



# Progressive Islam and Majelis Ulama Indonesia

Progressive Islamic perceptions on religious diversity  
management by an Indonesian religious council

**Nathan Spiro**

Supervisor: prof. dr. H.L. Beck

Second reader: prof. dr. K. Yagmur

MA thesis | Management of Cultural Diversity



Name: Nathan Spiro

ANR: 391285

Telephone: +31630886175

Email: Nathanspiro@gmail.com

Supervisor: prof. dr. H.L. Beck

Second reader: prof. dr. K. Yagmur

**Title of thesis:**

Progressive Islam and Majelis Ulama Indonesia: Progressive Islamic perceptions on religious diversity management by an Indonesian religious council

**Abstract:** This study maps perceptions from progressive Islamic representatives in contemporary Indonesia towards the management of religious diversity by a religious council called the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI). Two cases where the MUI used their fatwas (religious opinions) to manage religious diversity are central in this thesis. These cases are used to reveal insights on the progressive Islamic landscape and issues that progressive Islam is facing in Indonesia.

Firstly, this study argues that the MUI with their fatwa no.7 -which opposes religious pluralism, Islamic liberalism and secularism affected the functioning of the progressive Islamic landscape negatively. Secondly, this thesis demonstrates that the MUI's religious statements during the Jakarta gubernatorial elections in 2017 are a continuation of their fatwa no.7. Their affirmation of the practicality of Surah Al Maidah 51 during the elections sheds light on their point of view towards religious pluralism. Like fatwa no.7, their recent religious guidelines exacerbated the already present critical perspectives from the progressive Islamic side towards the increasingly political-ideological character of the MUI. This thesis concludes that the MUI is strengthening its position as a representative of the Indonesian Ummah. Their involvement in the Jakarta gubernatorial elections show that they took an additional step in their attempt to curb religiosity. This, on the one hand, shakes-up the progressive Islamic camp, while on the other, gives justification to conservative and reactionary Islamic initiatives.

**Keywords:** Intra- religious diversity, Islam in Indonesia, Progressive Islam, Majelis Ulama Indonesia

**Word Count:** 14142

## Preface

This thesis is carried out for the master track Management of Cultural Diversity. Throughout this master track, my focus was specifically on diversity issues in Islam. The religiously pluralistic context which Indonesia offers appeared to be a perfect fit to continue this focus. The data collection for this research took place in Indonesia over a period of exactly 100 days. This would not have been possible without my scholarship from the Frans Seda Foundation. Therefore, I would like to thank them for opening the door to this wonderful opportunity.

During my data collection, the Jakarta gubernatorial elections were in full-swing. Controversy and discussions around these events made religious pluralism word of the day. The societal relevance of my topic ensured that people wanted to speak up about how they felt about these developments, which guaranteed me of enough relevant interviews. Many interviewees perceived the election process as a test of the strength of Indonesia's position on religious pluralism and wanted to express their views about what was happening.

I ended up attending several public discussions and conducted a total of 20 interviews in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Solo, and Malang. Many interviews were concluded with informal discussions. On some occasions, I was invited by the interviewees to have iftar (break the fasting during Ramadan) or have dinner after the interview. Many of the people I interviewed were truly inspirational and opened my mind to a range of issues.

This experience inspired me to carry on researching the Indonesian context. I am currently looking for a Ph.D. position and aspire to become an academic. I want to thank Dolf Huijgers and Rennie Roos from the Frans Seda Foundation, the very helpful international office of Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya and lastly, I am especially grateful to my supervisor prof. dr. Herman Beck for enabling this new chapter in my life.

# Table of Contents

Preface.....	2
Table of Contents .....	3
Organizations .....	6
Introduction .....	7
Problem statement .....	7
1 Literature review .....	10
1.1 Fatwas in Indonesia .....	10
1.2 JIL and JIMM .....	11
1.3 Progressive Islamic discourses .....	12
1.4 Significance of Fatwa no.7 .....	12
2 Theoretical framework .....	12
2.1 Islamic discourses .....	13
2.2 Religious Pluralism, religious liberalism, and secularism.....	14
2.2.1 MUI and Religious pluralism .....	14
2.2.2 MUI and Islamic liberalism.....	15
2.2.3 MUI and secularism .....	15
2.3 Public Sphere and the digital Public Sphere.....	16
3 Research Context.....	16
3.1 Heterogeneous Indonesia.....	16
3.2 Mass Muslim organizations in Indonesia .....	17
3.3 MUI in an ever-changing context.....	17
4 Methodology .....	18

4.1	Research Design .....	18
4.2	Data Collection .....	18
4.3	Data analysis .....	19
4.4	Sample .....	20
4.5	Research Quality Indicators.....	20
5	Results .....	21
5.1	Progressive Islam in contemporary Indonesia.....	21
5.1.1	Progressive Islamic Youth networks.....	22
5.1.2	Radically progressive .....	23
5.1.3	Inactiveness of JIMM and JIL.....	24
5.1.4	Progressive Islamic NGO's .....	25
5.1.5	Progressive Islamic digital presence .....	26
5.1.6	Islamic website popularity .....	28
5.2	MUI's Role in Indonesia .....	29
5.2.1	MUI through the years .....	29
5.2.2	Criticism on MUI's role from a progressive Islamic perspective .....	30
5.3	Fatwa no. 7 on religious pluralism, religious liberalism, and secularism (2005).....	30
5.3.1	Progressive perspectives on MUI's definition of pluralism in fatwa no.7 .....	31
5.3.2	Progressive perspectives on implications of fatwa no.7 .....	31
5.4	MUI and the Ahok case (2017) .....	33
5.4.1	MUI's involvement in the Ahok case .....	33
5.4.2	The GNPF-MUI .....	34
5.4.3	Criticism on the MUI's involvement in the Ahok case.....	35
5.4.4	Perceived implications of the MUI's involvement in the Ahok case.....	35
5.5	Progressive Turn.....	36

6	Conclusion and discussion .....	37
6.1	Conclusion .....	37
6.2	Discussion.....	39
6.2.1	Challenges for progressive Islam .....	39
6.2.2	Similarities between MUI fatwa 7 and the MUI’s role in the Ahok case .....	40
6.3	Directions for future research .....	41
6.4	Limitations.....	41
	References .....	42
	Appendices .....	44
	Appendix A – Interviews and interviewee’s role and organization .....	44
	Appendix B – Attended events.....	46
	Appendix C – Example of interview script.....	47
	Appendix D – Selection of interview parts .....	49

## Organizations

This thesis opts to use the term “*progressive Islamic representatives*” to refer to a wide range of progressive Islamic movements, networks, organizations (including NGO’s), scholars and prominent individuals. Besides these progressive Islamic representatives, some other organizations are discussed in this thesis. A brief overview of all main organizations that are mentioned in this thesis is presented below.

FPI	Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defenders Front, reactionary group)
GUSDURian Network	A Value-based, progressive Islamic activist network
HTI	Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (a (pan-Islamist) reactionary organization)
JIL	Jaringan Islam Liberal (Liberal Islam Network)
JIMM	Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah (a progressive Network of young Muhammadiyah Intellectuals)
MAARIF Institute	Institute for Culture and Humanity
MUI	Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Council of Indonesian Islamic scholars)
Muhammadiyah	Indonesia's oldest Islamic mass organization
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama (Indonesia’s largest traditionalist Muslim mass organization)
NU Online	Online representation of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)
Paramadina	Universitas Paramadina
UGM	Universitas Gadjah Mada
UI	Universitas Indonesia
UIN	Universitas Islam Negeri (State Islamic University)
Wahid Institute	Research Center on Islamic issues

## Introduction

When former president Suharto stepped down in 1998 after his three-decade-long authoritarian regime, commonly known as the New Order era, years of repression in Indonesia abruptly ended. This was the mark for an era of Reformasi (reform), which gave unprecedented openness in the religious public sphere. All kinds of religious discourses, which formerly existed in the background, could be openly expressed. This freedom not only resulted in increasingly vocal conservative and reactionary (e.g., radical and Islamist) Islamic discourses but also gave ground to expressions of progressive Islamic discourses. In other words, polarization within Indonesian Islam surfaced after years of repression. In 2005, the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), an Indonesian council of Islamic scholars, attempted to curb religiosity. They did so by issuing a fatwa (an Islamic legal opinion issued by a Muslim jurist) that opposed defined forms of religious pluralism, Islamic liberalism, and secularism. Although the fatwa specified that plurality (i.e., diversity as a social fact) of religion was *not* forbidden, it was rather ambiguous as to what religious pluralism entailed. Phrases such as “only interact with non-Muslims to the extent of not inflicting mutual harm” (as cited in Kersten, 2015) leave room for interpretation. Reactionary Muslim organizations like FPI (Front Pembela Islam), also known as the Islamic Defenders Front and HTI (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia), used the MUI fatwa as justification for their ideology and actions.

## Problem statement

The current study aims to illustrate contemporary forms of progressive Islamic discourses and their related views on the management of religious diversity by the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI). This is done using a multiple-perspective approach, comparing the perspectives of prominent progressive representatives with several scholars and the reflections of the Islamic council itself. More specifically, the focus is on how these different representatives of progressive Islam perceive the issuance of fatwas (and other religious guidelines) by the MUI related to religious pluralism, Islamic liberalism, and secularism. This thesis looks at the respective fatwas as an instrument the MUI uses to manage religious diversity in Indonesia. Progressive Islamic perspectives on two notable cases where the MUI used their religious authority to manage religious diversity will be discussed throughout this thesis.

Firstly, Fatwa no.7, issued by the MUI in 2005 on pluralism, liberalism, and secularism will be examined from different points of view. This fatwa, where the MUI oppose defined forms

of religious pluralism, Islamic liberalism, and secularism has been a much-debated topic. Initially, the current study focused solely on progressive perceptions on the issuance of this Fatwa no.7. However, the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial elections were in full swing at the time of data collection. In the period before the final election round, the MUI issued a religious guideline (not a fatwa, but by many perceived as a fatwa) recommending Muslims not to vote for a non-Muslim leader. This had an impact on the elections since the former governor and then-candidate, Basuki Tjahaja “Ahok” Purnama, is a Catholic politician. The MUI also impacted the gubernatorial election process by issuing a religious statement on Ahok, declaring that he was guilty of committing blasphemy. This involvement of the MUI during the election process closely relates to topics of religious pluralism and secularism. It demonstrates that the MUI attempts to manage religious diversity in Indonesia, and in this case, even in the political sphere. Therefore, this thesis not only focuses on progressive perspectives on MUI fatwa no.7 issued in 2005 but also discusses progressive perspectives towards the MUI’s role during the period in which the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial elections were held. The central question this study asks, then, is:

**What are the perceptions towards MUI’s management of religious diversity and the related consequences from a progressive Islamic perspective, and what do these perceptions and their underlying factors reveal about the contemporary Indonesian progressive Islamic landscape?**

The current research maps contemporary forms of progressive Islamic discourses in Indonesian society. The overall aim is to illustrate progressive perceptions towards the MUI’s religious diversity management and see what these findings reveal about the contemporary Indonesian religious landscape. This will be done by showing contestations, similarities and the underlying factors behind the attitudes towards MUI’s management of religious diversity. The current research transcends a merely descriptive approach since it attempts to reveal underlying issues for progressive Islam in Indonesia, looks for the underlying factors and eventually argues how these findings can be interpreted to explain the position of progressive Islam in the Indonesian religious landscape. Moreover, the sub-questions this thesis attempts to answer are:

- What does the progressive Islamic landscape look like and what problems are progressive Islamic representatives in Indonesia facing?
- What are the underlying factors of the found problems?

- How progressive Islamic representatives position themselves towards the role of the MUI in contemporary Indonesia?
- How are the issuance of fatwa no.7 and its related consequences perceived by progressive Islamic representatives?
- How is the MUI's involvement in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial elections perceived by progressive Islamic representatives?
- What factors influence the position and reasoning of the found attitudes of the progressive Islamic representatives?

Finally, the discussion chapter will analyze and interpret the results and will end with arguing what the implications are of the found perceptions for the progressive religious landscape in Indonesia.

# 1 Literature review

Numerous studies deal with fatwas issued by the Indonesian Muslim Council that goes under the name of MUI. Most research focusses on the controversy of some of their fatwas in terms of contestation of religious freedom (Syafiq, 2011; Sirry, 2013), the relation to and use of Islamic fundamentalism and militant Islamic organizations of these fatwas (Crouch, 2010; Fealy, 2004) and the effect on violence and impact towards minorities (Burhani, 2014). Other research deals with the relationship between the MUI and the two largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia: the Muhammadiyah and the NU (Nadhlatul Ulama). The interplay between the MUI and these two mass Islamic organizations are rather complicated since the MUI is a so-called “tenda besar” (big tent). The MUI functions as an umbrella organization for diverse Muslim organizations (Hasyim, 2011). Since the Muhammadiyah and the NU are by far the largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia, the MUI largely exists of either Muhammadiyah or NU members. Gillespie (2007) describes and analyses the reactions of prominent members of these two large Muslim organizations towards the release of fatwa no. 7, while Burhani (2007) specifically investigated the attitude of the Muhammadiyah towards subjects as pluralism, liberalism, and Islamism. The current thesis differs from the previously described studies in the sense that it focusses specifically on progressive perspectives (as defined in the theoretical framework). Furthermore, it takes a different angle from the mentioned studies by looking (from a progressive perspective) at very recent events around the MUI and not solely the fatwa issued in 2005.

## 1.1 Fatwas in Indonesia

A fatwa (Arabic fatwā) is an answer given by Muslim scholars in response to a question. Traditionally, a fatwa is not binding (Lindsey, 2012, p. 253). Indonesia has a different structure when it comes to fatwa issuance compared to many other Muslim majority countries. The MUI is not the only council which issues fatwas in the Indonesian context. Examples of other fatwa councils are the NU’s Bahsul Masa’il and the Muhammadiyah’s Majlis Tarjih. On the issuance of fatwas by these other councils, Hasyim (2011, p.8) notes that they are not as prolific as the MUI’s fatwas. The MUI issues a larger number of fatwas and has, according to Hasyim, become “the most authoritative Muslim institution in Indonesia in the field of fatwa production”. However, their authority is not officially affirmed by the government. Besides the different fatwa councils which are present in Indonesia, there is a structural difference in the way the council is set up compared to councils in other Muslim majority countries. Within the MUI, there is no single

authority. The head of this council (currently Ma'ruf Amin), functions as chair of the Fatwa Commission, which comprises several ulama (Islamic scholars). According to Assyaukanie (2009), a fatwa will not be issued by the MUI if this commission fails to come to a consensus. The MUI declares it uses fatwas and other forms of opinions on issues of Islam “to guide the Islamic community and the government” (as cited by Lindsey, 2012, p. 253).

## 1.2 JIL and JIMM

Arguably, the most (in)famous progressive Islamic organization in Indonesia is Jarengan Islam Liberal (JIL). JIL takes a very critical and outspoken standpoint towards the issuance of Fatwa no.7 by the MUI. JIL's position on the topics of religious pluralism, religious liberalism, and secularism and JIL's relation with the MUI fatwa no.7 that opposes these concepts are brought forward in the work of several articles and books (Sirry, 2013; van Bruinessen 2013; Kersten, 2015). A progressive movement that arose shortly after JIL is Jarengan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah (JIMM). The current national coordinator, and co-founder of JIMM, Pradana Boy Zulian, dedicated a chapter in his recently finished book (2018, pp. 71-127) to the Dialectics of Religious Pluralism in Indonesia. This chapter illustrates Pradana Boy Zulian's critical perspectives on MUI's fatwa no.7. Since he functions as a direct representative of JIMM, his views also indicate JIMM's organizational perspective on this fatwa. In this chapter, he calls MUI's fatwa no.7 a “conscious attempt to preserve its (MUI's) traditionalistic religious perspective in the face of opposing ideas within the society” (2018, p.89). Pradana Boy Zulian believes this fatwa delegitimizes and silences ideas coming from groups that call themselves liberal or progressive or others that advocate inclusivity of religious views in society. His book shows his criticism towards the MUI's elaboration and interpretation of certain concepts in the fatwa. He is especially critical towards their definition of pluralism. Additionally, he questions the contextualization and use of Hadith that is cited in the fatwa.

Basya (2011, p.74), notes that both JIMM and JIL promote pluralism, in the sense that they call Muslims to be engaged with non-Muslim to establish democracy and human rights. Both networks, Basya argues, advise Muslims to see religions as relative forms of the ultimate truth or God's messages. In this thesis, these two progressive networks (JIMM and JIL) are taken as a starting point for mapping progressive Islamic perspectives on MUI's religious diversity management. A variety of other progressive Islamic networks and movements are added to the research to get a more comprehensive insight.

