

Social Integration of Indonesian Ahmadiyya Community to Preserve Existence in Jambi, 2003–2013

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Abstract

This study focuses on the social integration of Ahmadiyya Indonesia Community (JAI) to maintain its Existence in Jambi in the period 2003-2013. The issue raised in this study is the ability of the JAI in Jambi to maintain its existence at a time when Ahmadiyya congregations JAI in several regions in Indonesia suffered tragic fates after their places of worship were vandalized and their members suffered acts of violence perpetrated by local residents. In this regard, this article will answer the questions of why and how JAI Jambi carried out social integration efforts in order to maintain its existence. Issues that were subject of this study are the growth of JAI in Jambi from 2003-2013 and the social integration of JAI in Jambi to maintain its existence.

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Introduction

On December 4, 2013, Indonesians were shocked by heartbreaking and shameful sectarian violence perpetrated against the Ahmadiyya community (*Harian Jambi*, 5 December 2013). Plans of a rally against the Ahmadiyya community had been announced days earlier and there had been attempts to stage a demonstration. During the rally, protesters surrounded a mosque and an office of the Ahmadiyya community, sealed them off, and removed the signage.

In 2008 the Government through the Minister of Religious Affairs, the Attorney General, and the Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia issued a degree containing warnings and orders to adherents, members, and/or administrators of the Indonesian Ahmadiyya Community (JAI) and members of the public (*Joint Decree of Three Ministers*, 2008). Followers and administrators of the JAI who ignore the warnings and orders as referred to in the first and second dictums may be subject to sanctions in accordance with the laws and regulations governing organizations and legal entities.

In 2005, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), during its 7th National Conference, on 19-22 Jumadil Akhir 1426 H/July 26-29, 2005 AD, issued a fatwa on the Ahmadiyya sect, which stipulates that the Ahmadiyya sect is outside Islam, heretical and misleading, and that Muslims who follow it are apostates (Djamaluddin, 2003, pp. 98-

99). The fatwa also called on those who have already followed the Ahmadiyya sect to immediately return to the true teachings of Islam (*al-ruju' ila al-haqq*), as prescribed in the Quran and hadith. It also rules that the government is obliged to prohibit the spread of Ahmadiyya ideology throughout Indonesia, freeze the organization and close all places of its activities (MUI VII National Conference, 26-29 July 2005).

Those who support the fatwa is motivated by several factors: first, in 1980 the MUI issued a fatwa that Ahmadiyya was heretical and forbidden in Indonesia (Djamaluddin, 2003, p. 97) and second, Ahmadiyya was a deviant sect because its teachings have deviated from the authentic teachings of Islam. On top of this, MUI again issued "13 fatwas", one of which stated that Ahmadiyya was heretical and must be prohibited from existing in Indonesia. The MUI argued that its fatwa was based on the following reasons: First, Ahmadis believe in the existence of a prophet after the Prophet Muhammad. Second, Ahmadis do not follow Islamic teachings, but instead follow the teachings of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (who is believed to be a prophet), Imam Mahdi, the Messiah, and Jesus who came down to earth and received revelation. According to the MUI, these beliefs clearly deviate from the basic teachings of Islam. The MUI said it offered dialogue and conducted scientific studies before taking actions that were considered immoral. Dawam Rahardjo stated that MUI had made a big mistake with the fatwa, because the fatwa had been used as a tool by a group of people to judge and justify attacks against a group of people. In the vein, Gus Dur stated that MUI had made a mistake and was institutionally ill (Kurniawan, 2006, p. 5).

The Ahmadiyya community revealed that attacks, intimidation and acts of vandalism were not new to them, not only in Indonesia, but also in several other countries. Since the establishment by its founding father, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Ahmadiyya movement has drawn controversy, especially in its home countries India and Pakistan. Many scholars who were initially supportive of Mirza became hostile because of his teachings, and conversely, there were those who were initially hostile to him became his supporters (Hicks, 2014). Various criticisms of Ahmadiyya culminated in the fatwa issued by *Rabithah Alam Islami 1978* which stated that Ahmadiyya was a prohibited organization. However, when viewed objectively, currently one of the Islamic organizations that has the widest network in the world is Ahmadiyya. The progress of this organization has grown to almost all over the world and its offices are located in about 200 countries. Currently the headquarter is in London, United Kingdom. Actually, in the UK itself, its existence invites pros and cons, but due to a law on religious freedom, it considers as a community, so that any community as long as it does not violate the law has the right to live and develop (Audah, 2002, p. 14).

