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# FROM IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA TO INDONESIA: The Translation of Shi'ite and Wahhabi Literature in Contemporary Indonesia

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Abstract: This study examines the translation of Shi'ite and Wahhabi literature in Indonesia. This is a literature study. The primary data was obtained by examining the record of translated and published titles in Indonesian. This study refers to the theory of Mehdi Nakosteen, R.G.A. Dolby, and Abdul Munip regarding the transmission of knowledge through translation activities, their phases, and motives. This study found that these books from Iran and Saudi Arabia, covering various Islamic knowledge, are published and distributed in Indonesia by affiliated and unaffiliated publishers in order to introduce their ideas and doctrines to the wider Muslim community in Indonesia, using the Indonesian language as the medium of transmission. This transmission of knowledge through translation takes place through the awareness, interest, and adoption phases, and has religious, educational, economic, ideological, and stimulative-provocative motivations.

**Keywords:** Knowledge; translation; Shi'ah; Wahhabiyah; Persian; Arabic; Indonesian.

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### Introduction

The majority of Indonesians are Muslims; however, they do not all follow the same school of law and theology. Most Indonesian Muslims are Sunnis and follow the Shafi'ite school of law and the Ash'arite creed. Sunni groups are represented in some traditional and modernist Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), 1 Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah, <sup>2</sup> Muhammadiyah, <sup>3</sup> Al Ittihadiyah, <sup>4</sup> Persatuan Islam (Persis), Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (Perti), Mathla'ul Anwar and Al Khairaat.<sup>5</sup> However, there are other Muslim groups and sects following different ideological orientations and intellectual traditions.

There are at least three other groups that have emerged and established themselves in Indonesia to date, namely the Ahmadiyah,6 the Shi'ah, 7 and the Wahhabiyah. 8 The Ahmadiyah sect as an

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Faisal Ismail, "The Nahdlatul Ulama: Its Early History and Contribution to the Establishment of Indonesian State," Journal of Indonesian Islam 5, no. 2 (2011), http://dx.doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2011.5.2.247-282.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ja'far et al., "Discovering the Legacy of Mandailing Ulama: Education, Intellectuals, and Politics in North Sumatra in the Early 20th Century," Ulumuna: Journal of Islamic Studies 26, no. 2 (2022): 296-336; Mhd. Syahnan, Asrul, and Ja'far, "Intellectual Network of Mandailing and Haramayn Muslim Scholars in the Mid-19th and Early 20th Century," Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam 9, no. 2 (2019); Ja'far, "Ulama, Al Washliyah and Knowledge in Modern Indonesia (1930-1980)," MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman 46, no. 2 (2022): 235–256; Mhd Syahnan and Ja'far, "Examining Religious Moderation of the Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah Fatwa Council," Journal of Indonesian Islam 15, no. 1 (2021): 21-46; Ja'far, "Peran Ulama Al Washliyah dalam Pengembangan Ilmu Agama," Islamijah: Journal of Islamic Social Sciences 2, no. 1 (February 24, 2021): 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ahmad Najib Burhani, "The Ideological Shift of Muhammadiyah from Cultural into Puritanical Tendency in 1930s," Jurnal Masyarakat dan Budaya (JMB) 8, no. 1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Dja'far Siddik and Ja'far, Al-Ittihadiyah: Delapan Dasawarsa Menerangi Nusantara (Medan: Perdana Publishing, 2017); Al Rasyidin, "Organisasi Islam Di Tanah Melayu: Ideologi Dan Gerakan Al-Ittihadiyah Sebelum Era Reformasi," Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies 2, no. 1 (2018); Hasnah Nasution and Al Rasyidin, "Respons Al-Ittihadiyah Di Sumatera Utara Terhadap Radikalisme," Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies 3, no. 1 (2019): 1; Soiman, "Gerakan Pembaruan Pendidikan Al-Ittihadiyah di Sumatera Timur, 1935-1975," Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies 2, no. 2 (2018).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Deliar Noer, "Contemporary Political Dimension of Islam," in *Islam in South-East* Asia, ed. M.B. Hooker (Leiden: Brill, 1988).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ismatu Ropi, "Islamism, Government Regulation, and the Ahmadiyah Controversies in Indonesia," Al-Jamiah: Journal of Islamic Studies 48, no. 2 (2010).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Al Makin, "Homogenizing Indonesian Islam: Persecution of the Shia Group in Yogyakarta," Studia Islamika 24, no. 1 (2017): 1-32; Dahlia Lubis and Syarifah

organization was prohibited from operating in Indonesia during the presidency of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004-2014). However, the Shi'ah and the Wahhabiyah groups are still active and developing in Indonesia and ideological rivals who do not shrink from exaggerated polemics, vilifying each other. These two groups also represent two political enemies, Iran and Saudi Arabia. It cannot be denied that the growth and development of a Shi'ah community in Indonesia is closely linked with Iran's foreign policy, 10 just as the growth and development of the Wahhabiyah community is inseparable from Saudi Arabia's foreign policy.<sup>11</sup>