### 1.3 Progressive Islamic discourses

A book which thoroughly details and portrays the origin and current shape of progressive Islamic discourses in Indonesia is Carool Kersten's "Islam in Indonesia, the contest for society ideas and values" (2015). Kersten's book is closely in line with the scope of the current thesis. Therefore, some theoretical concepts from his book are applied in this thesis' theoretical framework.

Kersten, in his work, maps philosophical and theoretical extrapolations by Muslim intellectuals. In a concise, yet elaborate way he reveals the polarization between the reactionary and progressive camps of Islam within Indonesian society. Many of the progressive interviewees, scholars, networks, and movements that are central to the current thesis, also come forward in Kersten's work. Furthermore, Kersten goes into detail on the MUI's fatwa no.7. This fatwa coincided with what Kersten refers to as the conservative turn in 2005. Analogously, van Bruinessen (2013, p.3) argues that by 2005 it appeared that a conservative turn had taken place in mainstream Islam and that the modernist and liberal views that had until then, found relatively broad support within Muhammadiyah and NU, were increasingly rejected. MUI's fatwa no.7 is seen by van Bruinessen as the "clearest expression of the conservative turn." Moreover, van Bruinessen proclaims that this specific fatwa is a frontal attack on JIL as well as an attempt to delegitimize a broader category of Muslim intellectuals and NGO activists, including some of the most respected Muslim personalities from previous decades.

### 1.4 Significance of Fatwa no.7

Together with their 2005 fatwa against the Ahmadiyya, van Bruinessen (2013) sees MUI's fatwa no.7 as the "the MUI's clearest intervention in Indonesia's religious politics". The importance of the fatwa also comes forward in Kersten's book (2015), where he states that the polarization in debates amongst Muslims in Indonesia can be partially attributed to the problematic choice of terminology in MUI's fatwa no.7. With "problematic choice of terminology" Kersten refers to the MUI's use of "isms". In particular, their interpretations and definitions of religious pluralism, Islamic liberalism, and secularism.

## 2 Theoretical framework

This chapter will elaborate on the theoretical concepts that are central to the current study. The relevance of these concepts together with how these concepts relate to this thesis are shortly

explained. Additionally, some notes are made about how these concepts will be used to explain certain phenomena.

## 2.1 Islamic discourses

A prominent conceptual issue when referring to different Islamic discourses is ideological labeling. Self-evidently, there is no such thing as a homogeneous Islam. In a similar sense, there is significant heterogeneity within different Islamic discourses. There are a variety of terms used to describe these different discourses in Islam. Important for this thesis when conceptualizing, is to cautiously refrain from essentialist approaches to Islam and the different discourses within Islam. Especially in a context that comprises of people with such heterogeneity in their backgrounds as Indonesia (as explained in the research context chapter), refraining from generalizations and essentialism is of the utmost importance.

Still, conceptualization of the Islamic discourses is necessary for defining the focus of this study and for interpreting the research findings. For this thesis, three Islamic discourses as defined by Kersten (2015) are used to conceptualize the progressive and conservative side of the Islamic discourse spectrum. Following Kersten's concepts, a distinction is made between *progressive*, *conservative* and *reactionary* Islamic discourses. This research specifically focuses on the perspectives of the progressive discourses. *Progressive Islam* in this context refers to Islamic ideologies that share an orientation towards the future, informed by critical engagement with the intellectual legacy of Islam as civilization. Progressive Islamic discourses use continuous interpretative exercises of Islam as a living tradition that can be attuned to a constantly changing context. In many ways, progressive and liberal Islam are terms that overlap each other. However, conservatives Muslims have tended to employ the term liberal as a stigmatizing label against a wide range of critical religious thought. They accused liberal Islam of being equal to rationalism and irreligiosity (van Bruinessen et al., 2013).

Throughout this thesis, the term *conservative* Islamic discourses is used to refer to more restricted, circumscribed understandings of Islamic tradition relying on more authoritative schools of law. The concept of *reactionary* Islamic discourses is used to refer to an even narrower definition of what being Islamic is. The clear common denominator for reactionary Islamic discourses is that they want to go back to the 'Golden Age' in the Islamic past and face today's challenges by recreating that historical setting. (Kersten, 2015, p.281). A further distinction is made by van Bruinessen (2013, p. 17) between Fundamentalist Islam and Islamists. These terms

would fall under Kersten's definition (and therefore also for this thesis) of reactionary Islam. This further categorization by van Bruinessen's of what in this thesis falls under reactionary Islam indicates that even within the reactionary Islamic discourse there is large heterogeneity. The broad group of Indonesian Muslims that do not match either the descriptions of progressive, conservative or reactionary Islamic discourses are referred to throughout this thesis as moderate Muslims. Although a dubious and much-criticized term, it is a term that is often used in the Indonesian context. As this moderate group is not the focus of the current study, further conceptualization and discussion of this moderate group are not within the scope of this thesis.

## 2.2 Religious Pluralism, religious liberalism, and secularism

From a theoretical perspective, this thesis' central concepts - religious pluralism, religious liberalism, and secularism - can be interpreted in different ways. An important interpretation in the context of this study is that of the MUI. The MUI defines these concepts in a way that has been thoroughly criticized. Critics argue the MUI's definitions deviate from academic approaches to these concepts. A brief explanation of how the MUI defines the concepts religious pluralism, Islamic liberalism, and secularism is needed to understand the MUI's attitude towards these concepts. This explanation will be based on the clarifications the MUI gave in their fatwa no.7. This fatwa evolves around these three central concepts. The fatwa states that it is forbidden (Haram) for the Islamic community to follow the understanding of religious pluralism, Islamic liberalism, and secularism (as cited by Gillespie, 2007, p.221).

### 2.2.1 MUI and Religious pluralism

The MUI reasons that religious pluralism is an understanding that sees all religions as the same and therefore as an understanding that sees every religion to be relative. (As cited by Gillespie, 2007, p.221). Hasyim (2015, p.490) goes into specifics on the MUI's standpoint towards pluralism. He concludes that banning pluralism is "the soul of this fatwa (fatwa no.7)". On MUI's definition of pluralism, Hasyim notes that the MUI believes that the understanding of pluralism will lead to heresy. The MUI uses Indonesia's state ideology "Pancasila" (see research context) as a foundation for their attitude towards pluralism. The council refers to Pancasila's verses about the belief in one supreme being (Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa). The MUI interprets this verse as an argument for the belief in a monotheistic religion. The belief in pluralism which, following the MUI's reasoning, is synonymous with syncretism (combining beliefs) is therefore against the

state ideology. An important remark when looking at the definition the MUI gives to religious pluralism is that the MUI makes a distinction between religious plurality and religious pluralism. Religious pluralism is defined as the *reasoning* that all religions are the same and thus the truth of every religion is relative. The concept of religious plurality, on the other hand, is seen by the MUI as the *societal fact* of having different religions in Indonesia. The MUI does not argue that plurality of religion is forbidden (Sirry, 2013).

### 2.2.2 MUI and Islamic liberalism

In the same fatwa no.7, the MUI states that Islamic liberalism is forbidden. The MUI notes in this fatwa that Islamic liberalism is an understanding of religious texts attained by combining such texts with the use of logical thinking. The MUI goes on to state that such liberalism only recognizes religious doctrines that are consistent with (their) own subjective understanding (as cited by Gillespie, 2007, p. 227). Comparing this with the definition that was given earlier on progressive Islamic discourses, there are some similarities. The first element of the progressive Islamic definition referred to critical engagement with the intellectual legacy of Islam, which is closely tied to MUI's religious liberalism definition, as they refer to "combining religious texts with the use of logical thinking." A second essential element in the progressive Islamic discourse definition that was given is the "use of interpretative exercises of Islam as a living tradition that can be attuned to a changing context." That is, to a substantial extent, comparable to MUI's definition of Islamic liberalism, which related to recognizing religious doctrines that are consistent with (their) own subjective understanding. At first glance, it appears that MUI's definition of Islamic liberalism extends to progressive Islamic discourses as well.

### 2.2.3 MUI and secularism

Lastly, on the concept of secularism, the MUI has a very wordy definition. They argue that secularism is "separating the world from religion so that religion is only to be useful to assist arrange one's private relationship with God, whilst relationships between people are arranged only on the basis of a social contract" (As cited by Gillespie, 2007, p. 226). Such an application of secularism is also deemed as forbidden in fatwa no.7. The implications of MUI's position on secularism were not brought up frequently by the informants of the current study. Therefore, this thesis pays more attention to the concepts religious pluralism and Islamic liberalism than to secularism.

## 2.3 Public Sphere and the digital Public Sphere

The concept *public sphere* for this project is used to describe the place where different Islamic discourses are expressed. In the public sphere, both intellectual and political exercises find a place for actualization (Latif, 2008). The influence of social media and the internet is becoming more apparent in the Indonesian Islamic context. The concept of public sphere will, therefore, be used in a broader sense compared to Habermas' classical notion (1962). It will also comprise of the *digital public sphere* as described by Schäfer. Schäfer argues that this digital public sphere gives rise to public debates which feed into finding collectively binding decisions (2015, p. 7). Concisely, the online presence of the progressive Islamic discourses will be included in this thesis. However, it is not in this thesis' scope to carry out an E-ethnography of any sort; rather it will give indications about the progressive Islamic perspectives on the digital sphere derived from interview data and secondary data sources.

## 3 Research Context

### 3.1 Heterogeneous Indonesia

According to Latif (2008), the large internal variations that are found within the Islamic community in Indonesia stem from the heterogeneity in background of the Indonesian Muslims in ethnicity, culture, language, geography and both inter- and intra-diverse religious doctrines. This heterogeneity resulted in Indonesian Muslim politics being characterized by diversity, contestation, and by various opposing positions. Kersten (2015, P. 80) concludes his chapter on Islam in Indonesia today in an analogous manner. He stresses the “increasingly multi-layered complexity of discourse and identity-formation among Indonesia’s Muslims at the beginning of the twenty-first century.”

The heterogeneous nature of Indonesia is reflected in its state ideology “Pancasila.” Hasyim (2015, p.5) explains that Sukarno, the founding father of Indonesia, invented Pancasila as a “mosaic state ideology that accommodates different beliefs and ideologies so that that ethnic groups can live together (...).” Pancasila consists of five principles. Important for the current thesis is the first principle of this state ideology. This principle refers to the belief in one god (Indonesian: *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*). The MUI used this principle to argue for the belief in a monotheistic religion.

### 3.2 Mass Muslim organizations in Indonesia

The Muhammadiyah and NU are vast organizations that together represent the majority of Indonesian Muslims. The sheer size of the organizations results in a large heterogeneity within these organizations. Therefore, it is important to tread carefully and avoid making essentialist statements on whether these organizations are either progressive or conservative, among other essentialist labels. Most Indonesians would refer to these organizations as being ‘moderate.’ However, this label has its issues since there are plenty individuals within these organizations that are either on the progressive or conservative side of the Islamic spectrum. It is important to emphasize the correlation between the character of these two mass Muslim organizations and the character of the MUI. The fatwa council functions as an umbrella for diverse Muslim organizations but mostly consists of either Muhammadiyah or NU members. Therefore, it can be argued, that the true spirit of the MUI can be derived by looking at the NU and Muhammadiyah. If these organizations will become more conservative, it is likely that the MUI will follow. Where some of the MUI members are considered conservative Muslims, a few others would be seen as more on the progressive side. The MUI’s fatwas and views on religiosity are seen as being rather conservative.

### 3.3 MUI in an ever-changing context

For understanding the current functioning of the MUI, it is important to realize that the council has been adapting throughout the years to changes in the context it functions in. Initially, the MUI was founded in 1975 on the initiative of Suharto during his New Order era. Hasyim (2015), emphasizes that Suharto at that time considered the group of ulama as justification for his power.

The establishment of the MUI had certain aims. One of the primary intentions of its founding was to counter a communistic trend at that time. Secondly, with the establishment of the MUI, Suharto hoped to overcome the threat of political Islam. More importantly, Suharto’s authoritarian regime used the MUI to gain support from the Muslim community in Indonesia. The MUI tried to serve as an interface between the government and the Muslim community.

After the demise of the New Order, the MUI attempted to reform and reposition itself as having the aim to serve society (van Bruinessen et al., 2013). In other words, the MUI’s focus shifted from the state to the people. Ichwan (2013) sees the MUI’s adaptation towards a change in the context in a similar sense. He mentions that the MUI has been trying to redefine itself as the servant of the *ummah* (the Muslim community) rather than of the government. On another note,

he perceives a new role of the MUI, where they make a consistent effort try to purify Indonesian Muslim's beliefs and practices, and harmonize them with idealized orthodoxy.

## **4 Methodology**

The current study adheres to a grounded theory design. The research is for the largest part inductive, considering that the main body of theory emerges from data. This inductive approach fits the grounded theory design. Deductively, fatwas no.7 as issued by the MUI and the related concepts are critically looked at as a starting point. Most importantly, the research inductively will establish patterns, underlying factors and implications of perceptions towards religious diversity management practices by the MUI from multiple perspectives.

### **4.1 Research Design**

The most appropriate research design that fits the research question, since it focuses on people's actions and interactions (fatwa issuance as a means of managing religious diversity and the reactions and perceptions on this phenomena) is that of a grounded theory study. The goal of this grounded theory study is to develop theory from the data about the actions of the research subject (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015). The research is explanatory; it will transcend merely describing progressive Islamic perspectives by revealing underlying issues for progressive Islam in Indonesia and suggesting how these findings can be interpreted to explain the position of progressive Islam in the Indonesian religious landscape.

### **4.2 Data Collection**

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were utilized as a data collection method. All the interviews were conducted face to face. An interview script with general lines, questions, and topics directed the interviews, but there was room to deviate from this script to respond to potentially interesting cues and sidetracks. This flexibility helped to unravel underlying structures and reasoning, which are of foremost importance for the current research. The topic can potentially be perceived as controversial or sensitive. Because of this sensitivity - since the research is conducted in a different culture with people that have a different linguistic and cultural background than the researcher's - some precautions were taken. This was done to overcome potential forms of miscommunication and enhance reliability. One of the precautions that was taken was the use of security questions in the interview script. These questions related to earlier discussed topics to see if at a later stage the interviewee responded analogously. Also, the interview structure was

created in a way that ensured the interviewee first felt at ease before diving into more controversial and confrontational issues.

The interview scripts are structured in the same way as the sub-questions. Adaptations in each script were made to ensure that the questions were related to the personal research, expertise, and achievements of the interviewee. The following general topics have been discussed during the interviews.

- Biographical information
- Attitude towards and definition of pluralism, liberalism, and secularism
- Fatwas in general
- MUI's fatwa no.7
- MUI and the gubernatorial elections
- MUI and its role in Indonesia (reflective in case of interviewing MUI members)
- Managing religious diversity in Indonesia

### 4.3 Data analysis

Synchronously to the collection of data, the data was transcribed and analyzed. This allowed for a constant comparative method of analysis, where initial analysis and interpretations drove later data collection (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015). In the earlier stages of the research, some preliminary data was collected in the forms of informal exploratory interviews. The main form of data collection is through interviews. Except for the MUI interview session, all interviews have been recorded. Afterwards, for the ten most relevant interviews the audio material was transcribed and coded. The main findings of this thesis were discussed with two experts of Islam in Indonesia (Carool Kersten and Martin van Bruinessen) in the final stage of the research. This was done to corroborate the found results

A large amount of interview data led to the decision not to transcribe every interview, but rather the most important ones. The transcriptions of these interviews have been coded according to the approaches suggested by Corbin & Straus (as cited by Leedy and Ormrod, 2015). The most relevant coded interview transcriptions can be found in Appendix D. The coding approach focuses on a grounded theory research design and following Corbin & Straus's three suggested steps; open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The process aims at finding common themes in the transcripts, after which the data is divided into categories and subcategories (using

a Microsoft Word 2016 plugin to link part of texts to defined codes). After these categories have been identified, categories were linked to the sub-questions. These categories then functioned as an axis around which certain other subcategories revolved. The coded texts were exported to Microsoft Excel 2016, in which the sorting and filter functions were used to compare, contrast and extract meaningful information from the large dataset.

#### 4.4 Sample

The interviewees were selected based on purposive sampling. This ensured that the different perspectives this study addresses were covered. There are three main categories of interviewees. The first category consists of prominent progressive individuals and founders/directors of progressive movements (including institutes) and networks. The second category aims at scholars that specialize in the MUI, Islam in Indonesia, fatwas or other related topics. The final category comprises of members of the MUI itself.