The arrivals of Ahmadis in Indonesia were greeted with mixed reactions. Some communities welcomed them with open arms, but others showed anti-Ahmadiyya sentiment (Audah, 2002, p. 17). The presence of the Ahmadiyya community in Jambi, setting aside the controversy about the Indonesia Ahmadiyya Community, the MUI fatwa issued in 1980, the 2005 MUI fatwa, the 2008 Joint Ministerial Decree, as well as the actions of groups against them in 2013, is of particular interest, because few studies

have been conducted about it from historical perspectives. Such literatures are sorely needed in Jambi to reduce clashes and misunderstandings that can lead to the disintegration of the nation. Several things are worth asking about the JAI in Jambi: How was the existence of the JAI in Jambi Province 2003-2013? Why did JAI integrate socially to maintain the existence of its community? And how did the members of the Ahmadiyya community respond to the fact that they had assimilated in social life but were still being victims of discriminatory treatment in Jambi?

Method

As part of historical studies, this study applied four stages in historical research methods: heuristics, criticism, source interpretation, and historiography (Notosusanto, 1984, pp. 22–23). Historical research is a process of reconstructing the relics of the past (Gottschalk, 1983, p. 32). The first stage is heuristics, a process to find and collect historical sources, both primary and secondary sources. The sources collected are those that are relevant to the theme being studied (Frederick and Soeroto, 1984, p. 467). The heuristic process of searching for primary sources in this study was carried out in several ways, including collecting written sources from the JAI archives and library in Jambi, oral data through a series of interviews with informants, and objects or photos related to historical writing (Kuntowijoyo, 2003, pp. 169 – 171).

Primary sources in the form of archives, documents and interviews used in this study were obtained from the location of the Ahmadiyya community in Jambi, official documents, Articles of Association and Bylaws (AD/ART) as well as interviews with informants. Meanwhile, secondary sources were obtained from various libraries such as the Jakarta National Library, the Ahmadiyya Community Library in Jambi, Jambi City Library, University of Indonesia Library, Universitas Gadjah Mada Library, Yogyakarta State University Library, Universitas Diponegoro Library, and other libraries. Visits to various libraries yielded many literatures on JAI, such as articles published in journals, books, magazines, and newspapers. Of course, not all sources present data in a way that researchers want because each has its strengths and weaknesses. However, researchers should be able to present those sources in a compelling way as without historical sources, historians will not be able to piece things together (Wasino, 2007, p. 9).

Source criticism is the second stage in the historical method to obtain authentic and credible data. Source criticism is important for researchers to be able to filter the information obtained during the data collection process. In this case there are two types of source criticism, namely external criticism and internal criticism. External criticism is made to determine the authenticity of a document. The authenticity of the archives contained in official institutions can be known immediately, for example a Decree on the management of the Indonesian Ahmadiyya Community, the Articles of Association of the Indonesian Ahmadiyya Community must be verified by studying those documents are structured and obtaining confirmation from people who issued them. The second criticism is internal criticism, which is to test the credibility of historical sources. It is necessary to seriously examine interview sources considering

that they have their own perspectives on historical events.

Interpretation is the third stage of the historical method, aimed at making connections between similar facts. Historical facts that are relevant to JAI's social integration efforts in Jambi during 2003-2013 are synthesized through imagination, interpretation, theorizing to find relationships between one fact and another in the framework of chronological and causal relationships. Thus, the dynamics of JAI's social integration efforts to maintain its existence in Jambi can be explained and then understood in a comprehensive and complete manner. At this stage, the use of social science concepts and theories is useful to help explain facts, including linking the social integration of JAI in Jambi as a minority and various pressures on them. This stage requires the researcher's imagination to describe a past event, by remaining disciplined with the existing traces.

