such principles has significant implications in terms of how cadres perceive society. While *halaqah* are forums in which individuals strive to familiarise themselves with religious materials, they also represent social spaces in which like-minded individuals debate the finer points of 'living' Islam and what it means to society.

According to interlocutors, individuals are encouraged to talk at length about how to have a positive impact on the community. They are stimulated to partake in Wahdah Islamiyah's social programmes, most prominently their initiative to offer religious classes to young children across Indonesia (Interview, Yogyakarta, 20 September 2016). Yet, this is not without a clear political message. *Halaqah* course materials make continuous reference to the dangers and problems facing 'the umma', and cadres spend considerable time debating *Ghazwul fikr* (loosely defined as a war of ideas) as a means to describe the battle between 'Western' and 'Islamic' civilisational ideas.

Accordingly, what a positive impact to society is follows a very specific social outlook. In 2016, I conducted a survey and series of interviews amongst Islamic activists between the ages of 20 and 29 in Makassar, South Sulawesi. It was notable that when asked what challenges Indonesia faced, there was consistency amongst those from Wahdah Islamiyah. All but two cadres stated that the two biggest priorities facing Indonesia were the need to improve education and strengthen people's understanding of morality – themes frequently emphasised by Wahdah's leaders. Wahdah's cadres also expressed strong attitudes towards the role of Islam in state institutions. They believed that Indonesia needed to apply the law in order to ensure public order and reduce problems such as alcohol, theft and gambling; and that all government employees and elected officials needed to understand religious principles and obligations. Cadres similarly believed that Islam strengthened national identity and increased one's ability to contribute to the nation. But they were also quick to note that this did not amount to support for an Islamic state. Instead, interlocutors clarified that the state may not be constitutionally Islamic but it should work hand-in-hand with Sunni Muslims in order to regulate public and private behaviours. As one interlocutor stated, the role of Wahdah Islamiyah is to 'provide input to leaders so that Islamic precepts are guarded properly in Indonesia' (Interview, Makassar, 15 October 2016).

The state is therefore understood to be one where religion remains a very public issue – regulated through the combined efforts of state institutions and Islamic groups. In order to fulfil this vision, cadres are increasingly urged to collaborate with non-Salafi Sunni Islamic organisations. Not only does this underline how Wahdah Islamiyah is actively shifting away from stricter interpretations of Salafi doctrine, but also how a particular concept of state and society is filtering into their activism. This image aligns with what Menchik has described as the prevalence of 'Godly Nationalism' in Indonesia. As Menchik argues, while Islamic groups have generally come to accept democracy, there remains an emphasis on the need for the community to be respected over the individual, and on the primacy of faith over other values. It is part of Godly Nationalism to believe that one needs to belong to one of Indonesia's six officially recognised religions if one is to belong to civil society (Menchik 2016).

Godly Nationalism is neither institutional nor particular, however, and so remains dependent on context and individual interpretation. This is especially true when it comes to relating to other religious communities. As Menchik notes, Muslims may have few issues with Christians having full access to the social sphere, but this does not automatically equate to a right to hold high office or be able to freely propagate their religion in public (Menchik 2016). Indeed, Wahdah Islamiyah's sense of Godly Nationalism differs from that explained by Menchik in relation to other Islamic organisations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. In contrast to these groups, Wahdah Islamiyah seeks to differentiate

between religious groups in order to strengthen the primacy of Muslims at the expense of non-Muslim groups.

Wahdah Islamiyah's members thus promote a view of religious faith generally, and Islam more specifically, as a principle that defines Indonesia and Indonesians. It is of essential normative value, and the state must intervene when necessary to protect it. The state itself must ensure that its own politicians and members are well versed in religious dictums, and here civil society partners such as Wahdah Islamiyah must play a role. It is not enough that Indonesia has a Ministry of Religious Affairs; the government requires direct input from Islamic organisations. Wahdah Islamiyah is a partner of the state, providing advice to its politicians and citizens on Islamic issues. In terms of citizenship, this leads to a drive to differentiate between those who adhere to acknowledged religious beliefs and those who do not. In the final section, we thus examine how these norms are expressed in public activism in order to influence the extent, depth and content of citizenship.

5. A differentiated citizenship

Wahdah Islamiyah, I have argued, evokes an understanding of nation and state that foregrounds the importance of religious values in public life. They believe religion to be sewn into the fabric of the nation and thus in need of protection as a matter of national security if necessary. As one leader aptly put it, 'religiosity amongst citizens is a strong foundation for the Indonesian people. When our religion is well ..., we become stronger ... we are a fortress of ethics.' (Interview, Makassar, 16 October 2016). This is not solely a matter of organisational rhetoric, but has implications on perceptions of citizenship and society. While Wahdah Islamiyah accepts Indonesia's religious plurality, they believed that as the majority of Indonesians are Muslim, those who don't adhere to correct Islamic tenets are seen as holding different socio-political rights. They thus promote a differentiated citizenship where political and social rights depend on one's religious affiliation.