Contact with most interviewees was made using a snowball technique. There were a few initial contacts before the data collection started. After these contacts were interviewed, they assisted in getting new contacts. The sample size was determined using the saturation principle where saturation is reached when new data (interviews) does not lead to additional information. In other words, the data collection is aimed at saturating the three interview categories as described at the beginning of this paragraph. The interviewees, their related organizations, and their positions are summarized in Appendix A. For the MUI category, an interview session with six members of the national fatwa commission was held. The two members that were answering most of the questions are noted in Appendix A. All interviewees agreed to be mentioned by name in this thesis. Additionally, three public discussions in Jakarta related to pluralism were attended, the topics and the most prominent attendees are displayed in Appendix B.

#### 4.5 Research Quality Indicators

An important remark that relates to the external validity of the findings is that conclusions in the current study cannot be generalized towards the progressive Islamic landscape as such. The progressive landscape consists of different organizations and individuals which, evidently, do not always share the same perception. The study, therefore, focuses on transferability rather than generalizability. The validity of the current research is addressed by illustrating multiple views, including reflections of the MUI. Furthermore, this validity is further strengthened by looking at

a wide-ranging set of progressive Islamic entities within the Indonesian context. Comparing these views with existing research and scholarly opinion leads to data triangulation, which gives more credence to the findings.

There were significant differences in culture, religion, and language between the researcher and interviewees. It could be possible that interviewees did not feel like giving completely honest, or straightforward answers to an “outsider” who is doing research. This is certainly a possibility since the research is focused on deeply sensitive issues in the Indonesian context. The researcher learned the basics of the language and got acquainted with the Indonesian culture by traveling for three weeks through the country before commencing the research. This, in turn, helped to reduce cultural barriers and the language gap. Additionally, most of the interviewees had an academic background and had a good command of the English language.

## 5 Results

This chapter will start with presenting the progressive Islamic representatives who are at the core of this research (overview in Appendix A). This first paragraph entitled “progressive Islam in contemporary Indonesia” introduces the progressive landscape together with the perceived issues on the situation for progressive Islam in Indonesia. This will form the foundation for the remainder of the results section. All citations and paraphrases throughout this results section come from personal communication unless otherwise stated. This chapter’s remaining paragraphs highlight findings regarding the perceptions of progressive Islamic representatives towards the topics described in the sub-questions. Collectively, these paragraphs illustrate progressive Islamic perspectives on MUI’s attempts to manage religious diversity in Indonesia. The progressive Islamic representatives consist of progressive Islamic movements, networks, organizations (including NGO’s), scholars and prominent individuals.

### 5.1 Progressive Islam in contemporary Indonesia

There are still some well-respected progressive Muslims in the older generation. However, Martin van Bruinessen notes that the reality is that there are not many prominent progressive Muslims in the younger generation. He goes on to explain that there are many young progressives, but that hardly any of them have a large personal following, and that the media does not support them. According to Martin van Bruinessen, progressive Islam in Indonesia has none

of the vigor it showed ten years ago. With this vigor, Martin van Bruinessen points to the abundance of activities from two youth networks a decade ago.

#### 5.1.1 Progressive Islamic Youth networks

The youth networks JIMM and JIL and their attitude towards fatwa no.7 issued by the MUI in 2005 are the initial starting point of the current research. **JIL (Jarengan Islam Liberal)** or the *Liberal Islam Network* was founded in 2001 by Ulil Abshar Abdalla and Luthfi Assyaukanie in. Ulil Abshar Abdalla characterizes the years from 2001 to 2005 as the golden age of JIL.

According to Luthfi Assyaukanie, one of the most important reasons for the founding of JIL was to counter the growing number of radical groups at that time. Ulil Abshar Abdalla phrases it slightly more forthright by stating that the initial goal of the network was to create a counter-movement and counter-narrative to the rising trend of religious radicalism and fundamentalism. This trend was increasingly becoming more prominent after the transition from the authoritarian Suharto era to the post-reformasi era. After the fall of Suharto, there was a march of freedom in society, which, according to Ulil Abshar Abdalla, unleashed all good and bad forces in society.

When asked what JIL stood for, Ulil Abshar Abdalla states they campaigned for three main ideas: pluralism, liberalism, and secularism. Other interviewees including members of the MUI, confirm there is a relation between JIL's activities at that time and the issuance of the 2005 fatwa on pluralism, secularism, and liberalism by the MUI. What this relation exactly is, remains rather ambiguous. The fatwa does not mention JIL by name, but there seems to be a consensus among the interviewees that the fatwa targeted a growing liberal trend in Indonesia at that time. Najib Burhani frames it as follows:

*“perhaps the idea –of fatwa no.7- is towards JIL. But it is not phrased directly or clearly in a statement towards JIL. I think JIL is one of the targets, but the main idea is to stop wild ways of thinking regarding religion.”*

JIL's co-founders both see a more causal relationship between JIL's activities and the MUI fatwa. They argue that in the discussion the MUI had before issuing the fatwa, the name of JIL in specific was brought up. Pradana Boy Zulian portrays a different picture of the situation. Arguing similarly to Najib Burhani, he does not think that the fatwa targeted JIL specifically, but rather that it was issued to counter progressive movements and networks in general. When Asrorun Niam Sholeh, who functions as the current secretary of the national fatwa commission of

the MUI, was asked whether the Fatwa targeted JIL, he answered the fatwa was related to JIL's activities but that JIL was not the sole reason for the issuance of the fatwa. It does not target a single organization.

When acquiring information about the current activities of JIL, it appears that JIL as a collective network is not functioning anymore. However, the individuals that were active in JIL are still promoting their ideas in the Indonesian public sphere. Ulil Abshar Abdalla has been active in politics and now is repositioning himself as an Islamic scholar, while others became academics, lecturers at universities, or like Luthfi Assyaukanie, started different organizations. Former JIL member Akhmad Sahal pursues an academic career while still actively promoting his thoughts on religiosity on social media.

A network that is often named in a similar context as JIL is **Jarengan Intellektual Muda Muhammadiyah (JIMM)**, or the young intellectual Muhammadiyah youth. Even though their approach, organization, and reasoning are different from JIL, they are unwillingly brought into relation with JIL. Pradana Boy Zulian, co-founder of JIMM and current coordinator, reveals that during JIMM's founding they were inspired by JIL. Most JIL members are intellectuals from NU origin. Similarly, the JIMM members wanted to have an intellectual community within Muhammadiyah. An important note here is that both JIL and JIMM are not and never have been formally affiliated with either the NU or the Muhammadiyah. However, it is the case that JIL mostly consists of NU members and JIMM mostly consists of Muhammadiyah members. The former leader of the Muhammadiyah and founder of JIMM, Ahmad Syafi'i Maarif, stepped down as the leader of the Muhammadiyah in 2005. It appeared that after this event, JIMM's activities had deteriorated. Pradana Boy Zulian indicates that he is currently trying to revitalize JIMM using different names and websites.

#### 5.1.2 Radically progressive

JIL is by many people considered to be radical in their way of countering the conservative and reactionary groups head-on. In contrast, JIMM tends to use a less confrontational approach. Kersten (2015), mentions that leading activist of JIL chose a mode of operations that was almost as abrasive and confrontational as that of the reactionaries they tried to counter. Pradana Boy has a similar perception of JIL's strategy. He emphasizes that JIL used provocative and sarcastic terms and expressions and that they dealt with extraordinarily sensitive issues. He mentions that JIMM, on the contrary, tries to avoid such provocations. Azyumardi Azra criticizes both JIL

founders Ulil Abshar Abdalla and Luthfi Assyaukanie by emphasizing they loved to make fun of certain beliefs and certain practices of Muslims, Azra says that “they enjoyed making people angry”. Ulil Abshar Abdalla does confirm that JIL’s strategy at times was rather provocative. He describes JIL’s approach towards Islamic reactionary and conservative movements as follows:

*“we were countering them (the reactionary and conservative movements) head-on, using the same theological arguments that they used.”*

### 5.1.3 Inactiveness of JIMM and JIL

JIMM has been rather quiet but appears to attempt to revitalize its operations. JIL does not have any visible recent activity. Several factors were mentioned during the interviews that potentially caused the inactivity of both networks. A first and uncomplicated factor that was frequently mentioned is that the members and founders of both networks simply became older and got involved in different activities as studying abroad, pursuing academic careers, getting involved in politics or becoming active in either Muhammadiyah or NU. Second, an additional issue relates to the funding JIL received from an American organization called the Asia Foundation. Martin van Bruinessen believes this Western funding to be their undoing. He explains that critics could present them (JIL) as a fifth guard, paid by Imperialists, Jews and Christians to undermine Islam. Such accusations initiated delegitimization for other progressive and liberal groups as well, who found their credibility shaken. Third, there is a potential correlation between the MUI fatwa on pluralism, secularism, and liberalism and the undoing of JIMM and JIL. However, the opinions whether this fatwa was a key factor in the demise of the two networks are diverging. Najib Burhani does not believe the fatwa had an enormous impact on the existence of JIL and JIMM. Instead, he argues other factors, as previously mentioned, play a more significant role. He does remark that there was a strengthening of the group that attacked JIL and JIMM. The issuance of the fatwa, according to him, is “like giving them (the attackers of JIL and JIMM) a weapon to attack, giving them motivation”. The last factor that caused difficulties for both networks and other progressive Islamic representatives was the pressure of the conservative and reactionary movements that collectively try to suppress liberal and progressive Islamic trends. Alissa Wahid, the founder of the progressive GUSDURian network and daughter of late president Gus Dur (Abdurrahman Wahid), argues that the negative propaganda towards Islamic liberalism is “one of the most successful framings by the MUI and the conservative groups that have been getting

stronger and stronger in Indonesia”.

Although JIMM is trying to revitalize its operations, most interviewees agree that the golden days of both JIMM and JIL are over. JIMM is also struggling with a negative image. Like JIL, they are often associated with negative connotations of liberalism. Also, they are brought into direct relation with JIL, which seems to embrace their negative image. In 2005, some prominent JIMM members were rejected to enter the board of Muhammadiyah. Muhammad Abdullah Darraz claims that this rejection was based on their association with JIMM. He argues that these rejections of JIMM members are a likely reason for how JIMM became inactive.

#### 5.1.4 Progressive Islamic NGO's

Besides JIMM and JIL, there are other progressive NGOs that have been expressing their discourse in the contemporary Indonesian public sphere. **The Wahid- and Maarif Institute** are examples of that. Both institutes promote religious pluralism, human rights, and democracy. Besides these initiatives, these institutes actively research areas of religion, interfaith harmony, culture, and humanities. Maarif Institute's director Muhammad Abdullah Darraz and co-founder of the Wahid Institute Ahmad Suaedy both state that they purposefully keep a distance from the term liberal Islam due to the counter-productivity that this label embodies. These institutes are not employing a confrontational strategy. Still, they encounter issues while carrying out their activities. Where the Maarif institute largely consists of Muhammadiyah members and was involved in the foundation of JIMM, the Wahid institute largely consists of NU members. In their daily activities, the institutes do not encounter problems while advertising religious pluralism.

Ahmad Suaedy does point out that the government -on all levels, including police and attorneys- is under pressure of what he calls “the radical (reactionary) movements”. Ulil Abshar Abdalla talks about a conservative campaign, with which he refers to a loose movement existing of several organizations. He explains this conservative campaign is not a fixed entity but comprises of several political parties like PKS as well as organizations like Hizbut Tahrir and FPI. When asked if MUI fatwa no.7 and this conservative pressure made it more difficult to disseminate a religious pluralism ideology, Azyumardi Azra suggests that it has not necessarily become more difficult. From his point of view, it is just more effective to play with terminology, instead of mentioning the word pluralism. For instance, it works to talk about “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” (unity in diversity).

Some examples indicate conservative, and reactionary Islamic movements and

individuals are using fatwa no.7 as an instrument to justify their initiatives. For example, Muhammad Abdullah Darraz explains that the Maarif Institute initiated a program for mainstreaming human rights in Islamic education material in Muhammadiyah schools. However, their program was rejected by the Muhammadiyah constitute. He points out that the Muhammadiyah constitute claimed their program was a religious pluralism promotor. Some other books by the Maarif Institute were rejected by the Muhammadiyah constitutions in Sulawesi, Central-Sulawesi, and West-Java on the grounds of promoting religious pluralism.

#### 5.1.5 Progressive Islamic digital presence

There are also progressive Islamic representatives that have a focus on disseminating their ideas in the digital public sphere. Alissa Wahid is contributing to the progressive Islamic landscape with her Islamic network **GUSDURian**. GUSDURian has the aim of preserving and emulating the values of humanity, justice, and freedom of oppression. The same values that late president Gus Dur (Abdurrahman Wahid) stood for. Alissa claims to have an active presence in 84 Indonesian cities. Here they have local meetings, programs, and activities. The GUSDURian network differs from the Maarif- and the Wahid Institute in its organization. It's loosely organized and functions as a social network. Alissa Wahid mentions that she has encountered some problems with the GUSDURian network. Often, they are the victim of online accusations on social media. She mentions that they are accusatorily called liberals. Regarding MUI fatwa no.7, Alissa Wahid mentions that it impacts minorities and that in a couple of cases the fatwa is enforced by local governments.

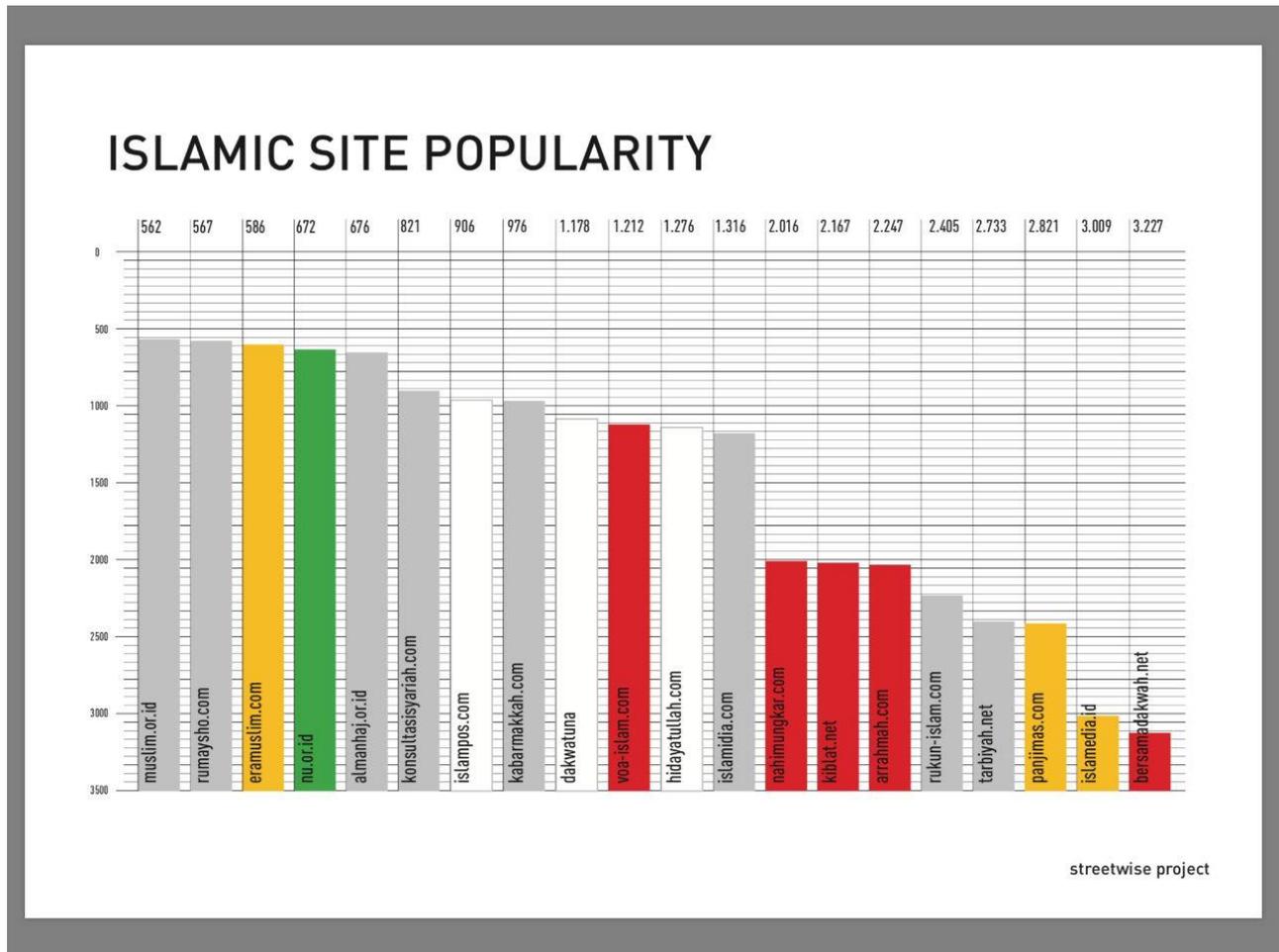
A large part of the GUSDURian network relies on online mobilization and discussion. This shows on their Twitter page which has a following of 114.000 individuals (next to Alissa's personal 274.000 followers). Other progressive individuals that were interviewed who are active in carrying out their progressive Islamic message in the digital public sphere are former JIL members Akhmad Sahal (146.000 followers on Twitter) and Ulil Abshar Abdallah (774.000 followers on Twitter). Other interviewees often mentioned Ulil Abshar Abdallah's online activities. Ulil Abshar Abdallah himself mentioned that he revises some of his perspectives on liberalism and secularism. In Moch Nur Ichwan opinion, Ulil Abshar Abdallah went through an intellectual transformation, more in the direction of the moderate side. According to him, this took place during the Ahok controversy. Moreover, Martin van Bruinessen points out that "Ulil Abshar Abdalla is rebranding himself as an Islamic using social media as a platform. Moving

away from negative connotations with JIL and liberalism”. Another interviewee who is active on social media is University of Indonesia (UI) lecturer Ade Armando. He was assisting in Basuki Tjahaya Purnama (Ahok’s) campaign to become Governor of Jakarta. On his Facebook page (55,000 followers) he promotes progressive Islam and is (straightforwardly) critical towards conservative and reactionary individuals and movements.