Historiography is the stage of writing history. This involves verifying sources in stages and putting them together in scientific writing. The stages of historical writing begin with collecting sources, followed by criticism from various sources obtained, then interpreting facts from sources which are then assembled into a historical writing. If all stages are passed correctly, the expected historical work will be produced, namely a descriptive-analytical historical writing (Daliman, 2015, pp. 28-29).

Growth of Ahmadiyya Community in Jambi 2003-2013

The Ahmadi community in Sarolangun Jambi emerged from the government's transmigration program initiated during the New Order era in 1960-1980 (Crouch, 2010). The program was intended to reduce poverty and population density on densely populated islands, provide opportunities for people who want to work, and meet the needs of manpower to exploit natural process resources on islands such as Papua, Kalimantan, Sumatra and Sulawesi (Heren, 1979, pp. 32-38). Transmigration to Jambi Province occurred during 1966-1980 affecting areas including Rantau Rasau, Singkut, Rimbo Bujang, Pamenang, Dendang, Pamusiran. Areas in Sarolangun Regency affected by transmigration including, Singkut and Datuk Nan Tigo Pelawan in Limun District, according to a survey conducted by the Directorate General of Transmigration in 1973 (Soekasdi, 1980, pp. 29-34).

Ahmadis in Sarolangun came from Java, especially from Parung in Bogor through the transmigration program introduced by the Suharto government in 1978. At the beginning, there were only eight families: the Abdurahmans, the Adek Syaifulahs, the Mamad Muhammads, the Ukat Sukatmas, the Ahmad Sunaryas, the Mahmudins, the Endang Wijayas, and the Iyos. Each family was given a wooden house and one hectare of land by the government (Interview with Abdurahman, February 23, 2020).

The new members were attributed to the births and marriages, and it is common for members to come and go from and to other regions due to economic factors. For 25 years, from 1978-2003, there were around 150 Ahmadis in Sarolangun, becoming the largest group in Jambi province. Data collection in Sarolangun was not as accurate as that in the city of Jambi due to the lack of education and poverty. Ahmadis in Sarolangun did not pay attention to archiving, with frequent changes to religious

imams (*mubaligh*) contributing to the problem. *Mubaligh* were tasked with preaching and did not pay attention to administrative matters, which were supposed to be the job of community leaders and their subordinates who are elected every three years.

In 2003, the Sarolangun branch of JAI began to show its influence, because a new regional administration had been formed in the center of Jambi Province. This facilitated connections in regional groupings before the Jambi regional administration was formed. Whenever an event was held, the Sarolangun congregation went to Palembang, South Sumatra for a 10-hour trip. This made it difficult for the congregation in Sarolangun to participate in Ahmadiyya activities, thereby slowing their progress. It was not uncommon for Ahmadiis to leave and stop taking part the organization's activities (Interview with Ukat Sukatma, February 23, 2020). The formation of regional administrators in a separate province made the Sarolangun branch of the Ahmadiyya Organization even more solid. In 2003 – 2005 there were several times of betrayal. The first *bai'at* (pledge of loyalty) was conducted in 2004, attended by 10 people. Furthermore, in 2005 11 more people took the oath of allegiance conducted by a Ahmadiyya *mubaligh* in an event that coincided with the Regional Leadership meeting (Interview with Mamad Muhammad, February 23, 2020).

During 2005-2009 the growth of Ahmadiyya faced stagnation after the MUI firmly issued a fatwa against the community during the Second National Conference in Jakarta. The fatwa, which ruled that Ahmadiyya was outside Islam, heretical and misleading, hurt the expansion of Ahmadiyya (Zulkarnain, 2011, p. 294). During 2010-2013, Ahmadiyya did not experience significant growth, other than from marriages, births and the transfer of members. During that period the size of the community was around 215 people. The outbreak of conflict on December 4, 2013 made them even more united and strengthened their resolve to maintain their existence. With these attacks, the community became increasingly convinced of the truth of their beliefs. They likened their sufferings to the early struggles of the Prophet Muhammad in spreading Islam. Likewise, the Qadian Ahmadiis convinced members, that the Imam Mahdi revealed to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has descended, and they are obliged to believe in him and spread the teachings to all mankind. People who believe and follow the commandments are on the right path. They took *bai'at* and were convinced that the Ahmadi Islam is a blessing for the universe, while those outsiders were deemed to have not found the true way of Islam (Interview A. Syaifulah, February 23, 2020).

