The Masyumi Networks and the Proliferation of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia (1945–1965)

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Abstract

This article addresses the roles played by Masyumi political leaders in fuelling dakwah activism in Indonesia and energizing the inception and proliferation of Islamic higher education institutions before and after the political turmoil faced by the Masyumi party. Islamic politics and education in Indonesia were intermingled and utilized by Masyumi leaders to promote Islam, foster the dignity of the ummah (Muslim community), and achieve Maysumi's political vision via non-political activism. Using social-structure networks analysis, this article argues that the Masyumi networks and the spirit of Islamic modernism accelerated the spread of Islamic higher education in Indonesia, especially from 1945–1965. The Masyumi networks consisted of Muslim politicians, the intelligentsia, technocrats, noble families, and businesspeople.

Keywords

political Islam – education – dakwah – reform movement – higher education

1 Introduction

Indonesia has witnessed the spread of Islamic higher education (IHE) institutions over the past half-century, as evidenced by the presence of thousands of state and private Islamic universities all over the country.¹ The widespread

¹ According to the Kementerian Agama (Ministry of Religious Affairs, or MoRA), 58 state and
prevalence of IHE in Indonesia is the product of a specific historical context that deserves further investigation. Such an investigation could help to explain how and why IHE is such an integral feature of Indonesian Islam. The different types of education in Indonesia, ‘religious’ and ‘secular’, are the result of long social and political processes that have taken place since early Indonesian independence and even before this. The presence and increasing influence of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) and the Ministry of Culture and Education (MoEC), two government institutions that have operated many higher education institutions, signifies that education is part of the social reform and political agenda of Indonesia’s leaders.

During the Dutch colonial era, a limited number of higher education institutions aimed to provide advanced training for small groups of people and to produce prospective government officers and professionals. Professional training in law, medicine, and technology was ‘even more restrictive for Indonesians’, and only about 200 Indonesians managed to gain university diplomas (Madinier 2015:26). Despite restrictive access, these institutions offered a new way for pribumi (native Indonesians), especially those from noble families and the wealthy, to benefit from a higher level of training. Thus before Indonesian independence, the newly established Dutch higher learning system enriched the existing traditional education system run by pribumi, which included pesantren and other types of non-formal Islamic education that paid little attention to the professional skills required for government jobs. Unlike national schools, which focused mainly on professional training and ‘secular’ knowledge, IHE seemed to have aimed to create future Muslim leaders with both strong professional skills and Islamic awareness. In the spirit of the nationalist movement, Muslim leaders started promoting Islamic higher education, and their ‘nationalist ambition’ was instrumental in accelerating the inception of higher education institutions as part of a larger framework of ‘social welfare programs’ (Van der Kroef 1955:366). In recent times, ‘the lines demarcating secular versus Islamic spheres in Indonesia’s National System [have not been] as rigid as it would at first appear’ (Nakamura and Nishino 1993:52; see also Suwignyo 2012).

This article will fill the literature gap in Indonesia’s history of IHE and political Islam by focusing on the political contexts before and after Indonesian independence 1942–1945 and 1945–1965. Within these periods of history, Muslim leaders from various political backgrounds battled to own and operate

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829 private Islamic higher education institutions, excluding Islamic universities that are affiliated with the Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (Ministry of Education and Culture, or MoEC), run various Islamic studies programmes.
IHE institutions to produce a more knowledgeable and well-educated Muslim population and to create an Indonesian Islamic identity. Arguing that Masyumi leaders used a political strategy and networks to spread their ideology, ideas of nationalism, and dream of pan-Islamism through education and *dakwah* (Islamic propagation), this article investigates the ideas and motivations behind the growth of IHE institutions before and after the political crises Masyumi faced during the Orde Lama (Old Order) era. In conducting this study, I relied heavily on historical literature, biographies, daily news, and party documents. However, I have also conducted fieldwork to support case studies and interviews with informants who knew former Masyumi leaders.