The online presence of the **Nahdlatul Ulama (NU Online)** might not carry out a straightforwardly progressive Islamic discourse, but the director of NU online Savic Ali does identify himself as being a progressive Muslim. He indicates that with NU online they would like to distribute counter-narratives to the reactionary and conservative websites.

### 5.1.6 Islamic website popularity

Savic Ali has compared the most influential Islamic websites in Indonesia looking at page views per day. His findings are displayed in figure 1. His findings give a clear overview of what kind of websites are established in the Indonesian digital public sphere.



- Red:** pro-violence reactionary websites
- Yellow:** Non-violent reactionary websites
- Grey:** Conservative websites
- Green:** Moderate websites

Figure 1. Islamic site popularity (source: personal communication, Savic Ali, July 2017)

Savic Ali concludes that conservative and reactionary Islamic groups dominate the most important websites in Indonesia. NU online, the fourth most popular, is the only moderate website in the top 20. Other interviews perceive problems in the online establishment of progressive Islamic discourses as well. Firstly, it is mentioned that the reactionary and

conservative movements have far more resources. Secondly, interviewees indicate that these movements are better organized, have more know-how on how to professionally distribute their ideology online and have more and higher quality content to place online.

Azyumardi Azra infers that in the progressive landscape, universities play a key role as well. **State Islamic Universities**, in particular, are crucial players regarding progressive Islamic discourse. Multiple interviewees had an educational background in a State Islamic University in Indonesia.

## 5.2 MUI's Role in Indonesia

Now that the progressive landscape has been framed, it is time to dive into the core subject matter; perceptions of these progressive Islamic representatives on the management of religious diversity by the MUI. This paragraph will present the general perceptions towards the role of the MUI in Indonesia. The subsequent two paragraphs will go into specifics on two notable cases where the MUI used their fatwa attempting to manage the religious diversity situation in Indonesia.

### 5.2.1 MUI through the years

The MUI's role in the Indonesian context has been changing throughout the years. To understand their current role in Indonesia, it is of importance to look at their origins. As mentioned in the research context chapter, the MUI was created by Suharto. Luthfi Assyaukanie adds that Suharto had no sincere interest in religion because he was secular but that he needed religious support. After the fall of Suharto in 1998, there is an observable change in the relation between the government and the MUI. After Reformasi (the period of reform after the fall of Suharto), Ulil Abshar Abdallah remarks the MUI changed its role and became more autonomous and tried to reposition itself as a representative of the real voice of Islam in Indonesia. Ahmad Sueady confirms the role of the MUI changed after Reformasi. During the New Order era, the MUI used to follow the government. Then, Ahmad Sueady reasons, there was a short transition period. When Gus Dur (Abdurrahman Wahid) became president (1999-2001), Ahmad Suaedy indicates that there was a confrontation between the MUI and the government. Alissa Wahid tells that her father (late president Gus Dur) tried to create a healthy distance between the MUI and the government. Later when SBY (Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono) became president (2004-2014), the relation between the government and the MUI changed again. Alissa Wahid points at a speech

from SBY, where he pledges that the government would serve the MUI. Ahmad Suaedy affirms this change in role for the MUI. He says that during the regime of President SBY, the government followed the MUI instead of vice versa. Under the current Jokowi (Joko Widodo) regime the MUI functions more autonomously, the MUI *does* however still receive funding from the government. Luthfi Assyauckanie points out that momentarily, the MUI is not controlled by the government but rather by the major Islamic organizations, the NU and the Muhammadiyah in specific play an influential role in the functioning of the MUI. Most members of the MUI belong to either the NU or the Muhammadiyah. Luthfi Assyauckanie phrases the correlation between the religiosity of the MUI and these mass-Muslim organizations as follows:

*“if you want to see the true color of MUI, you have to see the color of the NU and Muhammadiyah. If the NU and Muhammadiyah are getting conservative, so does the MUI.”*

#### 5.2.2 Criticism on MUI’s role from a progressive Islamic perspective

In Assyauckanie’s opinion (2009), one of the most important impacts of the MUI’s new autonomous character is that the council seems to have lost any filter for membership. He argues that ideological-political interest now determines the MUI’s structure. Assyauckanie also relates this to the fatwas they issue. Another critical note that is placed by several interviewees is that many Indonesians quite literally follow (MUI) fatwas. Alissa Wahid says that many people have misperceptions towards the authority of the MUI, according to her many people think that the MUI is a state body and the highest Muslim authoritative body. Pradana Boy Zulian in an equivalent manner thinks that many people blindly follow the fatwa issued by the MUI and that many people are not capable, or willing, to have a critical perspective in understanding these fatwas. Luthfi Assyauckanie analogously reasons that the people that have the biggest need for a fatwa are lay people who are less- or uneducated. Therefore, he goes on, they often do not have the required knowledge on the issues at stake and must rely on Islamic authority.

#### 5.3 Fatwa no. 7 on religious pluralism, religious liberalism, and secularism (2005)

This paragraph goes into the most important perspectives from the interviewees towards a specific fatwa and its consequences. Namely, fatwa no. 7 opposing religious pluralism, religious liberalism, and secularism issued by the MUI in 2005.

### 5.3.1 Progressive perspectives on MUI's definition of pluralism in fatwa no.7

It appears that all progressive Islamic interviewees appear to be critical towards this fatwa in one way or another. One of the major concerns that interviewees bring forward is that the definition that was given by the MUI of religious pluralism is limited and flawed. Most interviewees confirm they have openly criticized the fatwa in media, articles or debates. Azyumardi Azra, who was a member of the advisory council of the MUI at that time, was, and still is very critical towards fatwa no.7. He explains his attitude towards the fatwa as follows:

*“I was very critical; I criticized this fatwa very strongly even though I am a member of the MUI, I openly criticized this fatwa. [...] I think this fatwa came from infiltration of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) members within MUI leadership of that time.”*

Azyumardi Azra says that before the issuance of the fatwa, he was consulted about the contents of the fatwa concept. Azyumardi Azra told the MUI members that the content of the fatwa was wrong since they state that pluralism is equal to syncretism (combining beliefs). In Azyumardi Azra's view, religious pluralism is about recognizing and honoring religious differences without sacrificing one's religion. Ulil Abshar-Abdallah and Alissa Wahid criticized the fatwa using the same reasoning. In line with this argumentation, Ahmad Suaedy and Luthfi Assyaukanie stated that the MUI does not use the same definition of pluralism as is discussed in scholarly or human rights debates. Akhmad Sahal phrases it straightforwardly:

*“I think The MUI is against pluralism because they only took one version or interpretation of pluralism.”*

### 5.3.2 Progressive perspectives on implications of fatwa no.7

Besides criticism on how the MUI interprets and defines pluralism, the interviewees also expressed themselves on the implications they believed to be related to MUI's fatwa no. 7. Since the interviewees' statements on whether the fatwa influenced the deteriorating activities of JIMM and JIL have already been discussed in the first paragraph of this results section, the focus now rather is on how the interviewees perceive the fatwa has had implications on the larger Indonesian society and the progressive Islamic landscape in general.

In Ahmad Suaedy's opinion, the MUI rejects freedom of thinking and freedom of speech by forbidding the belief of religious pluralism. He goes on to argue that religious pluralism means acknowledging religious differences in the world. Even though the MUI does not forbid plurality

of religions (the societal fact), Ahmad Suaedy does argue that the fatwa harms plurality of religions.

*“If we reject the idea of pluralism, we reject the freedom of how people have different beliefs. [...] the fatwa on "sipilis" (fatwa no.7) is very counterproductive for the harmony in plurality [...] They (the MUI) limit people to reach out to non-Muslims.”*

Najib Burhani phrases that the fatwa is a tool to curb the ideas of the ways that people think about religion.

*“There is a dichotomy in people’s way of thinking about religion in Indonesia. There is a group that is going far away from accepted religiosity [...]. This -fatwa- is a way of keeping boundaries, and warning the people not to be too liberal or too secular.”*

A strong implication of this MUI fatwa is that it works instrumentally. Najib Burhani argues that the fatwa inspires people to take the law into their own hands. Other interviewees argue in a similar sense that the fatwa gives ground for Islamic conservatives and reactionaries to attack interfaith dialogue. Alissa Wahid gives an example of an organized interfaith discussion where she had to show a permit from the MUI to the local police before continuing the event. Azyumardi Azra argues that this fatwa has become a subject for hate speech in the mosque and religious gatherings. There is also general agreement among the interviewees that the fatwa contributed to the attacks that target JIL in 2005. Additionally, some interviewees argue that the fatwa indirectly provided motivation and justification for physical violence. For instance, Ulil Abshar Abdalla argues that the attempted targeting him relates to his attitude towards this fatwa.

*“There was an attempt to kill me; the plan was contemplated by a cell in Jemaah Islamiyah [...] The thing that stood out for them (the attackers) is my strong criticism, of the Fatwa (fatwa no.7) of the Council of Ulama.”*

MUI’s fatwa commission secretary, Asrorun Niam Sholeh, admits that some groups may use this fatwa as justification for physical violence. He strongly argues that this is not the intention or responsibility of the MUI.

MUI’s fatwa no.7 opposes not only religious pluralism but also opposes Islamic liberalism. All the interviewees purposefully refer to themselves as progressive Muslims. In many cases, the interviewees agree that the message of progressive Islamic discourses has a lot in

common with that of liberal Islam. Martin van Bruinessen argues that progressive Islamic movements and networks are forced to be very careful with foreign funding which could lead to negative associations with Western liberalism. This has the result of them having limited resources compared to other Islamic movements. When Muhammad Abdullah Darraz was asked whether the Maarif Institute represents liberal Islam, he answered:

*“No, I think we stand for progressive and moderate -Islam-. Regarding the term liberal, in Muhammadiyah we take a distance from this term. This term, in our opinion, is counter-productive. We talk about harmony in diversity; we just promote progressive and moderate -Islam-. But, in some issues, we have the same perspective with liberal Islam”.*

Although most interviewees purposefully take a distance from the term liberal Islam, there are many people that, accusatorily, claim they are liberals. Pradana Boy Zulian also mentions being often associated with liberalism and the West. One of the things he does is avoiding English and even Indonesian terms in expressing his religious ideology. Instead, he opts to choose for Arabic as often as possible.

*“Everything where we can come up with an Arabic term, we express it in Arabic.”*

#### 5.4 MUI and the Ahok case (2017)

The Jakarta 2017 gubernatorial elections ended tragically for former governor Ahok. As a Catholic politician in a Muslim majority country, Ahok was subject to a series of controversial events after he suggested people not to be deceived by Islamic politicians using a Quranic surah (Al Maidah, verse 51) to prevent voters selecting a non-Muslim leader. The accusers argued that Ahok had stated that the verse contained a lie. In other words, they argued that Ahok stated that the Quran lied and therefore that Ahok had committed blasphemy (Marcoes, 2016). Eventually, Ahok lost the 2017 gubernatorial elections in the final round and was convicted to two years imprisonment in May 2017.

##### 5.4.1 MUI’s involvement in the Ahok case

The MUI played a twofold role in this *Ahok case*. Firstly, the MUI assessed that Ahok’s statement insulted the Quran and the clergy, and therefore was blasphemous. This was formally brought forward by the MUI in a so-called “Pernyataan sikap” (a religious guideline) signed by both the chairman Ma’ruf Amin and the secretary general Anwar Abbas. This took place a few

months in advance of the final election round. Secondly, the MUI stated that one should convey the contents of Surah Al Maidah, verse 51, and reminded every Muslim to vote for a Muslim as a leader. During the Ahok controversies, the MUI did not use their fatwa, instead, they used a religious guideline, a so-called “pernyataan sikap”. When MUI fatwa commission secretary, Asrorun Niam Sholeh, was asked what such a pernyataan sikap entails compared to a fatwa, he responded that a pernyataan sikap is a religious guideline, which is even more important than a fatwa. Surah Al Maidah, verse 51, which was endorsed by the MUI during the Ahok controversy can be translated to:

*“ Believers! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for your “auliya.” They are the “auliya” of each other. And among you, he who takes them for “auliya,” shall be regarded as one of them. Allah does not guide the wrong-doers.” (Al-Maidah 5:51)*

Alissa Wahid notes that the translation and interpretation of this verse are somewhat problematic as “Auliya” can be translated into "friends," "beloved ones," "allies" or "leader." It is of interest to see how the MUI’s involvement during the Jakarta gubernatorial elections relates to the MUI fatwa no.7. Muhammad Abdullah Darraz frames the relation as follows:

*“I think there is a relation between the last fatwa (Pernyataan sikap, 2017) and the 2005 fatwa. I think the radical- and intolerant groups (i.e., reactionary groups) move based on fatwa no.7. They prosecute and intimidate people that have different ideas, people that have different beliefs. Regarding the case of Ahok, they -the MUI- interfered, they pressured Ahok as a Christian and Ahok as a Chinese. So, based on this fatwa (Pernyataan sikap, 2017) and the 2005 fatwa on pluralism, liberalism, secularism, people have a standpoint to reject plurality -of religion-”*

#### 5.4.2 The GNPF-MUI

A group of reactionary Muslims, led by FPI leader Habib Rizieq, rallied together during the run-up to the final election round, in an organization they named the GNPF-MUI (Gerakan Nasional Pengawal Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia), the *National Movement to Safeguard the Indonesian Ulema Council's Fatwa defenders*. Martin van Bruinessen reasons that the GNPF-MUI’s individuals played a significant role in mobilizing Ahok opponents who in turn contributed to

Ahok losing the elections and being convicted. Even though the GNPF-MUI uses the name of the MUI, they are in no way formally affiliated to the MUI.

#### 5.4.3 Criticism on the MUI's involvement in the Ahok case

Azyumardi Azra argues that the GNPF-MUI exploited the MUI's statements. One of the major problems that Azyumardi Azra sees with the MUI is that it is a very loose organization. This has the result that anybody can claim that they represent MUI. In conjunction with this criticism, other interviewees said that the MUI caused confusion by the way they interfered in the Ahok case. Alissa Wahid, for example, phrases her confusion around the MUI's religious guidelines by stating that:

*"It was just a statement. I think two or three persons from MUI even argued that the statement is stronger than a fatwa. We were Confused! [...] They put it vaguely. People believed that it was a fatwa".*

Also, UIil Abshar Abdallah appears to be rather hesitant about the nature of the religious guideline.

*"No, it's not a fatwa. It's not framed as a fatwa, even though it is a fatwa."*

Moch Nur Ichwan also believes it to be strange that the MUI argue that their statements during the Ahok case were higher (in importance) than a fatwa. This hierarchical division between a fatwa and what the MUI called a pernyataan sikap is questionable according to Moch Nur Ichwan. Azyumardi Azra, again points out that there is a problem of leadership within the MUI. This MUI statement on Ahok, Azyumardi Azra argues, was suddenly issued. Azyumardi Azra tells he advised the general chair of the MUI, Ma'ruf Amin, there should be a certain code of conduct for leadership before issuing a fatwa. Other interviewees pointed out that they feel that the MUI, during the Ahok case, went too far in blending religion and politics. Ahmad Suaedy goes on to argue that this Ahok case is the continuation of MUI's political spirit and that the MUI is part of political Islam. He argues that even though Ahok was sentenced for committing blasphemy, he was sent to jail because of political reasons.