Being two transnational groups that are not native to Indonesia they receive resistance from the Sunni majority. For example, the activities of the Shi'ah groups have been severely limited after interventions from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) under President Suharto (1966-1998) and his New Order. 12 Similarly, the Wahhabi groups have experienced much local resistance and accused of radicalizing Indonesian Muslims through their extremist ideology.<sup>13</sup> According to Sahrasad, et al., the Wahhabism divides into various unfriendly or even hostile factions, which can sometimes escalate into

Rahmah, "Education Movement of Shia Group in Contemporary Indonesia," Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies 5, no. 2 (2022): 224; Hasan Bisri, "Khomeini's Concept of Wilâyat Al-Faqîh and Its Influence on the Contemporary Indonesian Islamic Thought," Tajdid 25, no. 1 (2018): 33; Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, "From Power to Cultural Landscapes: Rewriting History of Shi'ah in Aceh," Journal of Indonesian Islam 11, no. 2 (2017): 509-530.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Saipul Hamdi, "Wahhabism and the Shariah State in Indonesia," in *Proceedings of the* The 2nd ICS Universitas Mataram International Conference: Countering Radicalism & Terrorism in the Digital Era - Reshaping a Global Peace Community, 2020, 1–18, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\_id=3767226.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Muhammad As'ad, "Ahmadiyah and the Freedom of Religion in Indonesia," Journal of Indonesian Islam 03 (2009): 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Mahan Abedin, Iran Resurgent: The Rise and Rise of the Shia State (London: C. Hurst

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Relli Shechter, "Abd al-'Azīz Āl Sa'ūd's Other Campaign: Propaganda in the Making of the Modern Saudi State, 1918–1932," Journal of Arabian Studies 12, no. 1 (2022): 45-63.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Dicky Sofjan, "Minoritization & Criminalization of Shia Islam in Indonesia," Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 39, no. 2 (2016): 29-44, https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/340/article/779587/summary.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Syamsul Rijal, "Opposing Wahabism: The Emergence of Ultra Traditionalism in Contemporary Indonesia," in The New Santri: Challenges to Traditional Religious Authority in Indonesia (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2020).

violent conflicts. Not all Wahabi groups are radicals, extremists and terrorists. Some Wahabi groups are anti-jihad and anti-uprising. There are at least three types of Wahhabism in Indonesia: Wahhabi Shururi, Jihadi Wahhabi, and Takfiri Wahhabi. Some Wahhabi groups, such as Jihadi Wahhabi (Jemaah Islamiyah or JI) and Takfiri Wahhabi (Islamic State of Syria and Iraq or ISIS), have become the focus of government interventions to curb the spread of radical Islamic ideologies and terrorism. According to Sahrasad, et al., "the Wahhabi Shururi considered anti-birthday (mawlid), anti-adhān twice, anti-tahlil, anti-pilgrimage grave and anti-jihad and often assume the public against the government as bughāt (rebels)."14

Viewed from the perspective of the local Shi'ah and Wahhabi groups, whose members are, after all, Indonesian citizens, they are intent on spreading their views and strengthening their Islamic intellectual basis. Given that their religious authorities and literature are of foreign origin, they focus on the transmission of knowledge through translation activities. The Shi'ah, for example, established several organizations, taklim councils, repositories, and publishing bodies. The works of prominent Shi'ite scholars from Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon were translated, published, and then circulated among the Muslim communities in Indonesia. Likewise, the Wahabiyah follows the same strategy by translating the authoritative works of Wahhabi scholars, especially those from Saudi Arabia. Apart from serving as essential reading materials and references for the two groups, the presence of Shi'ite and Wahhabi literature in various Islamic disciplines, especially in 'agidah, Shari'ah, and akhlāq, has helped to collect and preserve the intellectual diversity of Islamic thought in Indonesia. Indeed, the Indonesian government does not curb freedom of expression and permits the different groups and sects to publish their literature, as long as they abide by the laws. Thus, Shi'ite and Wahhabi books are readily available, can be circulated among the wider public, and be read by the Indonesian people, the majority of whom adhere to Sunni Islam.

This article, which is the result of a literature study, examines the transmission of Shia and Wahhabi ideology to Indonesia through translation activities. Translation, in the context of intercultural studies, is a medium of communication between cultural groups who

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Herdi Sahrasad et al., "Indonesian Terrorism: Wahabism and the Imagined Caliphate," The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies 45, no. 1 (2020): 31–45.