The first IHE institution in Indonesia, which is still in existence today, is the Sekolah Tinggi Islam (*sti*, now Universitas Islam Indonesia or *uii*). The *uii* was founded in 1945, a few weeks before the proclamation of Indonesia’s independence in Jakarta. We have found no record of any other IHE institutions being established in Indonesia until 1950. Surprisingly, a number of Islamic institutions, including higher education institutions, mushroomed between 1950 and 1965 in areas such as Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi. This article sheds some light on four Islamic universities in these areas as case studies; these universities allegedly had solid connections to the Masyumi party between 1945 and 1965. The establishment of IHE institutions in Jakarta/Yogyakarta, North Sumatra (Medan), South Sulawesi (Makassar), and West Java (Bandung), as this article will argue, was a result of the political movement, intellectual climate-engineering, and social reform sponsored and endorsed by the party’s leaders, who effectively used their networks to maintain political resources through *dakwah* and education.

As a political party supported by various Islamic organizations from different Indonesian regions, Masyumi had complex networks and social structures that intersected with various parties, including religious organizations, youth movements, intellectuals, noble families, and people from a variety of social and economic backgrounds. Thus, the rise of IHE institutions from 1945 to 1965 can be scrutinized using social network analysis, which examines how personal and community networks profoundly shape social and cultural capital patterns and strengthen the relationships between organizations and people. Moreover, social network analysis may reveal the types of individual networks that intersect with organizational activity, with alliances within organizations affecting jobs mobility, organizational cultures, and decision making (Wellman and Berkowitz 1988:xv). Therefore, the roles of political leaders who contributed to establishing the networks and eventually accelerated the inception of IHE institutions constitute a large portion of the analysis.
The Masyumi Networks: Between National Awakening and Islamic Political Struggle

In the first half of the twentieth century, Muslim Indonesians witnessed the unprecedented development of Islamic organizations and national-awakening movements. These two phenomena led to the rise of new Muslim leaders who had a strong awareness of the idea of Indonesia as a nation-state, which was expressed by the establishment of Islamic organizations such as Sarekat Islam (SI, Islamic Union; formerly Sarekat Dagang Islam or SDI, Islamic Trade Union) (1905); Muhammadiyah (1912); Al-Irsyad (Jami’yyatul Irshad Al-Islamiyah, Islamic Guidance Society) (1914); Persatuan Ummat Islam (PUI, Islamic Community Association); Persatuan Islam (PERSIS, Islamic Union) (1926); and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, Revival of Islamic Scholars) (1926), as well as by the creation of youth movements such as Jong Java (Young Javanese Union); the Jong Islamieten Bond (JIB, Union of Young Muslims); and the Jong Sumatranen Bond (JSB, Union of Young Sumatrans) (Latif 2005a; Suryadinata 1978; Van Bruinessen 2013). Unlike other youth organizations that had regional identities, such as Java, Sumatra, Celebes, or Ambon, the JIB’s members crossed regional boundaries as they came from Java, Sumatra, and Celebes; they had particularly close links to Muslim modernist circles (Husni 1998:49). Despite differences in activism styles, a range of other similarities connected some of the advocates of these Islamic organizations, political parties, and youth organizations. The connections among them were based variously on friendship, kinship, social class, educational background, and so on. In the long run, regardless of political ideology, they shared one objective: to be free from colonialism.

There are two types of networks that are discussed in this article. The first is the organizational network, or affiliation, and the second is the individual network. Masyumi as a social structure had widespread social networks through which people from different Islamic, economic, and cultural backgrounds intersected. Masyumi politicians became important actors or agents in connecting and consolidating Muslim leaders’ Islamic interests. These included fostering the implementation of Islam in public life as well as promoting Islamic education. Leading personalities among Muslim leaders were linked through—to borrow James Scott’s expression—‘invisible bonds which [were] knitted together into a criss-cross mess of connection’ (Scott 1988:109). This invisible bond can be traced to the genesis of the Masyumi party.

In 1937, several Islamic organizations together founded the Majelis Islam A’la Indonesia (MIAI, Supreme Islamic Council of Indonesia) to improve the position of Muslims when negotiating and responding to Islamic interests. After
1942, when the Dutch colonial government found itself surrounded by the Japanese, Masyumi was founded to replace the miai with the support of the Japanese. It emerged as the new Muslim organizational umbrella in 1943, two years before Indonesian independence. The Japanese government did not want to allow the miai to maintain its political power and regarded this movement as a threat to Japan’s political stability. After the miai had been dissolved, Masyumi emerged as a new platform from which to promote Islamic interests, led by Hasyim Asy’ari (1871–1947), a prominent cleric from the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama, and Mas Mansur (1896–1946), a young activist of the modernist Muhammadiyah. Masyumi received widespread support from various Muslim organizations which, decades later, functioned as a robust social network that was used by its leaders to promote their Islamic objectives.