#### 5.4.4 Perceived implications of the MUI's involvement in the Ahok case

Moch Nur Ichwan states that the MUI's statements on blasphemy, clarify the 2005 fatwa on pluralism, liberalism, and secularism.

*“People look at the 2005 fatwa in the lens of the new fatwa (Pernyataan Sikap, 2017). What was not clear in the 2005 fatwa, becomes clear now in this new fatwa.”*

He believes there is a relationship between the 2005 fatwa and MUI’s statements in the run-up to the gubernatorial elections in 2017. To further clarify this relationship, he sees a need for more research on this relationship. Ahok’s case and MUI’s involvement during the elections are seen as an indicator for a rising reactionary and conservative trend in Indonesia by international media. Examples of this are TIME magazine’s article where they referred to Ahok’s defeat as a “triumph for religious conservatism in Indonesia” (Kwok, 2017). In a similar tone, the Guardian talked about courts opening the door to fear and religious extremism (Harsano, 2017). Ahmad Suaedy does not fully agree with this.

*“I think the fall of Ahok does not show a rise in radicalism. Yes, radicalism is growing, but not regarding this case, it is very political. It was because of the election and the money involved.”*

Likewise, Azyumardi Azra argues it is wrong to assume these developments are indicating rising religious conservatism and religious extremism in Indonesia. In the second election round, Ahok gained 42% of the votes. Since Jakarta has a non-Muslim population of around 15%, he logically concludes that –at least- 27% of votes for Ahok came from Muslims. Other interviewees as Alissa Wahid point out that the statement the MUI made regarding the importance of Al-Maidah 51 could have future consequences.

*“You can drag this verse, not only to the presidential elections but also for example -to the appointment- of a principal of a school. It goes all the way down even to village heads, or neighborhood watches.”*

## 5.5 Progressive Turn

Alissa Wahid relates Ahok’s case to an increase in awareness for progressive Islam. Together with a rise of resistance towards Islamic radicalism at the grass root, she mentions “being able to turn the -conservative- current.” Other leaders of progressive Islamic movements as Pradana Boy Zulian and Muhammad Abdullah Darraz, point out that they are inspired by Ahok’s case to start more vocal progressive initiatives and start a stronger counter-discourse opposing the Islamic conservative discourse.

Martin van Bruinessen, on the contrary, is skeptical about this potential increase of

progressive activities and awareness of progressive Islam. He remarks that these progressive movements are marginal compared to other Islamic movements in Indonesia and that they have none of the vigor they showed 15 years ago. He argues that a perceived progressive turn might very well be a spur-of-the-moment thing. Martin van Bruinessen explains that disappointment with Ahok's conviction made some people turn away from conservative Muslim groups in disgust. However, he sees no indication of a growing interest in progressive discourses.

## **6 Conclusion and discussion**

This thesis thus far illustrated perceptions of several progressive Islamic representatives on the MUI's attempts to manage religious diversity in Indonesia. The purpose of this closing chapter is to indicate what these perceptions and their underlying factors tell about the current state of the Indonesian progressive landscape. It will do so by relating the existing body of literature and the theoretical concepts to the current study's primary data. Before discussing the research findings, first, a short conclusion on the found results is in order.

### **6.1 Conclusion**

The Indonesian progressive landscape consists of several networks, NGO's, movements and individuals that are disseminating their ideas in the public sphere. The progressive youth networks JIMM and JIL, which were impactful in the period that followed the fall of Suharto, appear to be of less impact in the contemporary public sphere. However, the individuals of the two networks are still disseminating their views actively. The Maarif and Wahid Institute are and have been active in promoting their progressive values. Besides these institutes, the GUSDURian network and NU online are present with their promotion of progressive ideas in the digital public sphere. There are a series of progressive individuals that try to counter the conservative and reactionary discourses in the (digital) public sphere. However, it appears that the following and visitors that the progressive camp acquires are marginal compared to the online conservative and reactionary establishments. Other players in the progressive camp that were not within the scope of the current thesis are Islamic State Universities and a handful of other institutes that stand for progressive Islamic values.

The results of this study show that progressive Islam faces several issues in Indonesia. One clear problem that has far-reaching implications is that progressive Islamic organizations have fewer resources available compared to their conservative and reactionary counterparts. The

progressive organizations are often accusatorily related to (Islamic) liberalism and with the West. To avoid further accusations, they must shy away from potential foreign funding. This bolsters a vicious cycle that results in them having limited financial resources. The conservative and reactionary organizations are therefore not only bigger in numbers but are also more financially sound. The availability of financial resources of the conservative and reactionary camp logically results in them having superior organization, marketing and (on- and offline) content.

When asked if the MUI plays a direct role in the problems that progressive Islam in Indonesia is facing, the results are diverging. There seems to be a consensus that the MUI tried to counter the growing liberal trend in 2005 by issuing fatwa no. 7. With the issuance of this fatwa, the MUI not only embraced the stigmatization towards Islamic liberalism but also condemned religious pluralism. According to several interviewees, this condemnation of religious pluralism had, and still has a negative effect on intra- and interreligious harmony and the promotion of such harmony in Indonesia. Moreover, The MUI is seen as being part and parcel of a conservative campaign, which aggressively counters the progressive Islamic entities.

The current study showed that the role of the MUI has been changing throughout the last decades. Since the fall of Suharto, the MUI has been functioning more autonomous from the government. This autonomy from the government gave rise to a more political-ideological character of the MUI. Several interviewees did not find such a political-ideological character appropriate for a religious council. Several other points of critique towards the MUI from the progressive Islamic camp have a common denominator; the ambiguous character of the MUI. This relates to their dubious interpretations and definitions of religious pluralism and other isms as Islamic liberalism and secularism. Their ambiguous character also is brought into relation with their statements and unclarity about the importance of these statements during the Ahok case. Also, it came forward that interviewees are critical towards unclarity of MUI's fatwa no.7 in general and their unclear organization. The unclarity about officiality of the GNPf-MUI also was a point of critique. Further disapproval was directed at perceived problems with leadership and organization within the MUI.

The MUI's involvement during the events around Ahok can be perceived as a continuation of condemning religious pluralism. Additionally, it indicates the continuation of the political and ideological character of the MUI. Some of the interviewees indicated that the events

around Ahok provoked them to initiate a more vocal counter-narrative to oppose the conservative and reactionary movements.

## 6.2 Discussion

The impact of MUI's management of religious diversity on the progressive Islamic landscape became apparent in the current study. With their fatwa no.7 opposing religious pluralism, Islamic liberalism and secularism the MUI affected the functioning of the progressive Islamic organizations negatively. This is in line with the findings from van Bruinessen et al. (2013) and Kersten (2015) who argue that MUI fatwa no.7 coincided with a conservative turn in Indonesia.

### 6.2.1 Challenges for progressive Islam

The current study has found that progressive Muslims purposefully take a distance from the term liberal Islam due to its counter-productiveness. Interviewees argue that conservative and reactionary Islamic movements together with the MUI have initiated a stigmatization process towards this term. This resulted in liberal Islam being associated in negative ways to the West. Such stigmatization fits under what van Bruinessen (2015) refers to as *ghazwul fikri* (invasion of ideas), which became a catch-all term to refer to various forms of Western cultural invasion. Islamic liberalism in Indonesia, partially due to MUI's fatwa no.7 that opposed Islamic liberalism, has such a *ghazwul fikri* stigma to it. The association of progressive Islam to such a stigmatized term makes it difficult to disseminate progressive Islamic discourses.

Burhani (as cited by Kersten, 2013), sees a link between JIL's propagation of liberalism and the downfall of JIMM. In line with the current thesis' findings, he mentions the confrontational attitude of JIL displayed by the network's activists. He argues this attitude almost certainly contributed to the issuance of the MUI's decision to issue fatwa 7. The results of this thesis advance on this link that Burhani sees between JIL's activities and the downfall of JIMM. This thesis found that JIMM members, but also other progressive Islamic representatives felt to be unwillingly associated with liberalism and JIL. Additionally, the current study found that the MUI's attitude towards religious pluralism is perceived to have a negative effect on intra- and interreligious dialogue. On top of that, the promotion of such dialogue is perceived to be more difficult due to the MUI's attitude.

Since the conservative turn in 2005, the Indonesian Ummah got more conservative. This is not only demonstrated by the statements in the found data; it also is evident from Savic Ali's

data (2017) on the immense popularity of conservative and reactionary Islamic websites. Martin van Bruinessen mentions that “progressive Islam doesn’t show the vigor it did ten years ago”. This can be interpreted by saying that the progressive side has problems in its organization and resources, another interpretation, however, is that the Ummah momentarily has a larger interest in more conservative Islamic discourses. Gillespie (2007) argues in his paper that MUI’s fatwa no.7, is a predictable attempt to demarcate a role more aligned with the ummah. In a similar sense, the MUI’s religious guidelines that were issued during the Ahok controversy prove the MUI tries to align with a more conservative ummah. Progressive Islam is getting no support from the MUI. Since the MUI largely consist of prominent Muhammadiyah and NU representatives, this points at a larger issue at stake. Namely a growing discrepancy between the progressive Islamic representatives and the Mass-Muslim organizations in Indonesia.

#### 6.2.2 Similarities between MUI fatwa 7 and the MUI’s role in the Ahok case

The MUI’s religious statements during the Ahok case deal with elements that in many ways correspond with their fatwa no.7. This is especially the case regarding their affirmation of the practicality of Surah Al Maidah 51, which elaborates on their point of view towards religious pluralism. Like fatwa no.7, their religious guidelines exacerbated the already present critical perspectives from the progressive Islamic side towards the increasingly political-ideological character of the MUI.

While van Bruinessen (2013) states that MUI’s fatwa no.7 is one of the clearest interventions of the MUI in politics, arguably, the MUI’s role during the Ahok case is even a more evident political intervention. Advising the Ummah to follow Surah Al Maidah 51 in the context of the events around Ahok, comes very close to advising people on who they should and should not vote. Another common point between the 2005 fatwa and the recent MUI involvement in the Ahok case is that the MUI took an additional step in their attempt to curb religiosity, which in turn may influence the progressive Islamic landscape.

From the data, it appears that several progressive networks were shaken-up by the events around the Ahok case. Since the data collection for this thesis took place during the election period, it is rather difficult to make general statements about implications the MUI’s involvement in the Ahok case had on the progressive landscape. What can be said, is that several interviewees declared to be more vocal in their dissemination of progressive Islamic discourses as a reaction to the Ahok case. However, the controversy around Ahok indicated further polarization within the

Indonesian society. The MUI, with fatwa no.7 and their religious guidelines during the Ahok case, has given legitimacy to Islamic conservatism, which makes it difficult for progressive Islamic discourses to present a legitimate counter-narrative.

### 6.3 Directions for future research

On the one hand, the findings of this thesis indicate that progressive Islam in Indonesia is under pressure, while on the other hand, the findings indicate that numerous progressive individuals, networks, and movements have been shaken-up by the recent events around Ahok. Interviewees mentioned being motivated to initiate a stronger counter-discourse and experiencing that their activities were received better. These were potential indications that progressive Islamic discourses are gaining ground. Further research on this area is advisable. Follow-up research could take Ahok's case as an initiator to research changes in the reception of Islamic discourses in the Indonesian public sphere. A specific focusing on changes in the reception of progressive, conservative and reactionary Islamic discourses would be logical as follow-up research. The reception of these discourses could be illustrated by mapping both the messengers as well as the recipients of Islamic discourses in the traditional and digital public sphere.

### 6.4 Limitations

This research focused on perceptions from progressive Islamic representatives. Such a focus brings certain limitations with it. It potentially shows a one-sided picture of a situation. The current study tried to overcome this pitfall as much as possible by using data triangulation, where several prominent academics and a reflection from the MUI were incorporated. Even though this does minimalize the limitation, it is important to realize the current thesis still highlights progressive Islamic views in Indonesia and not Islamic views in general.

Moreover, the current study did not have the resources to cover all progressive entities in the Indonesian religious landscape. Therefore, some organizations that may be perceived as being progressive Islamic have been left out.

On the parts in this thesis that dealt with the digital public sphere, it needs to be noted that no primary data for the online presence of progressive Islam was collected. This was not within the scope of the current study but would form an interesting study topic itself.

The last limitation that needs to be mentioned is that the interviews around the Ahok case took place during the election period. At the time, emotions around this topic ran high in

Indonesia, especially in Jakarta. Therefore, caution needs to be taken while looking at statements of interviewees on this topic; some statements may have been in the spur-of-the-moment.

## References

- Assyaukanie, L. (2009). Fatwa and violence in Indonesia. *Journal of Religion & Society*, 11.
- Basya, M. H. (2011). The concept of religious pluralism in Indonesia: a study of the MUI's fatwa and the debate among Muslim scholars. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 1, 69-93.
- Bruinessen van., M., Ichwan, M., Burhani, A., & Wildan, M. (2013). *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the "Conservative Turn"*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Bruinessen van, M. (2015). Ghazwul fikri or Arabization? Indonesian Muslim responses to globalization. *Southeast Asian Muslims in the Era of Globalization*, 61-85.
- Burhani, A.N. (2007). *Pluralism, Liberalism and Islamism: Religious Outlook of the Muhammadiyah Islamic Movement in Indonesia*. (Doctoral thesis, Faculty of Humanities, University of Manchester).
- Burhani, A. N. (2014). Treating minorities with fatwas: a study of the Ahmadiyah community in Indonesia. *Contemporary Islam*, 8.3, 285-301.
- Crouch, M. (2010). Indonesia, militant Islam and Ahmadiyah: Origins and implications *ARC Federation Fellowship, 'Islam, Shariah and Governance' Background Paper Series 4*.
- Fealy, G. (2004). Islamic radicalism in Indonesia: The faltering revival? *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 104-121.
- Gillespie, P. (2007). Current issues in Indonesian Islam: analyzing the 2005 Council of Indonesian Ulama Fatwa No. 7 opposing pluralism, liberalism and secularism. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 18.2, 202-240.
- Habermas, J. (1962). *The Structural Transformation of the Bourgeois Public Sphere*. Translation by Thomas Burger (1989). Cambridge, MIT Press.
- Harsono, A. (2017, May 10). An Indonesian court has opened the door to fear and religious extremism. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com>.
- Hasyim, S. (2011). The Council of Indonesian Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) and Religious Freedom. *Irasec's Discussion Papers*, 12.

- Hasyim, S. (2015). Majelis Ulama Indonesia and pluralism in Indonesia. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 41(4-5), 487-495.
- Kersten, C. (2015). *Islam in Indonesia: The Contest for Society, Ideas and Values*. Oxford: University Press.
- Kwok, Y. (2017, April 20). Hard-Line Islam Makes a Mark in Indonesia's Secular Politics. *Time*. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com>.
- Latif, Y. (2008). *Indonesian Muslim intelligentsia and power*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2015). *Practical research: planning and design*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Lindsey, T. (2012). Monopolising Islam: The Indonesian Ulama Council and state regulation of the 'Islamic economy'. *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, 48(2), 253-274.
- Sirry, M. (2013). Fatwas and their controversy: The case of the Council of Indonesian Ulama (MUI). *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 44.1.
- Zulian, P. B. (2018). *Fatwa in Indonesia: an Analysis of Dominant Legal Ideas and Mode of Thought of Fatwa-Making Agencies and Their Implications in the Post-New Order Period*. Amsterdam University Press.