use different languages. 15 Furthermore, Mulyadhi Kartanegara emphasized that the emergence of the Islamic Renaissance and Western Renaissance was preceded by intensive translation activities, as well as activities to study and analyze classical scientific and philosophical works. Translation and research activities were key to a Renaissance. 16 Kartanegara argued that translating the major works of Muslim philosophers is the right way to develop the study of Islamic philosophy in Indonesia. 17 Mehdi Nakosteen examined the preservation and transfer of ancient knowledge from the Greek and Hellenistic civilizations to the Islamic world. According to him, the existence of translators and translation activities was the main key to spreading knowledge from foreign cultures in the Muslim East. Scholars have translated the works of philosophy and science from Greek directly into Arabic, translated into Pahlavi then into Arabic, or translated from Hindu into Pahlavi then into Syriac, Hebrew, and Arabic. Nakosteen continued that translation activities were also the main key to the spread of knowledge from the Muslim world to Europe where Jewish, Nestorian and Western Christians, including English and Italian scholars translated the works of Muslim scientists into Latin, Hebrew, Greek, Spanish, and Italian. 18 According to R.G.A. Dolby, the transmission of knowledge through translation takes place through several phases namely awareness, interest, and adoption.<sup>19</sup> At least five motives encourage translators and publishers to carry out translation activities and publish foreign works accessible to the public, motivated by religion, education, economics, ideology, and intellectual stimulation and provocation. 20 To explain the translation activities of the Shi'ah and Wahhabi groups in Indonesia the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Anica Glodjovic, "Translation as a Means of Cross-Cultural Communication: Some Problems in Literary Text Translations," Linguistics and Literature 8, no. 2 (2010): 141-151.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Mulyadhi Kartanegara, Menembus Batas Waktu: Panorama Filsafat Islam (Bandung: Mizan, 2005), 110-115.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Mulyadhi Kartanegara, Nalar Religius: Memahami Hakikat Tuhan, Alam Dan Manusia (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2007), 127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Mehdi Nakosteen, History of Islamic Origins of Western Education A.D. 800-1350; with an Introduction to Medieval Muslim Education (Colodaro: University of Colorado Press, 1964), 18-20, 255-256.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Dolby R.G.A., "The Transmission of Science," History of Sciences 15, no. 1 (1977):

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Abdul Munip, "Motivasi Penerjemahan Buku Berbahasa Arab," al-Mahara 1, no. 1 (2015): 83-108.

theories of Nakoosten, Dolby, and Munip will be used as a framework for discussion.

### Shi'ite Literature in Indonesian

The Shi'ite school of theology is considered the oldest school of Islamic theology due to its early appearance in Islamic history.<sup>21</sup> Although various Shi'ite groups emerged from the seventh century onwards, the establishment of the Safavid Empire (1501-1736) consolidated the dominance of the Twelver Shi'ah or Imamiyah. Under the Safavids era, Persia adopted Shi'ism as its official religion.<sup>22</sup> This school of thought experienced a strong revival after the Islamic Revolution in Iran under Avatollah Khomeini in 1979 and continued to attract a significant number of followers worldwide. The Twelver Shi'ah believe in the imamate of 'Ali bin Abi Talib and his 11 successors, the twelfth imam being in occultation. 23 Today, Iran, Bahrain, and Iraq have Shi'ite majority populations adhering to this creed; however, they have, as all Muslim groups, also strong communities in Western countries. Ideologically, Iran has made the Shi'ite interpretation of Islam its official state religion. Some Shi'ah groups in Indonesia have established Islamic organizations and foundations. These organizations and foundations have received support from various groups in Iran, and are actively introducing Shi'ite traditions in Indonesia.<sup>24</sup>

Iran is a theocracy that places Muslim scholars in very high esteem. Among the most influential Shi'ite scholars in the modern era are Ruhollah Khomeini, Sayyid Muhammad Husain Tabatabai, Murthada Mutahhari, Sayyid Ali Khamenei, Jawadi 'Amuli, Nasir Makarim Shirazi, M. Taqi Misbah Yazdi, Ja'far Subhani, Ali Nasiri, Murtadha Mutahhari, Ali Shariati, Sayyid Mujtaba Musawi Lari, Faidh Kasyani, Falah al-'Abidi, Sayyid Sa'ad al-Musawi, Ali Asgari Yazdi,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Marshall G. S. Hodgson, "How Did the Early Shî'a Become Sectarian?," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 75, no. 1 (1955): 1–13, https://www.jstor.org/stable/595031.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Rula Abisaab, *Converting Persia*: Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai, *Shi'ite Islam* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1979).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Majid Daneshgar, "The Study of Persian Shi'ism in the Malay-Indonesian World: A Review of Literature from the Nineteenth Century Onwards," *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* 7, no. 2 (2014), https://doi.org/10.1353/isl.2014.0017.

Seyyed Ahmad Fazeli, Jawad Maliki Tabrizi, Sayyid Husain Hashimi, Muhammad Baqiri Saidi Roushan, Mohsen Gharawiyan, Ishaq Husaini Kuhsari, Hasan Yusufian, Ahmad Husain Sharifi, Sayyid Yahya Yathribi, Muhammad Hasan Qadrdan Qaramaliki, Ali Madj Faqihi, Akbar Najaf Lakza'i, M.A. Shomali, Hamid Mowlana, Muhammad Hadi Ma'rifat, Ibrahim Amini, Muhammad M. Reysyahri, Rasul Ja'fariyan, Sayyid Mahdi Ayatollah, Kamal Faqih Imani, Shafinuddin al-Mandari, Sayyid Muhammad Husayni Beheshti, Muhammad Mahdi al-Ashifi, and Shahid Athar. Three Iraqi scholars are also considered authorities, namely Muhammad Baqir Sadr, Muhammad Baqir Hakim, and Sayyid Kamal Haidari. These scholars have a very high reputation in Shi'ite circles, and their works published in Persian and Arabic are widely read and have been translated into English to reach a wider audience.