Many Masyumi leaders had solid Islamic backgrounds as they had been culturally nurtured in Islamic families and environments. Nonetheless, it should be noted that some key leaders of Masyumi had studied in the Western education system, mainly in Dutch educational institutions in the Dutch East Indies or the Netherlands. As noted by Remy Madinier, ‘most of the 25 deputies who had not been educated in the Dutch system had attended schools run by reformist associations (Al-Irsyad, Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam), whose programs were not entirely dedicated to religion but devoted a significant amount of time to the teaching of classical subjects’ (Madinier 2015:26). Concomitant with the Dutch Ethische Politiek (ethical policy), which allowed pribumi to pursue their studies in various subjects in the East Indies, some young activists had had the opportunity to pursue advanced studies in various fields, such as the humanities, the social sciences, economics, law, and medicine in the Netherlands’s higher educational institutions, notably in Leiden, The Hague, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam (Meulen 1929; Ricklefs 2001; Poeze 1986).

Others had pursued their studies in a Middle Eastern educational setup. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some Indonesian Muslims received formal or informal education overseas. The founders of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama studied Islam in Mecca with respected Meccan ulama, including Malay ulama in Hijaz (Azra 2004; Laffan 2003). Many Indonesians travelled to Mecca in the tradition of pilgrimage (Vredenbregt 1962). The next generation of young Muslim Indonesians studied at the Azhar University of Cairo (Abaza 2004). The presence of Indonesian students in the Middle East studying in Azhar, Mecca, and elsewhere led to the rise of ‘new networks
and new knowledge’ (Feener 2010) and a new ‘Islamic milieu’ among Muslim scholars and activists in Indonesia (Laffan 2003; Kinoshita 2009). The diverse educational backgrounds of the Masyumi leaders created a unique network that was influential in strengthening the Muslim vision of iHE.

One must not neglect the power of friendship and education as a social network that creates political cohesion and social structure in society. Not all Masyumi elites were ideologically nurtured and politically supported by large organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. Some were active in smaller Islamic forums, organizations, or parties before joining the Masyumi party. Prominent Masyumi leaders such as Sukiman Wirjosandjojo (1898–1974), Mohammad Natsir (1908–1993), Mohamad Roem (1908–1983), Prawoto Mangkusasmito (1910–1970), Burhanuddin Harahap (1917–1987), Kasman Singodimedjo (1908–1985), and Jusuf Wibisono (1909–1982) were advocates of the Jong Islamieten Bond and the Studenten Islam Studieclub in the 1930s (A. Kahin 2012:12). Later, these two Muslim youth organizations produced prominent political leaders and Muslim intelligentsia during the Indonesian (Islamic) revolution and after Indonesian independence (Fogg 2020; Latif 2005a).

Although these people were committed to learning about Islam, both normatively and contextually, they had studied within the Dutch education system. Sukiman Wirjosandjojo (the first Masyumi chairperson) was a medical doctor and a graduate of Amsterdam University.3 Mohamad Roem, Prawoto Mangkusasmito, and Kasman Singodimedjo graduated from the Dutch Law School in the East Indies (G. Kahin 1952; Latif 2005a). Similarly, Mohammad Natsir and Burhanuddin Harahap had also had the opportunity to be educated in the Dutch school system (Fogg 2020:173). The friendships they established during the nationalist movement in the 1930s and their Western educational backgrounds seem to have had a profound impact on preserving the networks among the leaders of Masyumi after 1945. Their Western educational experiences gave them the confidence to discuss higher education issues and communicate with other nationalist leaders, such as Sukarno, who graduated from the Technische Hoogeschool Bandoeng (ITB, Institut Teknologi Bandung); Dahlan Abdullah, who graduated from Leiden University; and Mohammad Hatta, who studied at the Rotterdam School of Commerce. After Indonesian independence, some of the leading Masyumi figures mentioned above were appointed

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3 In the Netherlands, Sukiman Wirjosandjojo (the younger brother of Satiman Wirjosandjojo, the founder of Jong Java) met Mohammad Hatta (Jong Sumatranen Bond) and they led the Indische Vereeniging (Poeze 1986).
to various government offices. Thereafter, they became members of the Konstituante (Indonesian Constitutional Assembly).4