## Appendices

### Appendix A – Interviews and interviewee’s role and organization

Name	role	Organization	Interview Length	Date
dr. Luthfi Assyaukaniee	co-founder	JIL	00:52	18-04-2017
Ulil Abshar Abdalla	co-founder	JIL	02:18	26-05-2017
Akhmad Sahal	Former member	JIL	02:01	19-06-2017
dr. Pradana Boy Zulian	Co-founder and national coordinator	JIMM, Univ. Muhammadiyah Malang	01:38	01-06-2017
prof. dr. Zakiyuddin Baidhawi	co-founder, lecturer	JIMM, Univ. Muhammadiyah Solo	01:01	25-06-2017
dr. Zuly Qodir	Co-founder, lecturer	JIMM, Univ. Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta	00:54	15-06-2017
Alissa Wahid	Founder and Director	GUSDURian Network	02:25	07-06-2017
Muhammad Abdullah Darraz	Director	Maarif Institute	01:13	06-06-2017
Ahmad Suaedy	Co-founder, researcher	Wahid Institute, GUSDURian	01:17	10-06-2017
Savic Ali	Director	NU Online,	00:48	11-06-2017
Prof. Dr. Azyumardi Azra (UIN)	Academic, vice chairman of advisory board	Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, MUI	00:44	08-06-2017

Dr. Moch Nur Ichwan	Coordinator of Doctorate Program	UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta	01:12	15-06- 2017
Dr. Ade Armando (UI)	Lecturer, activist	Universitas Indonesia	01:43	20-04- 2017
Dr. Ahmad Najib Burhani	Senior researcher, Vice Chairman, former member	Indonesian institute of sciences, Majelis Pustaka Informasi (muhammadiyah), JIMM	00:46	24-05- 2017
Dr. Suhadi Cholil	Lecturer	Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies (UGM)	00:50	23-05- 2017
Prof. dr. Martin van Bruinessen	Academic	Comparative Study of Contemporary Muslim Societies		
Hertasning Ichlas	Coordinator	Universalial Legal Aid Foundation	00:41	21-04- 2017
Dr. Carool Kersten	Academic	King's College London		
Asrorun Niam Sholeh	secretary of the fatwa commission	MUI	Not recorded (around one hour)	14-06- 2017
Zafrullah Salim	chairman of the fatwa commission	MUI	Not recorded (around one hour)	14-06- 2017

## Appendix B – Attended events

Public discussions
<i>Challenges to Religious Pluralism and Tolerance: 14-06-2017</i> Prof. dr. Franz Magnis-Suseno, Yenny Wahid, Ahmed Aboutaleb, Dr. Yudi Latif, Dr. Martin Lukito Sinaga
<i>Book release Hate Spin; religious offense and its threat to democracy: 02-05-2017</i> Prof. dr. Cherian George, Ihsan Ali-Fauzi
<i>Public discussion on inter and intrareligious harmony with Minister of Religious affairs: 31-05-2017</i> Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, Ihsan Ali Fauzi

## Appendix C – Example of interview script

### Interview script Ulil Abshar Abdallah

Selamat (pagi/siang/sore). I'd like to introduce myself and tell you something about my research. My name is Nathan, I am a student at Tilburg University in the Netherlands. Currently I am finishing the Master program Management of Cultural Diversity. I came to Indonesia to do research on the perceptions of progressive Islamic organizations on fatwa issuance by the MUI.

**Biographical information:** Firstly, I would like to ask you some short general questions:

- Function
- Age
- Career/education
- Role of religion in daily life
  
- Can you tell me about your affiliation with the NU?

### Personal work/JIL

- Can you tell me something about your role at JIL?
- How would you position JIL in the organizational landscape in Indonesia?
- What were your personal reasons of getting involved with JIL?
- Are you still considering yourself as still an active part of JIL?
- Is JIL as an organization still active?
- What kind of ideology did/does JIL stand for?
- What is the role of former JIL members in other organizations and movements in Indonesia?
- How are you currently continuing spreading the ideology that JIL stood for?
- What was JIL role in the debate on pluralism?
- How does JIL relate to the website IslamLib.com?

### Pluralism, liberalism and secularism in Indonesia

- What would you say is the role of the 2005 fatwa concerning pluralism, liberalism and secularism in the contemporary situation with regards to pluralism in Indonesia?
  
- What is JIL position towards, religious pluralism?
- What is JILs position towards of religious liberalism?
- What is JIL position towards secularism?
- Are there more recent MUI fatwas after the 2005 fatwa that deal with pluralism?
- What is JIL's role in the pluralism debate?

### JIMM

- How would you position JIMM in the religious/organizational landscape in Indonesia?
- Can you tell me something about JIMM's ideology?
- What is JIMM's role in the pluralism debate?
- What is JIMM's relation to the Muhammadiyah?
- Were there similar actions in relation to JIMM?
- What are according to you the most important differences between JIL and JIMM networks?
- Is the debate on pluralism negatively affected due to less active role by JIMM and JILL?

### **MUI fatwa no.7**

- What is the current position of the MUI on pluralism?
- What was the impact of the 2005 fatwa on liberalism, pluralism and secularism by the MUI on JIL?
- What are your personal thoughts on this fatwa?
- Were there formal reactions to this fatwa from JIL?
- In which ways did you react to this Fatwa?
- What does the diminishing of JIL/JIMM say about the situation of pluralism in Indonesia
- Is there a relationship between the diminishing of JIMM and JIL and the Fatwa issued by the MUI?
- What are the causes according to you of the diminishing of JIL?
- I understood that the fatwa on liberalism, pluralism and secularism was (indirectly) aimed at the network JIL, what do you think about this?
- There were several violent acts directed at JIL Network, do you think this had to do with what they were standing for? Where there relations to fatwas?
- There have also been some acts of violence in your personal direction, could you tell more about that?
- Do you think these are related to MUI Fatwas as well?

### **Fatwas in general**

- Could you tell me something about the role of Fatwa issuance in Indonesia?
- What is your personal opinion about Fatwa issuance?
- What areas do you believe fatwas should focus on?
- Do you think a national council is good solution for fatwa issuance?
- Do you think Fatwas are taken as an advice or sometimes more as binding in the Indonesian context?

### **Fatwas and MUI**

- Can you tell me something about the interplay between government and the MUI?
- Are there tensions between the current government and MUI?
- Did this fatwa have an influence on liberal Islamic youth organizations and the way they can express their opinions?
- What is your personal opinion about MUI's position towards pluralism and plurality?
- In which way is the MUI involved in the current elections?
- In which ways do you propose the religious situation in Indonesia to be managed?

## Appendix D – Selection of interview parts

This appendix displays the most relevant interview data. The full interview transcripts and coded interview transcripts can be accessed upon request.

Page	Text	Interviewee
9	Ahok effect, going back to the Ahok effect. So, after the fatwas... you know the people, especially the Islam based violent group, like FUI, FPI, they use the fatwa as the crown for attacking Ahok and his defenders, his supporters	Alissa
9	How is something stronger than a fatwa in Islamic jurisprudence ruling. It's just confusing. I don't know	Alissa
8	initially MUI came out with a statement that what Ahok did in Kepulauan Seribu is blasphemy. The second one is...	Alissa
9	Just a statement. From MUI. I think two or three persons from MUI even argued that the statement is stronger than a fatwa. We were Confused!	Alissa
9	So, you have MUI with a fatwa and then you have some people that say, "we are GNPf, we are defending the fatwa of MUI" and then MUI said it is not a fatwa. But they didn't change the name. That was the drawn for the GNPf to aggressively pursue threats and legal actions toward Ahok	Alissa
11	the case with the verse that Ahok quoted, the interpretation of that verse, we have a diverse interpretation of that verse. Whether a Muslim can choose a non-Muslim as a Auliya, which can be translated into "friends" or "beloved ones" or "allies" or "leader", but that verse in the problematic tafsir, interpretation, is really going to ruin the democratic principles of Indonesian society	Alissa
8	They put it in a vague way. People believed that it was a fatwa	Alissa
9	this formation of the GNPf-MUI [Gerakan Nasional Pengawal Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia], that's like a movement to defend the fatwa	Alissa
11	You can drag this verse, not only for the president, but also for example the principal of a school. It goes all the way down even to maybe village heads, or neighborhood watches	Alissa
10	After SBY's speech in front of the congress, where he pledged that the government would serve MUI	Alissa
10	Because the mainstreaming religious exclusivism has been going on since like 2005. That's the strongest movement, before that it already started to influence the practices of everyday Muslim life but it was not that pronounced. It was not that offensive. But after 2005	Alissa
12	So yes, I consider the fatwa as the turning point	Alissa
13	the educated layers of NU they understand the dynamics between MUI and NU, and their identity as a member of NU is strong enough so that they would look up to what NU is saying on this. That's the educated people. Then at the bottom, which is the majority, in NU they rely on the interpretations of the Ulama	Alissa

14	there would be groups within NU who got their fatwas out of social media or media, mainstream. They still believe that MUI is the highest Muslim council and their rulings overrule fatwas from the NU, they would believe the MUI fatwas. But mostly I think it depends on the two layers. If the local Ulama says that the health security system, the PTS, one day the MUI said that it is Haram. The state organized health security is Haram for Muslims. Then NU came out with another opinion, it's not Haram, it's good. Some people in NU don't care about the MUI fatwa. Then of course the MUI retracted that fatwa	Alissa
7	because in Indonesia the term liberal Muslim refers to people who drink wine and don't practice Salah	Alissa
6	But the practices themselves are not that far [apart]. I think that is one of the most successful framing by the MUI and the conservative groups that has been getting stronger and stronger in Indonesia	Alissa
12	liberal part, yes. But for the pluralism and secularism, no. It has a wider target audience	Alissa
7	they would just say "you are liberal". Liberal becomes a dirty word. I don't think people, even though they believe in the core values, I don't think people now can say confidently "I am a liberal".	Alissa
5	So, the official was confused. I said: "you know that the MUI is an NGO, right?" "No, I thought it was a government body" he said	Alissa
9	So, you have MUI with a fatwa and then you have some people that say, "we are GNPf, we are defending the fatwa of MUI" and then MUI said it is not a fatwa. But they didn't change the name. That was the drawn for the GNPf to aggressively pursue threats and legal actions toward Ahok	Alissa
4	They thought that- they think that MUI is part of... first is a state body and secondly that it is the highest Muslim authoritative body.	Alissa
5	things that I keep reminding every time something happens with MUI, is always to remind people that their fatwas are not binding and MUI is just an NGO and they are not above NU and Muhammadiyah	Alissa
5	when MUI came out with a fatwa on pluralism, liberalism and secularism of course, the people they think this is the fatwa from the highest body of Muslims in Indonesia	Alissa
4	Yes, that's why challenge to freedom of religion and freedom of speech, became more and more pronounced. Even a discussion of pluralism or inter-faith... sometimes if you organize them, the discussions, and you come to the police, the police will ask do you have the permit from MUI	Alissa
9	Before GUSDURian, MUI was a close ally of the government. They were the Ulamas who serve the government. In Gusdur's era, Gusdur tried distance the government from the MUI	Alissa
9	healthy distance between MUI and state	Alissa
4	Local political leaders and local governments always look up to MUI for everything. Then what the public understands is that the MUI is the authoritative body to give out fatwas	Alissa
12	Also to the attacks to the interfaith groups discussion and public events in other places, so many attacks	Alissa
12	Because it gave ground	Alissa

8	introduced a cultural shift and that's dangerous for Indonesia because Indonesia is a pluralistic society	Alissa
12	liberal part, yes. But for the pluralism and secularism, no. It has a wider target audience.	Alissa
12	So yes, I consider the fatwa as the turning point	Alissa
8	the framing is that pluralism is an ideology that says all religions are the same, while plurality is a reality of live where you have different people from different groups living together. That's it. As we are Muslim, then the truth only belongs to us and then the next step would be that we have higher privileges and standings in society. That's the danger of religious exclusivism	Alissa
13	should be about your everyday life as a Muslim	Alissa
13	Societal	Alissa
13	that state and religion should not be that integrally connected	Alissa
13	The conclusion in the NU fatwa is we are not forced on the government, we did not ask the government to change the banking system. For me fatwa should be like that, it should be a personal guidance	Alissa
10	In a good way. We are able to turn the current	Alissa
11	I've been asked for recommendations for Muslim clerics and even got consulted for a list of speakers for the Ramadan activities in state owned companies	Alissa
10	Might be! Hopefully, we still have a lot to do. At least I feel good about public awareness of this. Because for so long we have been talking about this and nobody said	Alissa
10	People are starting to realize that this is a big problem, the rise of religious exclusivism is a big problem, is a threat to the pluralistic values of Indonesian people. People who used to ignore this trend, they only believe that only the Muslim people they become more religious and it's ok, right? Now they realize that this is not religiosity, this is religious exclusivism and it's different, totally different	Alissa
	was a member of the advisory council of MUI in the past. But in the current MUI leadership I am vice chairman of advisory Majelis Dewan Pertimbangan. Dewan Pertimbangan MUI Pusat. Basically advisory	Azyumardi
	Probably more appropriate is progressive. Progressive, multi-cultural or something like that. If you mean by liberal, you do not accept that Islam becomes the basis of Indonesia, probably yeah, I do not accept that. I do not accept the Sharia adapted by the state.	Azyumardi
	I was very critical, I criticized this fatwa very strongly even though I am a member of the MUI openly I criticized this fatwa. I was quoted as Media like Kompas, Tempo. I think this fatwa came from infiltration of Hizbut Tahrir members within MUI leadership of that time. Because there are some HTI (Hizbut Tahrir) members who were also among the leadership of MUI. But now for the current MUI there is no HTI	Azyumardi
	Liberal means not in pejorative meaning, because I am still a practicing Muslim, I pray five times a day. I have no idea, no intention to do some deconstruction of Islamic teaching like JIL proposed.	Azyumardi
	Negatively loaded yes. Everything is considered liberal. That is very pejorative.	Azyumardi

	some HTI leaders, actually consulted me about this draft. But at that time, I didn't have any idea, that this concept would be brought, would be taken to the fatwa commission of MUI. So, I said to them, this is wrong. You said that pluralism means syncretism. No, of course not. Pluralism is that you recognize and honor religious differences without sacrificing your own religion	Azyumardi
	don't know when they discussed the draft, the concept of the fatwa. They didn't invite me. So suddenly they issued the fatwa that created a lot of controversies among Indonesian public. They were not angry with me, I criticized them strongly but they do not hate me. Probably they call this constructive criticism	Azyumardi
	But basically, I appeal to MUI they should take Indonesian social, religious, political realities into consideration before issuing a fatwa. For instance, Indonesia is a very plural nation. You have to be sensitive. I mean MUI should be sensitive to this plurality. To multi-cultural realities of Indonesia	Azyumardi
	It has become a subject for hate speech in the mosque, in religious gathering. So `you know, people from JIL for instance have been a target in mosques, in religious preaching everywhere. So, if you look at my name, on the internet, if you google my name why is Azyumardi Azra JIL, so they accuse me of being JIL. Right, I am not JIL, I am not a member of JIL. Because JIL people are much younger than me, in fact some them are my students. It doesn't make any sense. I have my own thought, way of thinking.	Azyumardi
	you must play with terminology now. Probably if you want to achieve something, let's say pluralism. "Bhinneka" Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, you know, diversity, just use that.	Azyumardi
	I think this is only because of transition of the membership of JIL or JIMM, some of the leaders went abroad to do their advanced studies, like Ulil went to Boston. Also, JIMM many went of them went to Australia, US or Europe. That is basically the reason. But when they return they are still, you know, the same. If not liberal, at least progressive	Azyumardi
	these two state Islamic universities, Yogyakarta and here in Jakarta. Many lecturers of these two universities have been very involved in discussion on pluralism or diversity. Many defenders of them, so they are very active. In general, these states owned Islamic universities are very active	Azyumardi
	I think because he was outspoken. He loved to make fun of certain Islamic beliefs or practices. Because the idea of deconstruction. Sometimes, not only Ulil, but also Luthfi Assyaukani loved to make fun of certain beliefs and certain practices of Muslims. They loved to make people angry	Azyumardi
	if people were angry, they smiled. But that is not the case with JIMM. JIMM has been less provocative	Azyumardi
	opposition to these progressive Muslim or liberal young Muslims. That's why they are not very effective in spreading Islamic reform, new ideas how to reform Islam, to reform Muslims or something like that. Because organization in both NU and Muhammadiyah oppose them, because they are suspicious that they actually do some kind of Western agenda, from US or Europe, particularly US, American Agenda. So that's it	Azyumardi

	it is wrong to assume that the opposition to Ahok is basically an indication of the rise Islamism in Indonesia. Because in the second round Ahok gained something like 42% of the votes. Then I think, because the percentage of non-Muslim and people of Chinese origin is only 15% in Jakarta. So, I think, 27% of the people who vote for Ahok are also Muslim, so you cannot just make a black and white conclusion. Of course, some Muslims are very bitter against Ahok. Particularly FPI, or some other groups. But remember, there was some kind of unholy alliances between ex-retired military, opportunist politicians and also literal minded radical Muslims. They combined together in order to take certain benefits from Ahok's controversy. So that's why I don't think that the Ahok case, can be repeated, can happen somewhere else in Indonesia for the local elections next year, or the presidential elections in 2019. Because the political constellation, the political composition is different. Jakarta is different from let's say West-Java and also the nation state of Indonesia. Ahok is special case	Azyumardi
	the defence of the fatwa. Using the name of MUI, this is the problem of the leadership of MUI. Because MUI is a very loose organization, that's why anybody can claim that they represent MU, while of course they do not represent MUI. Not necessarily represent MUI	Azyumardi
	What is that, fatwa... It is not a fatwa	Azyumardi
	I don't know. I have no idea. Because I didn't follow that. But suddenly MUI issued a statement, that's it. I don't know who were involved, this is again a problem of leadership. Problem of management within MUI. I said to, actually Ma'ruf Amin, as general chairman of MUI, that there should be a certain code of conduct for leadership before making fatwa. whether they can issue a statement on behalf of MUI. I suggested they should appoint certain spoke persons, so this is a problem of leadership	Azyumardi
	Could be effective to some extent. But still, it failed to prevent some Muslims to vote for Ahok. Because again, at least 27% Muslim vote for Ahok. If we assume all of the Muslims vote for Ahok 15%. Then he came at 42% it means that 20% were Muslims	Azyumardi
	MUI should invite experts in anthropology, sociology, political science or psychology before issuing certain fatwas	Azyumardi
	but now I think many of them are also very active in Muhammadiyah. Like Najib Burhani	Azyumardi
10	fatwa and Jakarta governor elections? But they made it. I think they go too far, they went too far in blending religion and politics	Pradana
6	now, we can see the increasing conservatism in Indonesia, many people are becoming more and more conservative and more and more radical. In terms of this situation we can adopt liberalism as a strategy	Pradana
5	rather than using more and more English terms, we put English in second sequence, but the first must be Arabic. Everything where we can come up with an Arabic term, we express it	Pradana
12	because education. Like I'm educated in Australia, so they think I have become a liberal	Pradana
7	the fatwa of MUI, this also give people legitimacy that JIMM should be banned from Muhammadiyah	Pradana