The arrival of a *mubaligh* named Nurhadi in 1984 from Kerucil, Central Java marked the the entry of Ahmadiis into Kayu Aro in Kerinci. That year he settled in Sungai Penuh and then moved to the village of Bengkolan Dua. He conducted religious study sessions and sermons in surrounding villages to convey to the public that Imam Mahdi had arrived. At first the sermons were delivered to individuals and eventually some of them took *bai'at*, including the families of Mr. Salib Shahib, Mr. Legiman and Mr. Rasmin (Interview with Mubarak Ahmad, February 29, 2020). In 1987, Nurhadi was replaced by Mr. Sulaiman, leading to the expansion of the Ahmadiyya community in Kerinci and the pledges of allegiance by more people including Mr. Abdul Syukur, Mr. Darsik, Mr. Suratmin, and Mr. Umurin and their

families. The expansion happened even more rapidly, including to the villages of Sungai Lintang, Batu Hampar, Pasar Minggu, Soko Dua, Kebun Baru, Sungai Tanduk, Bengkulan Dua, Pematang Lintang, Semurup, Batang Merangin, and Sungai Penuh. From 1988 to 2003 JAI Kerinci experienced three changes of *mubaligh* but it did not work out well and the size of the Ahmadiyya remained stagnant. Among the *mubaligh* who took charge that year were Mr. Sulaiman, Mr. Jumantoro, and Mr. Supriyanto. The number of Ahmadiyya grew through births, marriages and the arrival of members from other places until 2003. Over a span of 15 years, from 1984-2003, the total number of members in Kerinci reached 205 people (Interview with Agus Salim Hasibuan, February 29, 2020).

In 2003, there were around 205 members of Ahmadiyya in Gunung Kerinci and with additional 10 in late December 2004, the number rose to 215. The additions were not due to the results of preaching, but members returning to settle in Kerinci (Mubarak Ahmad, February 29, 2020). During 2004-2007, their size rose to 230, but this was not the result of conversions or *bai'at*, but members moving from Merangin and South Solok (Interview with Ahmad Wakir, February 29, 2020).

During 2007-2013 the size of the Ahmadiyya community in Kerinci dropped as economic pressures forced many to move to areas that offered jobs. At the end of 2013 the size of the community dropped to 215. In the period of 2003 – 2013, the size of the Ahmadiyya community in Kerinci remained unchanged. In Kerinci, the role of *mubaligh* had been dominant in the growth and development of the Ahmadiyya community from the outset. The 2005 MUI fatwa which declared Ahmadiyya to be outside of Islam and the 2009 Joint Decree of Three Ministers issued by the central government also affected growth. After the conflict in 2013 the Ahmadiyya community found it increasingly difficult to expand, because of the negative stigma that was propagated through the media. *Mubaligh* spent a lot of time trying to counter accusations directed at the community.

The establishment of the Ahmadiyya Qadian branch in Jambi city in 2003 following the arrival of Ahmadiyya *mubaligh* became the catalyst for the growth of community in Jambi Province (Ahmadi, On February 26, 2020). After news of the formation of the Jambi city Ahmadiyya branch spread around Jambi Province, other Ahmadis around Jambi Province began to join, including Mr. Abdurahman, a member of the Ahmadiyya community from Lahat, Mr. Nasrullah Nawir and his son from Jamaah Padang, and Mr. Legimin from Lubuk Ciuk, Medan. In addition, on June 17, 2004, an Ahmadi family with five family members from Medan who lived in Muaro Bulian also joined forces (Ahmad, 2006-2007).

In 2003, the Ahmadiyya Qadian community in Jambi comprised only five families. But at that time there were 12 Ahmadis from various areas in Jambi. On July 15, 2004, the Jambi branch *mubaligh* oversaw the pledge of allegiance by five people in Bayung Lincir, where an Ahmadi family had lived - children of the late Mr. Jailani. On March 5, 2005, seven people - the family of Mr. Setiyono - underwent a *bai'at* by the Ahmadiyya Jambi *mubaligh*. Based on the information, it can be concluded that in just 2 years, from 2003 to 2005, dozens of people registered as members of the Ahmadiyya.