In the Shi'ite community, the abovementioned modern scholars are well-known authorities in Qur'an commentary (tafsīr), hadith, jurisprudence (figh), speculative theology (kalām), Sufism, education, and scholar biographies. Apart from relating to Islamic jurisprudence, the Shi'ite literature available in the Indonesian language also deal with Islamic philosophy, which has a strong tradition in Shi'ite thought, far superior in its eloquence and development of ideas than their Sunni counterparts. For this reason, there is a plethora of Shi'ite publications on metaphysical, logical, ethical, political, and historical philosophy. Many Islamic and philosophical books written by Shi'ite scholars are available in public libraries and bookstores in Indonesia, even though most Indonesians are Sunni Muslims. In contrast, Wahhabism is decidedly anti-speculative and anti-intellectual ideology, which condemns the science of philosophy. Therefore, Wahhabi literature is strictly source-based and does not encourage critical thought.

These books were translated by Indonesian Muslims who are also Shi'ites but also by Sunnis. Since translators have to bridge not only the linguistic but also the cultural gap and have to be familiar with both worlds, Indonesian alumni from Iranian universities played an important role in the process of translating and publishing these books. However, there are differences in the motives of Shi'ite and Sunni translators. Among the translators of books written by Iranian scholars are Husain Al-Kaff, Mukti Ali, Achmad Subandi, Ali Yahya, Muhammad Jawad Bafaqih, Arif Mulyadi, Andayani, Arif Maulawi,

Mustajib, Husein Habsvi, Alfit Sair, Endang Zulaicha Susilawati, Ahmad Marzugi Amin, Ammar Fauzi, Irwan Kurniawan, Suparno, R.A. Mulyadi, Ahmad Hidayat, and Akmal Kamil. They played a key role in transmitting Shi'ite literature to Indonesia by translating the Persian books by Shi'ite scholars from Iran into Indonesian.

These translations were then published by several publishers in Indonesia, especially in Java, among them being Rausyan Fikr in Yogyakarta, Al-Huda in Jakarta, Pustaka Az-Zahra in Jakarta, Pustaka Hidayah in Jakarta, Lentera in Jakarta, Mizan in Bandung, Muthahhari Press in Bandung, Sadra Press in Jakarta, Citra in Jakarta, and Cahaya in Bogor. However, this does not mean that these publishers promote Shi'ite ideology and may do so strictly based on business considerations.

Currently, books written by Shi'ite scholars from Iran are available in Indonesian and can be accessed easily, their copies being sold in bookstores and government libraries. The list of authors ranges from classical to modern thinkers and scholars. They include well-established authorities like Nasr al-Din al-Tusi, Mulla Shadra, Hafiz Rajab al-Bursi, Sayyid Haidar al-'Amuli, Abbas al-Qummi, and Sayyid Muhammad al-Musawi but also modern scholars like Sayyid Muhammad Husain Tabataba'i, Ruhollah Khomeini, Murtada Mutahhari, Ali Shariati, Sayyid Ali Khamenei, Muhammad Taqi' Misbah Yazdi, Hasan Zadeh 'Amuli, Jawadi 'Amuli, Nasir Makarim Shirazi, Ibrahim Amini, Muhammad Baqir Sadr, Ja'far Subhani, Mehdi Haeri Yazdi, Hashemi Rafsanjani, Sayyid Muhammad Husayni Beheshti, Kamal Faqih Imani, Muhammad Hadi Ma'rifat, Muhammad Baqir Hakim, Mujtaba Musawi Lari, Sayyid Husain Fadlullah, Mohammed Reza Modarresee, Muhammad Hasan Qaramaliki, Seyyed Mohsen Miri, Husain R. Kheradmardi, Dasteghib, Mehdi Hadavi Tehrani, Mujtaba Misbah, Ali Hosein Hakeem, Gholam Reza Fayyadi, Muhammad Taqi Ja'fari, Mirza Javad Agha Maliki Tabrizi, Akbar Najaf Lakza'i, Mohsen Gharawiyan, Rasul Ja'fariyan, and Muhammad Jawad Mughniyah.

Apart from these translated works, there are also several publications on Shi'ite thought, which offer valuable introductions and overviews of the authoritative works, thus complementing the collection. Some of these authors are Shi'ite Muslims themselves who studied intensively at colleges (hawzah) or universities in Iran, or at least have visited Iran for private study, such as Hasan Abu Ammar, O Hashem, Jalaluddin Rakhmad, Khalid Al Walid, Muhsin Labib, and Ammar Fauzi Heriyadi. Several other books were written and published by Shi'ah organizations, for example, Ahlul Bait Indonesia (ABI) published Buku Putih Mazhab Syiah Menurut Para Ulamanya yang Muktabar (Dewan Pengurus Pusat Ahlul Bait Indonesia, Jakarta, 2012), and Syiah Menurut Syiah (Dewan Pengurus Pusat Ahlul Bait Indonesia, Jakarta, 2014). Apart from that, quite a few Sunni Muslim researchers in Indonesia have published books containing Shi'ite thought, as evident from the many scholarly theses and dissertations about Shi'ite scholars and their works; for instance on Mulla Sadra, Imam Khomeini, Sayyid Muhammad Husan Tabatabai, and Murtada Mutahhari.