13	public support. At that time many young Indonesians supported them. Maybe, in my language, they are too sarcastic. So, people also think twice about expressing their open support to JIL	Pradana
11	I don't think it was directed at JIL but to progressive movements in general	Pradana
12	the issues they are dealing with are really, really sensitive. In JIMM, we avoid that	Pradana
8	it is important. Because many people here in Indonesia, take MUI's fatwa for granted. As if MUI's fatwa is a binding law	Pradana
4	JIMM, saying it is liberal, it is like a deviant group of Muhammadiyah	Pradana
14	fatwas should serve as an opinion, as a guide for people who are unsure about something. If we refer to theory, theoretical perspective, no fatwa is binding. Even those who ask for the fatwa are free to follow or to leave the fatwa	Pradana
9	how can pluralism be banned while our society is plural?	Pradana
9	I think it is still the same. Even stronger I think. By considering the political situation, MUI's position is becoming firmer on believing that pluralism is part of the social pathology. They believe young Indonesian should stay away from pluralism	Pradana
16	through Facebook, through any social media platform we have to speak up. So, we are currently in... we are setting a strategy on how to compete with radical and conservative opinions within social media	Pradana
18	have established an online website called Nalar sehad. New one. We just established that. Because of this awareness we have to establish	Pradana
9	they differentiate between pluralism and plurality. Plurality the fact of life, where pluralism is an ideology. Pluralism is the art of dealing with plurality, we believe that	Pradana
16	we have to set the tone. Change the strategy, and also, we have to wait and see how the situation develops. But then, we believe that if we keep silent the situation will become worse. So now, we have to compete with them openly	Pradana
17	it is time to speak up, it is time to compete. Because when we follow social media, o my god... I don't believe Indonesia is becoming like this, compared to ten years ago for example. It is becoming worse and worse. So, don't keep silent	Pradana
10	They used religion as a forced to obtain political goals. But then when we talk about this they say, so you are not a good Muslim? Because you separate between politics and religion	Pradana
1	MAARIF Institute. Actually, we have some programs on how to counter radicalism in educational institutions, in public schools. We have a campaign programs on how to promote democracy, promote pluralism, promote human rights values among students	Darraz
1	Inshallah, we will have one program on how to review and make some alternative views about the controversial fatwa of the MUI	Darraz
1	Also, we want to review the fatwa on, the religious opinion on our former governor, this is the crucial point of how the majority took the fatwa to pressure our national law, our constitution. This is because of the religious opinion of the MUI	Darraz

1	there is no authoritative one from the MUI. But I think there is many ulama outside the MUI, [that are] more authoritative, more authoritative than the ulama within the MUI	Darraz
5	No, I think we stand for progressive and moderate. In terms of liberal... In Muhammadiyah we make a distance from this term. This term, in our opinion is contra-productive. We formulate the harmony in diversity, we just promote progressive and moderate. But, in some issues, actually we have the same perspective with the liberal Islam	Darraz
6	they are rejecting the idea of freedom of thinking, freedom of speech. Because, pluralism in our opinion is how we acknowledge the differentiation, the differences in the world. Also, the differences between religion, differences between maybe belief and so on. If we acknowledge the differences, that this world is plural. We have acknowledged that there is part of truth in part of the different things. If we reject the idea of pluralism, we have rejected the freedom of how people have different beliefs. How people have different thinking. In my opinion the fatwa on "sipilis", on pluralism is very counterproductive in terms of how we make harmony in differences in Indonesia, harmony in plurality. In plural life in Indonesia	Darraz
6	In their opinion. Pluralism is how we... That every religion is the same, in their opinion I think, wrong perspective	Darraz
6	I think they make a wrong definition about pluralism. So, they make wrong fatwas on pluralism	Darraz
7	actually, there is maybe just a small impact. In 2006, we have what we call the program of mainstreaming human rights in Islamic education material, in Muhammadiyah schools, until 2009. Our program is rejected by Muhammadiyah constitute, because the Muhammadiyah claimed it was a pluralism promotor. So, our books, there is some books [gets some books], rejected by some Muhammadiyah constitutions in Sulawesi, Central-Sulawesi. Also in West-Java	Darraz
7	because they claim that the MAARIF institute is promoting the idea of pluralism, which is forbidden by the MUI. But we can negotiate this problem, and finally they accepted. They accepted our program, they accepted our book. They accepted our training and so on	Darraz
7	because in NU, the chairman of NU is chairman of MUI and also some of the chairmen of Muhammadiyah are part of MUI	Darraz
8	Actually, we are inspired by the last religious opinion that came from the MUI, on Ahok, about the blasphemy. It is a very crucial fatwa, very crucial religious opinion. Because this opinion made some people vonnis and claim that Ahok did blasphemy. In terms of law there is no blasphemy. The vonnis of law, I think was intervened by the religious opinion, by the fatwa	Darraz
8	they said that Ahok committed blasphemy	Darraz
8	Yes, not in a fatwa, but they called it a religious opinion "opini agama"	Darraz
9	because I think, that after the fatwa the JIL have had some intimidation. Also, some prosecution, if you ever heard, there is prosecution by the FPI. Although it is the celebration of the Pancasila day, this prosecution from FPI is against the JIL activist	Darraz

9	they were rejected by Muhammadiyah constitution. Actually, JIMM come from the Rahim Muhammadiyah, come from the Muhammadiyah. In 2005, some founders and the leader of JIMM was rejected to enter the board of Muhammadiyah. This is what we call the pattern of JIMM. But, also Syafi'i Maarif, Buya climbed as a liberal person and in some areas, they rejected him. Also, I think this is the situation of how JIMM became inactive until now	Darraz
10	I think JIL is just very provocative yes. More provocative, and maybe in MAARIF we have a strategy, this is part of our strategy, how we deliver our ideas. Maybe it is the same idea as JIL, but with a different strategy. We enter to schools, enter to campus. JIL they are in the media	Darraz
11	they claim we are part of JIL. So, they rejected our program	Darraz
12	It is very controversial I think. If you talk about the last case on Ahok, it is very dangerous I think, if we make some fatwa on political issues. But we must... push the MUI that they make fatwas on how to reintegrate, how to make harmony in our social life	Darraz
2	Indonesia also in terms of religion, Indonesian people is are getting more religious than ever. If we compare our situation in the 70s, 60s with the current situation. Not like in the 70s, when I was a kid for example, I started in public school. One of my teachers, wore Hijab for example. That was very rare for people to be wearing Hijab. To be a Muslim, at that time Indonesian Muslim, generally believed that to be a Muslim there is no need to be an Arab. This is kind of a consensus. You don't need to wear Hijab to expose that you are a Muslim, you know. Because we are majority, no one will... You don't have to identify yourself, by wearing Hijab, you are by default as a Muslim. But now identity politics is so strong. So, you have to show your identity, you know that you are affiliating to certain groups	luthfi
5	Pluralism I think (-is a-) belief or concept that you accept diversity, first of all there is that. Diversity is already there in the Indonesian society. When we are born, you see diversity in your society. But pluralism is a concept, is thinking that you have to believe in diversity. That is pluralism. The problem is, because certain concepts. Why sometimes ... religious people deny or reject this kind of concept is simply because they think this concept is coming from the West, coming from outside their tradition, so they reject it. But if you ask them, whether they accept diversity, diversity is kind of something already there. They cannot reject it, but once you drag them into the discourse, into the debate there is so much disagreement on it	luthfi
5	Because they define Pluralism what they think, or what they assume, not as what it is discussed in the scholarly debate for example. If you see the debate on the scholarly level, there are so many opinions and views about pluralism. They are against pluralism, I think, because they only took one version or interpretation of pluralism	luthfi
6	The Fatwa, in Indonesia is taken collegial. Collegial means the Fatwa should be issued based on discussion among MUI members, more than a hundred I think. They have ulama gathering, discussing an issue and after that they release the fatwa. So, the fatwa, is a product of many people. So, in the system of Fatwa in Indonesia, we don't have a Mufti institution. We have a	luthfi

	fatwa institution, but not a mufti-. The institute is called Majelis Ulama Indonesia. Majelis means it's an organization, council	
6	religion in nature is conservative. Don't expect too much of religion. Particularly in fatwas, you know. Because, however democratic MUI was, still conservative. Don't compare with other democratic institutions. Because MUI is naturally a religious institution. So, they are naturally conservative. Their Fatwas are also conservative, if you ask me if it is fit to liberalism. Not at all. Because they try to reserve or try to maintain conservativeness orthodoxy of religion. The liberal network (JIL) is the opposite of that. We try to, reunderstand, rethink, and reformulate the orthodoxy. The basic is liberalism	luthfi
7	the current governor (still Ahok at the time of the interview), does now, regarding his responses to Islamic laws for example. [Jakarta governor] Ahok, although he is a Chinese Christian, part of his job was inherited from [president] Jokowi. He is very eager to build mosques in Jakarta, for example. He recently completed one grand mosque. The first time ever in Jakarta is a Mosque under Ahok. That is actually partly because of politics	luthfi
8	It's been political from the very beginning. Even the creation of the MUI was very political. Soeharto has no interest in religion actually. Because he was secular, he was from military background. He has no interest at all in religion, but he needs religious support. To control it. So, he built MUI. I mean, from the very beginning MUI was very political	luthfi
8	quite autonomous compared to the past. Because in the Soeharto time it was controlled by the government. Now it is no longer controlled by the government. It is controlled by the major Islamic organizations, particularly NU and Muhammadiyah. So, if you want to see the true color of MUI, you have to see the colour of NU and Muhammadiyah. If NU and Muhammadiyah is getting conservative, so does the MUI	luthfi
9	JIL never has been very popular in terms of followers. You know we are a very limited group discussion as I said earlier. So, it is just coming out of fear, coming out of concern. Perhaps, you know, because JIL tried to challenge the status quo, tried to challenge the orthodoxy that has been reserved by the MUI. They are just afraid, because challenging authorities is very dangerous. So, we were challenging authorities at the time	luthfi
10	Let me put it pragmatically. Because the Fatwa institutions are already there, just use the institutions. But not so much involved in politics. Currently, MUI is playing too much and too deep into politics. That is the problem. Once you are involved too much in politics that will create problems. Because first of all; the Indonesian society is so diverse, even when you are talking about Muslim communities they are not a single entity. Once you give to one side that will create a problem. So, Fatwa institution is good, as long as it is dedicated for only religious purpose	luthfi
1	I am skeptical about progressive Islamic movements gaining more grounds in Indonesia. They are marginal compared to other Islamic movements.	Martin

1	They flourished during the first years of transition (1998-2004) but became increasingly marginalized in the following years. They are still there but have none of the vigor they showed 15 years ago.	Martin
1	Individuals from progressive Islamic movements thinking that the Ahok case could be a turning point for progressive Islam might be a “spur-of-the-moment” thing. Disappointment with Ahok's conviction no doubt made some people turn away from conservative Muslim groups in disgust, but I see no indication of a growing interest in progressive discourses	Martin
1	Individuals from progressive Islamic movements thinking that the Ahok case could be a turning point for progressive Islam might be a “spur-of-the-moment” thing. Disappointment with Ahok's conviction no doubt made some people turn away from conservative Muslim groups in disgust, but I see no indication of a growing interest in progressive discourses.	Martin
1	Banning Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) can be seen as a late reaction from president Jokowi to the conviction of Ahok. Not just to Ahok's conviction but to the perceived danger radical Muslim groups pose to Jokowi's re-election in 2019. There were much better reasons to ban FPI, but that did not happen. FPI played a more central role in the demonstrations against Ahok, and it has a long history of violent action, including even murder. HTI has always stayed within the boundaries of the law, but its ideology is of course incompatible with Indonesian nationalism	Martin
1	Ulil Abshar Abdalla is rebranding himself as an Islamic scholar (and an expert on Ghazali, the medieval scholar most respected and loved in traditionalist circles) using social media as a platform. Moving away from negative connotations with Jaringan Islam Liberal (JIL) and liberalism.	Martin
1	The funding Asia Foundation has provided to JIL, proved to be their undoing, because their critics could present them as a fifth guard, paid by Imperialists/Jews and Christians/ to undermine Islam. Not just JIL but other progressive and liberal groups as well, found their credibility shaken.	Martin
1	Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) issued a fatwa, or a pernyataan sikap to be more specific, stating that Muslims cannot vote for non-Muslim leaders.	Martin
1	Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) issued a fatwa, or a pernyataan sikap to be more specific, stating that Muslims cannot vote for non-Muslim leaders.	Martin
		Martin
1	The GPNF-MUI's individuals played a big role in mobilizing Ahok opponents which resulted in Ahok losing the elections and being convicted. The conviction was a complicated process: the police and prosecutor had to decide whether they would investigate and prosecute Ahok; the decision to do so was taken under considerable pressure. Judges were placed under pressure by a demonstration specifically targeting them.	Martin
1	There are still a few well-respected progressive Muslims in the older generation. In younger generations not many prominent progressive Muslims can be found. [There may be many young progressives, but hardly any of them has a large personal following. The media are not supportive at all.	Martin
2	Ahmad Syafi'i Maarif is well-respected within the Muhammadiyah, but not followed.	Martin

2	Progressive Islamic movements have to be very careful with foreign funding which could lead to negative associations. This leads to them having limited resources compared to other Islamic movements.	Martin
3	terms of politics there are also some differences. In terms of theology, the NU is more following Shafi'i and following Al-Ghazali. While Muhammadiyah is more trying to go back to the Quran and Sunnah without certain references to old classical scholars. There are also differences in terms of Suffism, we call it in Muhammadiyah neo-suffism, while the NU the Suffism they adopt is Suffism based on like [inaudible] while Muhammadiyah, we call it neo-suffism or other terms that usually is used is Salafi-suffism, is suffism based on the practice of the prophet Muhammad	Najib
4	the fatwa, within Islam itself the meaning of plurality is also limited. It means that beyond the orthodoxy determined by MUI is not part of the plurality. For instance, Ahmadiyya is going beyond the categories of the accept beliefs, accepted beliefs within MUI, they are not part of the plurality	Najib
5	the fatwa on pluralism, liberalism doesn't have a certain object. Although people know that the object, or the victim is liberal Islam. Liberal ideas, people with pluralistic ideas. But there is nothing that can be considered as the one that can be banned or the one stopped moving. It's different from Ahmadiyya. Because the object, we can't see the object. But the pluralism is about the idea	Najib
5	It's about a way of thinking. So, we can just see that this is a kind of dichotomy in terms of people's way of thinking on religion on culture in Indonesia. So, we can see that there is a group that we can consider already going far away from accepted religiosity and those who are still within. So, this is more a mind of keeping boundaries, and warning to the people not to be too liberal or too secular. Considering that if you are doing that, in the context of religion, that's not the one that is accepted. It's like curbing, the ideas of the ways that people think about religiosity	Najib
6	But if pluralism, there is no certain organization mentioned there. But people will understand that the meaning of that is like Liberal Islam Network (JIL) and also those who are too far away in their way of thinking	Najib
6	to a lesser degree. because it's different. It's still accepted by some members of Muhammadiyah, also now some members of JIMM are leaders in Muhammadiyah. At that time... I mean, there are some people like perhaps Boy Pradana and also Zuly Qodir who are considered part of the liberal group within Muhammadiyah. But they are still within the Muhammadiyah organization. Not going outside the Muhammadiyah	Najib
6	Not formally, but it is established and the members from them mostly are coming from Muhammadiyah student association. Muhammadiyah high school students. From Muhammadiyah universities	Najib
6	Not an official body of the Muhammadiyah. But culturally they are part of Muhammadiyah and some of them are let's say structurally within Muhammadiyah. Also, it was, the birth of this organization, is done by the chairman of the Muhammadiyah at that time: Professor Syafi'i Maarif and Moeslim Abdurrahman	Najib