Then on July 28, 2005, the Indonesian Ulema Council issued a fatwa which reaffirmed the MUI fatwa in the Second National Conference (26 May - 1 June 1980), stating that Ahmadiyya was outside Islam, heretical and misleading (Zulkarnain, 2001, p. 294).

In 2005-2009 the Ahmadiyya community faced stagnation, with about 30 members. They struggled to maintain their existence from the onslaught of the media and government regulations that suppressed them. In addition, the issuance of the Joint Decree of three Ministers issued by the government in 2009 seemed to add to their nightmare. During 2009-2013, the Ahmadiyya community in Jambi Province endured various negative stigmas from the public, culminating in rallied by activists and the Community Alliance of Jambi Province on December 4, 2013. This affected the missionary activities. At that time, only 10 families lived in Jambi City, with the rest scattered on the outskirts to escape the increasingly tense situation. Members who left finally returned to help protect their families and groups, so that by the end of 2013 the size of the community rose to 85. About 90% of the Ahmadiyya community in Jambi were migrants who lived inside and outside the city. About 8% Javanese and Bugis were born in Jambi, and 3% were Jambi natives (Ahmad, 2013, p. 2).

Social Integration of Ahmadiyya Community in Jambi, 2003 -2013

In its movement, each organization has its own way of assimilating into society and the government, allowing its members to exist and grow in a new settlement. Through field research, the author observed and participated in JAI social activities directly, such as giving herbal treatment, blood donation, eye cornea donation, and conducting collaborative activities with the local government (Interview with Ali Rahman, February 29, 2020). After the MUI Decree (No 11/Munas VII/MUI/15/2005) from 2005 to 2008, JAI's social activities in Jambi Province experienced a decline. Basically, the activities of the Indonesian Ahmadiyya Community in various regions are experiencing the same situation, especially social activities, due to the stigma created by the media that affected the community (Interview with M. Syarif Hidayatullah, February 26, 2020). After the 2008 Joint Decree of 3 Ministers from 2008 to 2013, social activities of the Ahmadiyya Community remained stagnant and even in decline (Interview with Rian Ahmadi, February 19, 2020). They tried to carry out social programs as usual, despite the negative stigma from MUI. In fact, the situation worsened after the outbreak of protests by a group of activists and community members in 2013, causing all Ahmadiyya activities to stop for a while. The protests forced them to take down the Ahmadiyya signboards across Jambi Province including at mosques. From 2008 to 2013 was a dark period for the growth and social activities of the Ahmadiyya Community of Jambi Province. However, the silver lining was that the organization became increasingly united in carrying out religious activities (Interview with Agus Salim Hasibuan, 29 October 2020).

After the MUI Decree (No. 11//Munas VII/MUI/15/2005) from 2005 to 2008. The MUI fatwa in 2005 was not the first on the Ahmadiyya community, but reaffirmed the previous fatwa No. 05/Kep/Munas II/MUI/1980 issued during the National Conference II in Jakarta on May 26 - June 1, 1980. At that time, the MUI issued a fatwa affirming

that Ahmadiyya was a congregation outside Islam, heretical, and misleading (MUI Fatwa, 2003, pp. 98-99). The response of JAI Jambi Province regarding the 2005 fatwa, according to the missionary representative for the Jambi City region, was that Ahmadiyya was not heretical (Rian Ahmadi. 24 February 2020) and called on members to ignore it. Ahmadis remained calm and were not worried about its legality in Indonesia, because they believed that only the President could dissolve the Ahmadiyya organization. What worried Ahmadis were the actions of local communities that responded disproportionately to the MUI fatwa, even though the institution prohibits all types of anarchic actions against any party or activity that are not in line with this MUI fatwa. The *muballigh* repeatedly emphasized that the existence of the Ahmadiyya would always be preserved, although in terms of activities from 2005-2008 there were problems.