The translated books written by Shi'ite scholars from Iran have received an observable response from Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia, as indicated by the existence of several anti-Shi'ah publications. The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), for example, published Mengenal dan Mewaspadai Penyimpangan Syi'ah di Indonesia in 2013. Several figures and institutions also published books replete with anti-Shi'ah sentiments, for example, M. Rasyidi, Anung al-Hamat, Lembaga Pengkajian dan Penelitian Islam or LPPI, Sayyid Hussain al-Musawi, Abu Khalifah Ali bin Muhammad al-Qudhaibi, Farid Ahmad Okbah, Tim Peneliti dan Kajian Dar al-Mutaqa, and Aliansi Nasional Anti Syiah or ANNAS.

### Translation of Wahhabiyah Literature into Indonesian

The Wahhabi movement first emerged in modern Saudi Arabia before being spread into other parts of the Muslim world. This movement was founded by the Muslim jurist, theologian and preacher Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab (1703-1792). 25 Today, Saudi Arabia and Qatar are considered as the centres of Wahhabi influence. 26 Wahhabi ideologists are found all across the Muslim world, including

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Jacques D.J. Waardenburg, "Puritans in Arabia: The Wahhabi Movement (18th-19th C.)," in The Quest for Purity: Dynamics of Puritan Movements, ed. W. E. A. van Beek, 1988, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110860924-007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Gadi Hitman, "Saudi Arabia's Wahhabism and Nationalism: The Evolution of Wataniyya into Qawmiyya," Domes 27, no. 1 (2018): 79-96.

Indonesia, and their scholars and preachers are known for their religious fervor and uncompromising and intolerant attitudes.<sup>27</sup>

Among the well-known Wahhabi figures are Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab, Muhammad bin Shalih al-Uthaymin, Muhammad bin 'Abdul 'Aziz al-Sulaymani Qar'awi, Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani, Salih bin Fauzan bin Abdullah al-Fauzan, 'Abdul 'Aziz bin Fathi bin al-Sayyid A'id Nada, 'Abdul 'Aziz bin Abdullah bin Baz, Muhammad bin Salih al-Uthaymin, 'Abdullah bin 'Abdurrahman bin Jibrin, and Muhammad bin 'Abdul 'Aziz al-Sulaimani Qar'awi. These scholars were very active in preaching the doctrine of Wahhabism, especially through writing Islamic works in Arabic.

The above scholars are recognized as authorities on Wahhabi doctrines and have written numerous works in the field of religious knowledge, excluding philosophy. These books cover the fields of tafsīr, hadith, fiqh, jurisprudence, tawḥīd, education, and biographies of scholars. Given their decidedly anti-intellectual stance, the Wahhabi scholars not only reject but outrightly condemn the study of philosophy. Therefore, the content of Wahhabi books translated into the Indonesian language is related to purifying faith, purifying worship, and purifying morals. All books were originally written in Arabic.

The Indonesian translators of the Wahhabi literature are mostly loyal adherents of the sect themselves, educated in Saudi Arabian colleges and universities, and play an important role in the process of translating and publishing these books in Indonesia. Among the translators are Moehammad Thahir Badrie, Musthofa Aini, Hanif Yahya, Amir Hamzah, Muhammad Abbas, Izuddin Karimi, Ahmad S. Marzuqi, Amiruddin Djalil, Ummu U'ahmad, Elly Lathifah, Ahmad Yoswaji, M. Qadirun Nur, Abu Umar Basyir Al-Maidani, A.M. Basalamah, Asmuni, Ainul Haris Arifin, Abu Muawiyah Hammad, Hedi Fajar Rahadian, Abu Auna Ash-Shafi, and Ida Maulida F. These individuals, whether directly affiliated with Wahhabi groups or mere sympathizers, have been key to the propagation of the Wahhabi sect in Indonesia.

Based on the results of a literature study carried out on various sources, Wahhabi books are published by Ash-Shaf Media, Cahaya

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ayang Utriza Yakin, "Salafi Dakwah and the Dissemination of Islamic Puritanism in Indonesia: A Case Study of the Radio of Rodja," *Ulumuna* 22, no. 2 (2018): 205–236.

Tauhid Press, Darul Haq, Darul Falah, Darul Atsar, Darul Hadist, Darus Sunnah, Darul Qolam, Pustaka Panjimas, Pustaka At-Tibyan, Pustaka As-Sunnah, Pustaka Imam Bonjol, Aqwam, Alwadi, Pustaka Ibn Katsir, Media Tarbiyah, Pustaka Dhiya'ul Ilmi, Insan Kamil Publisher, al-Abror Media, Mitra Pustaka, at-Tibyan, Dar Ilmi, Gema Ilmu, al-Bayan, Pustaka Imam asy-Syafi'i, Attuqa, Darul Wathan, Pustaka Madina, Pustaka Imam Adz-Dzahabi, Syiar Media, Darussalam, Al-Qawam Publisher, Ummul Qura, Yayasan Al-Sofwa, and Kiswah Media. Even though the majority of Muslims in Indonesia adhere to the Ash'ari school, the works of the Wahhabi group can be accessed easily, and all of the publishers above play a key role in the process of circulating their ideology in Indonesia.