Religious groups that are recognised by the state (Buddhists, Protestants, Catholics, Hindu's and Confucians) enjoy full rights to vote and receive government services. They can also practice their religion in peace. Yet any attempt to proselytise or run for public office must be circumscribed. Wahdah Islamiyah is explicit about this. As one cadre told me 'Indonesia is a majority-Muslim nation and this majority doesn't want someone whose creed is different from the majority' (Interview, Makassar, 13 October 2016). Non-Muslims are therefore to be accepted, but could not hinder the political and aspirations and ideals of the alleged pious Muslim majority. Those whose ideas fell outside acceptable religious categories altogether, meanwhile, or who had no religion, needed to be restricted or educated in line with proper religious values. Such groups include the LGBT+ community, alleged communists, as well as Muslim minorities such as the Ahmadiyah and Shi'a communities, all of which have been explicitly targeted by Wahdah Islamiyah within their public activism. Wahdah Islamiyah has even worked with government institutions in such campaigns. In 2008, the Makassar branch of the Ministry for Home Affairs asked Wahdah Islamiyah to help disseminate public information on a government decree to restrict the activism of the Ahmadiyah community.

Wahdah Islamiyah thus promotes an idea of citizenship that alters the content, extent and depth of citizenship. Religion is by no means considered a private matter but as one at the very heart of state identity and national belonging. To not follow Sunni Islam or a recognised

religion is to not be fully Indonesian. It lies at the heart of what Indonesia, and Indonesians, are, and so must be protected on grounds of national security. To do so, Wahdah Islamiyah promotes a division between citizens who fully belong, who are permissible and who are 'foreign' to Indonesia, using inherently secular reasoning as to why these divisions must be upheld by state and civil society. To echo the analysis of David Campbell, the emphasis on non-Muslim social and political dangers set the 'ethical boundaries' of national belonging (Campbell 1998). Far from being an objective assessment of danger, the perception of threats arising from groups such as the non-Muslim or deviant subversive contribute to an understanding of state identity by expressing the dangers posed by 'others' (Campbell 1998). It also leads to a form of differentiated citizenship that acknowledges the salient differences between peoples and religions, but does so informally and with no explicit mechanisms to *protect* minority rights (for example see Young 1989, 1999). Instead it aims to protect the hegemonic position of an imagined pious majority, not through legal formalities (as in Malaysia for instance) but through reactive state intervention and community activism.

The synthesis between their Islamic agenda and national security provides Wahdah Islamiyah with a line of argumentation through which they legitimise distinctions between the socio-political and civil rights of Muslims and non-Muslims. This is increasingly expressed in public through the concept of 'proxy war', a concept popularised by two military hardliners, Defence Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu and the head of the armed forces Gatot Nurmantyo. According to these security officials, the prime threat to Indonesia comes not from massive external military force, but from attempts by unknown 'enemy states to pay for non-state actors to do whatever they want to divide the strength of the state' (Nurmantyo 2016). Echoing such language, a Wahdah Islamiyah preacher recently wrote that the unity of the nation was under daily threat from imported ideologies such as the Shi'a. Alongside the LGBT community, they argued, Shi'a was spreading faster than narcotic addiction (also considered a national emergency by the government). The article warned its readers: 'Almost every day we listen to similar threats against the unity of NKRI [the Unitary Republic of Indonesia] that seek to divide the nation with the import of foreign ideologues such as Shi'a' (Hamka 2016).

Both state and society must therefore be vigilant, and Wahdah Islamiyah goes to great lengths to engage citizens in campaigns to rid 'corrupt' behaviours from public and private life. For example, the group holds weekly *taklim* (informal lectures) in mosques throughout Indonesia, and these provide important forums through which Wahdah Islamiyah engages with the public. In October 2016, I attended one such lecture where the presiding preacher touched upon the problem of electing non-Muslim politicians. In front of the approximately 200 attendees, he interrupted his lecture on the dangers of 'loving this world' to provide some examples of what this meant. He stressed that for a society to be free of corruption, neither the politicians nor their staff could be *kafir* (un-believers). He said that non-Muslim political advisors had corrupted the current generation of Muslim politicians. He even stated that the practice of *serangan fajar* (dawn raids), where politicians hand out money-filled envelopes to voters on the morning of an election to gain favour, was introduced by non-Muslims to corrupt Muslim voters (Observation, Makassar, 8 October 2016).