7	In terms of organization it is not as strong as in 2005. But the individuals are still there. Some of them join political parties, some of them became lecturers at universities. But as a movement it is no longer there, I mean we still find the people but not the office, not the organization	Najib
8	Ahok issue in Jakarta. Is making some members of JIL even fragmented. I mean there are some groups that still having the same main kind of idea but also some groups that supported like the opposition to Ahok. Also, if you interview Ulil, have you interviewed Ulil	Najib
8	actually, that is the main goal of establishing JIMM is direct involvement in Muhammadiyah. Because at that time, these people were still very young. There was no chance for them to be actively participating in Muhammadiyah. But as a movement that is important, and then you need other people to continue actually. But once you get older, your main activities is not as a fringe organization but going into the Muhammadiyah itself	Najib
9	that's the failure of the organization, because people cannot make a new movement, with new people	Najib
9	there are many factors, but the fatwa.... I don't think it has had a huge implication to the existence of JIL and JIMM. Because, one of the factors of JIMM for instance, because they are getting older and are involved directly in Muhammadiyah, so it's not because of the fatwa. The second one is that after the issuance of the fatwa, some members of JIMM were going abroad, continuing their studies. Then after returning in Indonesia in 2012, 2013 they are directly involved in Muhammadiyah. So, there is no direct impact of the fatwa to the existence of JIMM. But... I think, the one that we can see from the fatwa is a strengthening of the group that attack JIL and JIMM. It's like giving them a weapon to attack, giving them motivation	Najib
9	the demise of JIMM and JIL is not because of that fatwa	Najib
9	it is kind of undermining the strength of JIL but no killing them	Najib
2	we promote different kinds of Islam. As you know, since ten years there are many conservative websites in Indonesia, radical websites or extremist websites. I think we need to counter these points of view, their perspectives, their ideology. With NU online and Islami.co we would like to... to have counter-narratives/messages to the radical and conservative websites. We are promoting a different point of view	Savic
2	In Indonesia, the most influential Islamic websites come from the conservative group. I have a picture, maybe I can show you. The most important 20 websites in Indonesia are dominated by radical groups. Only NU online is there, as number 5. The red is pro-violence. The yellow maybe intolerant but not violent, non-violent extremists and the green are moderate	Savic
2	I did it by myself. Every January, I track the websites by popularity. Actually, the most popular are the intolerant websites, the extremist websites. But not violent though. But they promote intolerant views, Muslim supremacy. This is what we want to counter	Savic
3	NU online does not only represent the PBNU, but we also the voice of Nahadin, the voice of the member of the NU, not only the officials of the NU. Because there are many articles, writings, and opinions that come from the	Savic

	member of NU that is to some extent different from the opinion of the officials of the NU	
3	Maarif Institute, Wahid Institute, and even Muhammadiyah do not have an influential website. They have a website, but with only a small number of visitors	Savic
3	I think JIL, maybe seven or eight years ago, was influential online and in social media. But they have become weaker and weaker. Actually, the members of JIL have divided to different places. For example, Ulil joined the democrat party. Assyaukani is active in his own organizations	Savic
3	Many conservatives opposing JIL. Because they think that JIL is the liberalization of religion. For many conservatives, liberalization is not accepted	Savic
3	To some extent we also promote liberal views, in Islami.co for example, there are several Ulil writings	Savic
4	The implication I think... there are many, maybe millions of people in Indonesia that get influenced by the websites. When we see what happens in the Jakarta elections, there are many conservative groups that join with extremist groups. I think one reason is the influence of the radical websites. Many urban Muslims learn online about Islam. This is different from NU, I learned Islam from my teacher in a Pesantran. When I encounter things I didn't know, I asked my teacher. Now we have the google generation, every time they need to know about something, they google it. Unfortunately, Google will lead them to the conservative website. (Breaking of fast, Iftar is served). One of the impacts of the radical websites is that millions of people are influenced by them. Therefore, they adopted the narrow-minded Islam. There are millions of people visiting these websites. If you monitor the social media in Indonesia. In Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, you will find many explicit, inappropriate versions of Islam. The ideology of these radical groups is Sharia Islam. They want to create an Islamic state. Maybe in a different way than ISIS	Savic
4	many websites are opposing religious pluralism. They are always writing bad things on other religions. They are always writing about Christians in a bad way	Savic
4	Yes, of course. This put the progressive Muslims in a difficult situation. Because we get less support from the influential Islamic institutions	Savic
5	I am still optimistic on promoting pluralism, because of the NU, a bigger organization than the MUI, stands on our side. MUI actually is created by the new order regime to legitimize the government. They don't affect the NU members much. But for the Urban Muslims, that do not affiliate with NU, MUI is more influential, particularly in Jakarta	Savic
5	Yes, I think, like with JIL, I haven't heard from them for more than three years. They don't have activities, they don't have a spokesperson. We don't recognize them in the last three or four years	Savic
5	MUI actually played an important role in the Ahok case. They reported Ahok to the police.	Savic

6	We have to weaken MUI, we don't need MUI actually. I, as an NU member, what I need is just to follow the NU. I do not need MUI fatwa. Most of the MUI ulama are not close to society. They are bureaucratic Ulama	Savic
6	fatwa is not an obligation for Muslims, up to the Muslim to follow it or not. So, every group can create a fatwa. But it depends on the people if they follow it or not	Savic
7	We have to create more content, we have a lack of content. They have a lot of content. We have a lack of content. There are many moderate, that are not active online. The moderate groups, ten years ago, felt comfortable with their positions. The radical groups because they felt like a small group, became more active and more militant in creating and promoting their content. I think the Ahok case is a blessing in disguise. Because of the Ahok case, many moderate groups suddenly woke up, realizing the current situation; the radical groups have become stronger and stronger. There are many groups, have become more aware and are creating more content, more promotion of their points of view in the online space	Savic
7	I think there is a turning point right now. For example, yesterday I met with Luthfi Assyaukanie and some of our colleagues to discuss the current situation, what we have to do to respond to the current situation	Savic
8	I think MUI at that time was not so influential as nowadays. Fatwa of the MUI became influential because of the growing group of extremists. Most supporters from MUI fatwa come from this extremist group. Ten years ago, when the MUI issued this fatwa, the NU member did not hear that. MUI has become more influential. MUI go hand in hand with extremists, conservatives. In 2005 there were not so many radicalisms	Savic
8	I think this was after the empowering of a network among MUI, SBY and the government. But before, in 2000 one of the human resource research institute of NU has a journal. Long before 2005, where the topic of promoting liberal Islam. Before 2000 there was not really talk about liberal Islam	Suaedy
3	important thing is about the policy of the government. Especially the MUI, in the Suharto era MUI follows what the government says, the MUI made decisions and so on. When Gus Dur became president, he makes statements and enforces that the MUI should be separated from the government	Suaedy
3	Gus Dur, especially gave one million, at that time a lot of money, to the MUI and they had to separate from the government	Suaedy
3	that the MUI became angry with the Gus Dur government, they affiliated with the opposition, the military and so on. Before Gus Dur, the MUI also affiliated to Habibi, and formed opposition to Megawhati. So, the character of the MUI is political	Suaedy
3	he used religion to run for presidency. Precisely, in Suharto MUI followed government, in Gusdur there was a confrontation and in SBY the government followed the MUI. In religious issues SBY followed what MUI said. What the statement of the SBY was that the MUI released the fatwa	Suaedy

3	There are two important fatwas. The first is about Ahmadiya, being out of Islam. Then liberalism, secularism and pluralism being haram. After that, if you look at data, including from the Wahid institute at that time. You see a rising intolerance. Since this event in July 2005 there is rising intolerance and rising violence of religion. Especially for Ahmadiya and Islamic minorities	Suaedy
4	in the sense that the MUI is not consistent in their definition of pluralism in general. In academic and also from a human rights perspective. They limit people to reach out to non-Muslims. The definition of pluralism for MUI is giving the same, all religions are the same. Did is not the definition of pluralism in terms of human rights or academics	Suaedy
5	there are many scholars and experts like Din Syamsuddin, Ma'ruf Amin they are known with the definition. But they provoked the forum to another definition	Suaedy
7	confrontation is just normal. Violence is different. Confrontation and debate are normal. Mentally we are not afraid of them. The problem lays in violence towards minorities especially. 2006-2012 there is high attacks, not only violence but in process of some activists from Ahmadiya and Shiites sent to jail	Suaedy
7	I do not think so. Until 2013 I think, JIL is still active in media. Also, especially in Media Java post in East Java. Every two weeks there was an article. So, this is not because of fear, or being under pressure of the MUI and FPI but just a normal process. JIL decided not to become a long-term movement. So, I don't think there is a direct relation	Suaedy
7	We still promote the pluralism dialogue. The problem is that the government, on all levels, also police, attorneys. They are all under pressure of the radicals, of these movements. So, for example, when the group of FPI attacked the Ahmadiyya, the police does not protect the Ahmadiyya but also protect the FPI for example. Not the FPI was sent to JIL but the leader of the Ahmadiyya. People like me, Ulil and so on. We have no problem because we always promote	Suaedy
7	situation for activists like Ulil is no problem. Because it is normal. The problem is that the police does not protect the people. Also, when a bomb was sent to the JIL center, the police does not try to find out who the people were who sent it	Suaedy
9	the continuation of the political spirit of the MUI. Like I said, during Habibi until mega, confronting Gus Dur, collaboration with SBY. This is part of this. I met with Maaruf Amin for example, the issue of religion Chinese. There actually is no fatwa. In terms of perspective, the thing is about the political. Because of the political interest, Maaruf has to follow the Umah, this is according to me this is political. Because there are many groups in MUI. NU and Muhammadiyah are only two, there are many groups. Most of them conservative. Most of the leaders come from the Middle-East. Like I said, there is a different strategy between the political Islam group, the Muslim groups who see politic always as a means to achieve their goals. Always promote in the center, to mobilize the people, in the progressive groups, there is a different strategy, not in the center but rather decentralization. This is why we see that the conservative group is very big. This is in the center, all	Suaedy

	conservative people are in one place. That is why it looks very big. MUI is part of political Islam	
9	The role of the MUI, not only the MUI but also the conservative groups. This is only the ideological or theological part, this is practiced in politics. There is a relation with political interest. The movement, and also the MUI get money, a lot of money, from this [political organizations	Suaedy
10	I am critical towards JIL also. They are too radical maybe. In terms of... Not radical in terms of philosophy, but in terms of provocativeness. Someone like Ulil, is back to cultural, the inspiration is still there; progressiveness, liberalism. But a different way of expressing. This is a positive thing	Suaedy
10	a different style between NU and Muhammadiyah. Muhammadiyah is more central in the campus, they speak from the campus to the people, the young NU like Gusdurian come from people that speak to the public, so that is different. Characteristic of Muhammadiyah is intellectual, in the city, on the campus. Their role is important. There are different organizational forms	Suaedy
11	there are many young people that are not part of JIL, also growing to be liberal, but not in a group. But people from JIL who were very liberal, go back to being cultural. In Ramadan, every evening from 9-10, Ulil reads live from...	Suaedy
12	According to me it's very simple, the government should enforce the regulation and the law. But protection to the people, especially for minorities. Rising intolerance is because of the government, especially SBY, just ignores when a group like FPI attack minorities. The minorities are dubbel victims. Secondly, the government should make regulations about protection. Almost all regulation about religion, are established in the 60s. They should review the regulations on human rights, civil society and so on. The government should not be under pressure from radical groups. The problem is that the government is non-decisive on this issue. It is why a group like FPI is growing because the government just ignores it	Suaedy
3	is even worse today. Especially after the governmental election Jakarta. The religious conservatism is even worse today	Ulil
9	So, look at the gubernatorial election in Jakarta. The MUI issued a fatwa, saying that the governor should be a Muslim	Ulil
6	fatwa is quite instrumental in providing a platform for society, for Islamic conservatives, to wage a battle against liberal ideas in Indonesia	Ulil
8	MUI is not part of this, but MUI, this organization was quite smart, that after reformasi it changed its position. It is smart to reposition itself in the constellation of Islamic society	Ulil

9	now MUI is like giving legitimacy to this new trend of conservatism in society	Ulil
13	very smart in how they promote it. They created an organization, even business, you have the whole network of commercial activities among those people. It's amazing in terms of social entrepreneurship as a movement this conservatism is amazing	Ulil
6	conservatism is easy to understand; the language is simple and the discourse is not sophisticated. So, it is easy to paddle conservatism to society	Ulil
6	in 2005 there was a fatwa. By the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI), saying that secularism, liberalism and pluralism were ideas that were antithetical to Islamic teaching, so people should be careful and... So that's the beginning of the backlash	Ulil
6	the campaign was quite successful, even to scare away, the western funding agencies	Ulil
5	After JIL was able to counter them head on, on discourse level. There was a backlash	Ulil
13	I don't say that MUI is the single factor in this turning point	Ulil
11	JIL and other progressive Islamic movements. That try to maintain freedom, we try to defend this freedom because it's important to our... of course it is very important and I believe that, freedom is instrumental in the flourishing of society in general	Ulil
16	The whole fatwa about liberalism, secularism and pluralism is directed to JIL. Even though the fatwa doesn't mention JIL by name. I know that during the deliberation that resulted in this issuance of fatwa JIL came up in the discussion. I learned that from some people who participated in the deliberation	Ulil
17	they are more comfortable with progressive. The term progressive. Which is a little bit too the left if you see the ideological spectrum. The word progressive is inclining more to the left, than to the right	Ulil
17	If you use progressive Islam, the emphasis is more on the side of social justice. That's the theme, the big theme in progressive movements, including in Islam is more on the social justice. Liberal Islam put emphasis more on individual rights	Ulil
6	liberal becomes a dirty word. People were scared of using liberalism and liberal, because it amounts to things that are not Islamic and so forth.	Ulil
18	show some sign of critical thinking, just a sign of critical thinking you will be stigmatized as liberal	Ulil
9	It's like a recommendation. But it's basically a fatwa. So now MUI is part of this conservatism that is rising in society lately.	Ulil
9	No, it's not a fatwa. It's not framed as a fatwa, even though it is a fatwa basically. Because the way it is reframed its argument and everything is just like a fatwa.	Ulil
21	we have this two major Islamic organizations that sustain this equilibrium of peaceful coexistence between different faiths and different religions, NU and Muhammadiyah. It's like two pillars of our moderation as a society. We are lucky also to have, despite its weaknesses and shortcomings, democracy works in Indonesia. It works	Ulil

8	It is now an autonomous body. That's why, in the past this entity was disrespectful, I mean it is not respected by the Muslim society because people see it as, lacking regime	Ulil
9	It was based on Quran. They try to come up with support from the Quran and Hadith. But the terminology that they used is not fatwa, it is tausiyah, no it is not tausiyah it's a religious opinion. It's a religious viewpoint. Is that it? No, they call it tausiyah	Ulil
10	I criticized the fatwa very, very strongly. I organized a press conference, just after the fatwa was issued, next day I organized a press conference in Jakarta, bringing prominent leaders, Muslim leaders, who were opposed to this fatwa	Ulil
9	just a few months after the fatwa. Crazy, yeah it was crazy, and then there was an attempt to kill me as well in 2011	Ulil
9	there was an attempt to kill me, the plan was contemplated by a cell in Jemaah Islamiyah	Ulil
14	MUI, defined pluralism as an idea that leads somehow to relativism. Into some view that sees all religious as equally... at the same footing. So that's problematic	Ulil
15	So that's how MUI, defines relativism. But in my mind, in my opinion that's not relativism. Relativism is to say that there is no single truth in everything	Ulil
10	they were scared of this unfiltered freedom in society, so they try to control this freedom. By producing, religious opinion, because I understand, I mean the social situation in Indonesia after reformasi was chaotic, really, really chaotic	Ulil
3	was like the lid was lifted up and all bad things that were suppressed during the previous order, came out suddenly	Ulil
13	I admire their social entrepreneurship, their organizational creativity. It's amazing and just in coincidence, I mean this amazing but most of the people who join this movement come from middle class background, well educated. Many of them are wealthers in IT technology, computer technology in design, in art design. So that's why if you look at this movement they have good posters, good flyers with a good design, very artistic. Well organized, well executed	Ulil
	People look at the 2005 fatwa in the lens of the new fatwa. What was not clear in the 2005 fatwa, becomes clear now in this new fatwa.	Ichwan