Books written by well-known Wahhabi scholars from the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia, have been translated into Indonesian and can be accessed easily. These books are available in bookstores and government libraries. Among the scholars whose works have been translated into Indonesian are Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab, 'Abdul 'Aziz bin 'Abdullah bin Baz, Muhammad bin Shalih al-Uthaymin, Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani, Salih bin Fauzan bin 'Abdullah al-Fauzan, 'Abdullah bin 'Abdurrahman bin Jibrin, and Muhammad bin 'Abdul 'Aziz al-Sulaymani Qar'awi. Their translated works are also complemented by books on Wahhabism and Wahhabi ideology written by leaders of this sect in Indonesia. Ustaz Firanda Andirja, who is an alumnus of the Islamic University of Madinah, wrote several books discussing Wahhabi ideology, including his *Syarh Kitab at-Tauhid* and *Menjawab Syubhat Para Penolak Sifat Allah Swt.* 

The existence of books written by Wahhabi scholars in Indonesian has also received a response from some authors and publishers who were not affiliated with the Wahhabi group, as evident in the emergence of publishers criticizing the Wahhabi ideology and movement, such as Lembaga Bahtsul Masail (LBM) NU Jember, Wali Pustaka, Sahifa, and IRCiSoD, for examples, Kajian Kritis dan Komprehensif Sejarah Lengkap Wahhabi written by Nur Khalik Ridwan (published by IRCiSoD), Menolak Wahabi: Membongkar Penyimpangan Sekte Wahabi, Dari Ibnu Taimiyah hingga Abdul Qadir at-Tilimsani written by Muhammad Faqih Maskumambang (published by Sahifa), Kerancuan Akidah Wahabi: Membela Akidah Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah yang Disesatkan Wahabi written by Abdul Wahab Ahmad (published by

Sahifa), Kritik Salafi Wahabi: Meluruskan Kesalahpahaman tentang Ketuhanan, Kenabian, Bid'ah, Takfir, Jihad dan Terorisme written by Ahmad Mahmud Karimah (published by Sahifa), Catatan Pemikiran Sayid Ahmad bin Zaini Dahlan tentang Wahabisme: Kumpulan Dalil, Kritik dan Bantahan Argumentatif Atas Mazhab Wahabi written by Sayyid Ahmad bin Zaini Dahlan (published by Wali Pustaka), and Buku Pintar Berdebat dengan Wahabi (published by LBM NU Jember). The rising anti-Wahhabi sentiments in Indonesia are also evident in online forums and social media and the heated debates between Wahhabis and Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah or Aswaja.

### Phases of Translating Shi'ite and Wahhabi Works and Motives

Mehdi Nakosteen explained that translators were the main key to spreading knowledge from foreign cultures to the Islamic world. Translation of knowledge books is carried out from the source language to the target language. In the context of the rise of Islamic civilization and European civilization, according to Nakosteen, the translators focused on works of philosophy and science from Greek directly into Arabic, or translated into Pahlavi then into Arabic, or translated from Hindu into Pahlavi then into Syriac, Hebrew, and Arabic. Likewise, Jews, Nestorians, and Western Christians, especially English and Italians, translated the works of Muslim philosophers from Arabic into Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Spanish, and Italian. This process also applies to the efforts in translating Shi'ite and Wahhabi literature into Indonesian today. Books written by Shi'ite scholars are generally written in Arabic, Persian, and English. Some of these books originally written in Persian or Arabic are translated directly into Indonesian, usually by local Shi'ah groups, while others have already been translated into English.

R.G.A. Dolby explained that the transmission of knowledge through translation activities takes place through several phases, namely the awareness, interest, and adoption phases. Likewise, the translation of Shi'ite and Wahhabi books into Indonesian has gone through an initial awareness phase when the prospective translators, editors, and publishers become aware of the existence of new ideas spreading from Iran and Saudi Arabia. In the second phase, the interest phase, the translators have a very strong interest in the content of the works of these foreign scholars because they consider the content to be very important knowledge. In the third phase, the adoption phase, the translator believes that the knowledge contained in the foreign works is worthy of circulation, study, and adoption. The translators of Shi'ite books, for example, believe that the knowledge contained in these works is worthy of being adopted for the benefit of the Shi'ah groups in Indonesia and a way to introduce the Sunni Muslims in Indonesia to Shi'ite ideas. The same applies to Wahhabi translators who wish to spread Wahhabi ideas in Indonesia.