The existence of JAI in Jambi Province Post-Joint Decree of Three Ministers in 2008. During 2008-2013, with the issuance of the Joint Decree of Three Ministers in 2008 regarding Ahmadiyya, ostensibly aimed to build inter-religious harmony, especially between JAI and Muslims in general, Ahmadis encountered obstacles. The biggest obstacle faced actually stems from the decree, which was widely misunderstood by most people. Many people consider the regulation as an affirmation of the prohibition on the existence of JAI (Joint Decree of 3 Ministers, 9 June 2008), even though there is no prohibition in place. It has led to violence against JAI adherents. The masses wanted Ahmadiyya be disbanded during protests in Parung, Bogor and Jambi. The situation meant Ahmadis were at risk, as in early 2003-2005. Even after the 2013 protests, all mosques with the Ahmadiyya sign were removed to comply with the demands of the protesters. However, on the bright side, this had brought more unity to members and this resulted in many members performs religious activities more rigorously. They were increasingly convinced that Ahmadiyya was on the right path, likening their struggle to that of the Prophet Muhammad in spreading Islam (Interview with Muhammad Syarif Hidayatullah, February 24, 2020).

The Joint Decree of 3 Ministers and cases of violence that befell JAI brings us to the question of how the existence of JAI will continue. The existence of JAI can be seen through several things such as the existing organizational structure, number of members, activities carried out, identity, and others. At that moment, the meeting between all members of JAI. They gathered and chatted together after the Friday prayer was completed. These activities can strengthen and maintain the motivation of individuals. The creation of culture is also carried out by all JAI members through family institutions. They are very aware that the formation of a JAI culture can only be formed through education taught in the family. One of the forms of culture within the JAI family is awareness of the education that is instilled in children and the inculcation of Islamic values. The above is a form of the latency function built by the JAI organization. The latency function in the JAI organization has also shown a pattern of maintenance, improvement of motivation and the creation of culture/habits. All of this is done to internalize the values of Ahmadiyya into its adherents. It is this internalization that will bring eternity to the organization. The compatibility between

Talcott Parsons' A, G, I, L concept with the existing system in JAI above, is a sign that the JAI organization is able to survive in various conditions such as pressure from the 2005 MUI Fatwa, the Joint Decree of Three Ministers and the protests by Student Action and Community Alliances in Jambi in 2013. Talcott Parsons' assumption, may be true, that a system will survive if it has four functions, as evidenced by the organization of the Indonesian Ahmadiyya Community. Although religious activities have decreased, the existence of the JAI organization from 2008-2013 persists and continues to carry out movements.

Conclusion

The entry of JAI in Jambi Province cannot be separated from migration. The Ahmadi congregation's social interaction with the surrounding community who were non-Ahmadis has been good in all fields except for religious practices. Ahmadiyya congregations tend to separate themselves from non-Ahmadis in the religious field. In addition, the Indonesian Ahmadiyya organization pays great attention to its congregations. Every month the communities get visits from *mubaligh* who work around the congregation in each branch in Jambi Province.

The growth of the Indonesian Ahmadiyya Community in Jambi Province from 2003-2013, (After the 2005 MUI fatwa, Decree of Three Ministers and the 2013 Jambi Student and Community Action). The most visible expansion of the Ahmadiyya Community happened before the issuance of the 2005 MUI decree, the 2008 Decree of 3 Ministers, and the 2013 Jambi Student and Community Action protests, from 2003 to 2005, which marked the establishment of the Jambi City branch. They succeeded in building what they called the Mission House which also served as a special mosque for the Ahmadiyya Community.

In order to maintain its existence, JAI carries out various social and religious activities such as blood donation, herbal medical treatment (homeopathy), and daily activities such as village cleaning and competitions conducted with the government. Initially these activities went smoothly, but after the issuance of the 2005 MUI fatwa, the Joint Decree of Three Ministers, and the 2013 Jambi Student and Community protests, they have faced opposition. This has greatly reduced the organization's activities, especially after the government and MUI issued an appeal for JAI not to carry out missionary activities. Because of media reports, communities harbor distrust for the Ahmadiyya organization, especially in Jambi Province. Even so, they manage to survive and keep their members to carry out activities as usual, despite the stigma attached to them.

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