Actively promoting a differentiated perception of citizenship is most evident when looking at Wahdah Islamiyah's activism against the Shi'a minority, who have come under increasing threat from Islamic conservatives in Indonesia (IPAC 2016). Wahdah Islamiyah's opposition to the Shi'a reflects their Salafi teachings, but their public pronouncements

against them adapt to the militarised language of ‘proxy war’. As one of Wahdah’s leaders explained:

... in Indonesia (the Shi’a) have indeed caused a problem ... They recruit among Muslims, and they then cause conflict. And you know that in today’s world such as in Syria, and then in Yemen, it is because of these people. (Interview, Makassar, 4 July 2016)

Over the past five years, cadres have worked alongside like-minded Muslim conservatives to ban the Shi’a commemoration of *Ashura* in the city of Makassar. In October 2016, this campaign consisted of an online petition, newspaper columns and public gatherings to lobby the provincial parliament to ban public Shi’a ceremonies. Worryingly, these efforts received recognition from South Sulawesi’s governor, Syahrul Yasin Limpo. The Shi’a were not banned outright, but restricted to commemorating *Ashura* within their own homes on grounds of security. This was considered an adequate ‘compromise’, although Shi’a communities had little input into this decision. Indeed, the Shi’a community remain under constant threat of physical violence and intimidation, not least because Wahdah Islamiyah’s cadres use their outreach to ask communities to be vigilant for anyone who may adhere to non-Sunni practices. One Shi’a preacher has recently had to move house after his neighbour reported his ‘beliefs’ to his landlord – who then asked him to vacate his house (Interview, Makassar, 21 October 2016).

These ideas in no way reflect the opinions of the majority of Indonesian Muslims, nor the position of the nation’s two largest Muslim bodies, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. The current leaders of both organisations have, for example, condemned recent rallies by Islamic conservatives – including Wahdah Islamiyah – who demanded that the former Christian governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, be charged with blasphemy.² As Menchik has noted, while Muhammadiyah’s and Nahdlatul Ulama’s position towards other religions may continue to evolve, in essence both organisations believe in communal tolerance and defend the idea of religious plurality as an important value to the Indonesian nation (Menchik 2016). However, differentiated ideas of citizenship not only persist but have gained traction due to the increasing ability of groups such as Wahdah Islamiyah to both work with the government, and mobilise their supporters within the public sphere. This has allowed Wahdah Islamiyah to frame their particular understanding of Islam and citizenship as central to an Indonesian identity.

6. Conclusion

In attempting to unpack the influence of conservative Islamic activism on the nature of citizenship in Indonesia, we can see multiple forces at play. These certainly include politicians seeking alliances with Islamic social movements that they believe can offer them votes during elections. We must also acknowledge the increase in anti-Shi’a and minority feelings amongst Islamic intellectuals in Indonesia, often through the introduction of Salafi-inspired literature. Yet the discursive shift by conservatives such as Wahdah Islamiyah has gone further; it has located a religio-ethical discourse within everyday narratives of being Indonesian and what this means in terms of rights, duties and the character of citizenship.

Our analysis has emphasised the way that religious identity can inform a citizen’s relations to power. Wahdah Islamiyah effectively promotes its differentiated understanding of citizenship, first amongst its supporters and then within the wider local community. It does so by utilising its vast network of cadres, political alliances and a combination of religious

and nationalist rhetoric to promote an idea of who is fully included, partially included and excluded (the *extent* of citizenship). Its members believe that citizens themselves have certain obligations and rights to the state (*content* of citizenship). These comprise the need for Muslims to participate in the public sphere and uphold religious dictums. At the same time, Wahdah Islamiyah also rearticulates Islamic values via the language and actions of citizenship, thus altering the *depth* of citizenship and meaning of political community. Government enforcement is not enough here; good Muslims must be active citizens who sign petitions, circulate ideas and mobilise if necessary. Wahdah Islamiyah's claims to represent the majority of Indonesian Muslims is questionable, but they have grown confident in foregrounding the rights of Muslims over other religions through the language of national belonging.

Notes

1. At its more recent *Muktamar*, both of these demands were mentioned explicitly by keynote speakers Vice-President Jusuf Kalla and Minister for Religious Affairs Lukman Hakim Saifuddin explicitly.
2. From November 2016 to May 2017, Indonesia saw a wave of demonstrations by Islamic conservatives who demanded the governor be tried for blasphemy after a doctored video of him allegedly 'insulting' the Qur'an was circulated in October 2016.

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