According to R.G.A. Dolby, the adoption phase can either be passive or active. Passive adoption occurs if the new knowledge is deemed relevant for adoption and worthy of being used as teaching material. Meanwhile, active adoption occurs if the new knowledge is studied and researched further to produce new, more original knowledge. In context of the Shi'ite books, translators carry out translation activities of books written by Iranian scholars in the religious and philosophical sciences. The Persian, Arabic, and English works are translated into Indonesian so that the contained knowledge can be transmitted and circulated in the Indonesian language community. The same applies to the Wahhabi books. In both cases, the translators act as transmitters of knowledge and gain legitimacy as agents of knowledge transmission.

The main agents for translating Islamic works written by Shi'ite and Wahhabi scholars are committed local Shi'ite and Wahhabi scholars and publishers, although the role played by the unaffiliated groups cannot be denied. Shi'ah figures in Indonesia take an important role in translating Islamic books and actively translate and edit books written by Shi'ite scholars from Iran and Iraq to prepare them for publication. These authors include prominent Shi'ite scholars from Iran, such as Nasr al-Din al-Tusi, Sayyid Haidar 'Amuli, Mulla Sadra, Sayyid Muhammad Husain Tabatabai, Imam Khomeini, Murtada Mutahhari, Sayyid Ali Khamenei, Jawadi 'Amuli, Ja'far Subhani, Ibrahim Amini, Nasir Makarim Shirazi, Hashemi Rafsanjani, Ali Shariati, Mehdi Ha'iri Yazdi and Dasteghib. Apart from translating books, Shi'ah figures in Indonesia also publish their own books, for example, Hasan Abu Ammar, Jalaluddin Rakhmat, Kholid al-Walid dan Muhsin Labib, which are published by Mizan Publisher, Cahaya Publisher, Lentera Publisher, Pustaka Zahra Publisher, Al-Huda Publisher, Pustaka Hidayah Publisher, Sadra Press Publisher, Muthahhari Press Publisher, Misbah Publisher, Al-Jawad Foundation,

Fatimah Foundation, Citra Publisher, and Rausvan Fikr Institute Publisher.

Indonesian books written by Wahhabi scholars from the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia, are also readily available in Indonesia. Many publishers are known to publish translated books by Wahhabi scholars from the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia. Among these publishers are Ash-Shaf Media, Cahaya Tauhid Press, Darul Haq, Darul Falah, Darul Atsar, Darul Hadist, Darus Sunnah, Darul Qolam, Pustaka Panjimas, Pustaka At-Tibyan, Pustaka As-Sunnah, Pustaka Imam Bonjol, Agwam, Alwadi, Pustaka Ibn Katsir, Media Tarbiyah, Pustaka Dhiya'ul Ilmi, Insan Kamil Publisher, Al-Abror Media, Mitra Pustaka, at-Tibyan, Dar Ilmi, Gema Ilmu, Al-Bayan, Pustaka Imam Asy-Syafi'i, Attuga, Darul Wathan, Pustaka Madina, Pustaka Imam Adz-Dzahabi, Sviar Media, Darussalam, Al-Qawam Publisher, Ummul Oura, Yayasan al-Sofwa, and Kiswah Media. These various publishers publish translated books by leading Wahhabi scholars such as Muhammad bin 'Abdul Wahhab, 'Abdul 'Aziz bin 'Abdullah bin Baz, Muhammad bin Salih al-Uthaymin, Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani, Salih bin Fauzan bin 'Abdullah Al-Fauzan, 'Abdullah bin 'Abdurrahman bin Iibrin, and Muhammad bin 'Abdul 'Aziz al-Sulavmani Oar'awi.

The presence of Shi'ite literature in Indonesia cannot be separated from the existence of educated local Shi'ah figures, some of them having received religious education in Iran. This group has proficiency in Arabic and Persian, which has enabled them to translate Arabic and Persian books supported by their knowledge of Shi'ite doctrine. Several Shi'ah groups also established their own publishing press; for example, Nur al-Huda, Sadra Press, and Rausyan Fikr Institute. Similarly, the local Wahhabi groups have their own publishing channels.

From a literary aspect, the Shi'ah publishers focus on religious and philosophical books, while the Wahhabi publishers limit themselves to religious books as they reject the study of philosophy. The Shi'ite books circulating in Indonesia cover the Islamic faith, figh, Sufism, history, the Qur'an, hadith, education, logic, and philosophy, while the Wahhabi books cover tafsīr, hadith, figh, history, and morals.

Abdul Munip found that the process of translating and publishing Islamic books from the original language to the target language has specific goals. This also applies in the context of this

research where the translators of Shi'ite and Wahhabi books have their own specific motivations. The first is religious motivation, where the translators believe that the activity of translating Islamic books is part of their religious mission. The second is educational motivation. where the translation activities of both groups wish to introduce the local Muslim community to their ideas and explain their teachings. These books, once translated and published, can be used as reference works for students in Indonesia. Third, there is also the aspect of economic motivation, where the translators and publishers expect material benefits in the form of sales profits. The fourth is the ideological motivation where the translators wish to spread of their ideas and propagate their ideology actively among the public and attract more sympathizers and followers. Further, they hope to influence the development of Islamic thought in Indonesia and build a strong ideological basis. The fifth motivation of the translators is the stimulative-provocative type, where they aim to spark academic discourse in Islamic studies. Shi'ite and Wahhabi books in Indonesian often have polemical nuances; for example, books like Mengapa Saya Keluar dari Syiah written by Sayyid Husain al-Musawi. This book translated by Iman Sulaiman and published by Pustaka Al-Kaustar criticizes Shi'ite teachings. Likewise, Sayyid Ahmad bin Zaini Dahlan's book on Wahhabism was translated by Agus Khudlori and published under the title Catatan Pemikiran Sayid Ahmad bin Zaini Dahlan tentang Wahabisme - Dalil Kritik atas Mazhab Wahabi offers a strong critique of Wahhabism. Polemic and non-polemical books also gave rise to reactions from antithetical groups. For example, Aliansi Nasional Anti Syiah (ANNAS) opposes Shi'ite beliefs and movements and published Fatwa-fatwa Syiah Sesat in 2018. Likewise, LBM NU Jember published Buku Pintar Berdebat dengan Wahhabi written by Muhammad Idrus Ramli in 2010. However, religious and ideological motivations are the two dominant motives for these translation activities.

The majority of Muslims in Indonesia are moderate Sunnis, and there are undeniable differences in the interpretation of Islamic teachings between Sunni, Shi'ite, and Wahhabi Muslims. Not surprisingly, there are local Islamic groups whose main objective is to oppose the emergence of Shi'ah and Wahhabi groups. This is evidenced by the existence of an organization called the National Anti-Shia Alliance and several anti-Wahhabi groups.

The availability of Shi'ite and Wahhabi literature in Indonesia has a mixed impact. On the one hand, Sunni Muslims have the opportunity to learn about their ideas, gain a correct understanding and consult authoritative sources, without having to rely on biased secondary sources from their opponents. As a result, educated Sunni Muslims are in the position to engage in a constructive dialogue with Shi'ite and Wahhabi groups and prevent disharmony among the religious communities. On the other hand, some readers may be unduly influenced by Shi'ite or Wahhabi teachings, become converted, or become thoroughly confused about which Islamic practices to adopt and follow. Apart from that, the availability of Shi'ite literature in Indonesia gained a strong negative response from some Sunni groups who felt that they threatened Sunni Islam in Indonesia.

The distribution of Islamic books in Indonesia is largely unrestricted. The republic has long supported the upholding of democracy and human rights, guaranteeing that all citizens have the right to practice their religion and beliefs. As long as it does not violate the law or even contradict the ideology in Indonesia, every citizen, whether Wahhabi or Shi'i, can publish books in any chosen field on any topic. It is also acknowledged that not all publishers of these books identify with either group. In fact, publishers usually print and distribute books for business reasons and are not ideologically motivated. If a book is deemed business-worthy and can generate profits, the publisher will publish it without assessing its ideological impact on the readers. Nonetheless, publishing businesses should consider the ideological impact of their books and not only the commercial aspect, so that the books in circulation do not erode the four pillars of nationality: Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the Republic of Indonesia, and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.

# Concluding Remarks

The study found that the translators have been the main key to the introduction and spread of Shi'ite and Wahhabi ideas in Indonesia, thus providing and strengthening the ideological basis of both groups. This transmission of knowledge through translation takes place through the awareness, interest, and adoption phases and has religious, educational, economic, ideological, and stimulativeprovocative motivations. Religious and ideological motives seem to

be the two main motives for translating Shi'ite and Wahhabi books into Indonesian.

The activities of translating and publishing Shi'ite books are closely related to the presence of Shi'ah groups in Indonesia. Several Shi'ah figures have received their Islamic education in Iran and established foundations involved in teaching and book publishing, thus enabling them to produce Indonesian translations of books written by Shi'ite scholars in Iran and Iraq, covering the fields of Islamic sciences, logic, and philosophy. Even though these activities have given rise to some opposition by Sunni groups, Shi'ite literature is easily available for those interested in it.

Likewise, the activities of translating and publishing Wahhabi books are closely related to the existence of Wahhabi groups in Indonesia. Some of the local Wahhabi figures have been educated in Saudi Arabia and translated books written by Wahhabi scholars from the Middle East from Arabic into Indonesian. Several publishers are known to be affiliated with the Wahhabi group and publish their translations. This proliferation of Wahhabi literature has been criticized by Sunni groups who oppose the circulation of their radical ideas in Indonesia, resulting in anti-Wahhabi literature.

It should be understood that the study still leaves many problems that can be researched further because this study focused on the translation of Shi'ite books from Iran and Wahhabi books from Saudi Arabia. For example, this research does not examine in depth the intellectual response of the local Sunni groups, the specific contents of these books, or the response of the Shi'ite and Wahhabi groups to anti-Shi'ite and anti-Wahhabi books published by Sunni leaders. A very interesting phenomenon worth further examination is that the Shia and Wahhabi groups equally went to publish books criticizing Sunni teachings. For example, the Shi'ah group published *Syiah Menurut Syiah* in response to a book published by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) condemning Shi'ah teachings. Future studies can further examine this issue in detail.

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