In our discussion of the Masyumi networks, it is worth mentioning Muhammadiyah, the primary supporter of Masyumi both before and after its transformation into a political party. As a modernist Islamic movement, Muhammadiyah was conceived in 1912 in Yogyakarta; about two decades later, it expanded into West Sumatra. Unsurprisingly, many advocates of Masyumi either came from modernist circles or belonged to the Minangkabau or Malay ethnic groups. A solid connection between Muslim modernists and the Minangkabau

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4 The Konstituante or Indonesian Constitutional Assembly was formed in 1955 as a means of setting up the Indonesian permanent constitution and was dissolved by President Sukarno in 1959, as he preferred to reinstate the 1945 Constitution. In this body, endless heated debates took place among Indonesian politicians over the issues of Islam and Pancasila as the basis of the Indonesian constitution (see Maarif 1985).
people became a pillar that strengthened the Masyumi network in the aftermath of Indonesian independence. These two ‘cliques’ co-organized the creation of iHE institutions. Historically, West Sumatra became one of the most important regions for the emergence of Islamic movements and the development of Islamic education institutions (Abdullah 1971; Noer 1973).

Although there were thousands of modern and traditional Islamic schools in Indonesia in the 1930s, run by Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam, Al-Ittihad, and Nahdlatul Ulama, iHE had not yet come into existence. Mahmud Yunus, a graduate of Egypt’s Azhar University, founded and led the first Islamic college (Sekolah Tinggi Islam, STI) in Padang, West Sumatra in 1940. The STI, with its two faculties—Sharia (Islamic Law) and Tarbiyah (Islamic Education)—operated for just two years. In 1942, during the Second World War, it was closed down by the Japanese (Yunus 1979; Boland 1971; Latief 2005a), thus ending the story of the first iHE institution in Indonesia.

In 1945, there was no political barrier between what we might call ‘Muslim leaders’ and ‘nationalist leaders’. While they had differing ideological views and political backgrounds, they had common objectives at that time. These included freeing the country from colonialism, formulating the ideological foundation of the nation, building a new identity as a new nation, and providing better opportunities for Indonesian society to access education. In November 1945, as an outcome of the National Congress that took place in Yogyakarta, Masyumi was transformed into a political party led by Soekiman Wirjosandjojo, the former leader of the Partai Islam Indonesia (PII, Indonesian Islamic Party). In 1949, the political leadership was taken over by Mohamad Natsir, who strengthened his administration by incorporating many young people from modernist circles and his friends from the nationalist movement. In many respects, the rising position of Muslim modernists in the Masyumi party overshadowed that of the traditionalist leaders. This caused tension between the modernist and the traditionalist leaders, leading ultimately to Nahdlatul Ulama and some other organizations withdrawing their support from the Masyumi party in 1952 (see Madinier and Feillard 1999; Munhanif 2012). Nahdlatul Ulama’s withdrawal may help us to understand how and why this organization was less involved in, but not entirely absent from, the inception of iHE in the 1950s and 1960s. By contrast, Muslim modernists from Muhammadiyah, the leading supporter of Masyumi, played a more significant role in accelerating the establishment of iHE institutions.
3 The Ideas of Islamic Higher Education (IHE)

The ideas behind IHE institutions have been formulated, and even implemented, since the ninth or tenth centuries in some Muslim countries, notably Morocco, Egypt, and Tunis. However, Indonesians only started to formulate such ideas in the early-to-mid twentieth century, partly as the impact of the Western educational systems attended by young Muslim activists during the colonial era became clear. The early advocates of IHE, in fact, were those who were educated in Western-style educational systems, such as Satiman Wirjosandjojo, his brother Soekiman Wirjosandjojo (b. 1898), and Mohammad Natsir (b. 1908). While both Satiman and Soekiman were graduates of Dutch universities in the Netherlands, Natsir was taught at Dutch schools in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia).

Before Indonesian independence, plans were created to establish and develop IHE. To promote Indonesian Muslims’ vision of IHE, several Islamic leaders who had experienced Western-style education and the advantages of higher education overseas were called to action. The first ideas for IHE suggested by Muslim leaders can be traced back to articles written by Soekiman Wirjosandjojo and Mohammad Natsir. These present conflicting information about the role of Satiman Wirjosandjojo and Soekiman Wirjosandjojo, the men who first came up with the idea of creating IHE. Satiman is known as the founder and first chairman of Jong Java, while his younger brother Soekiman was a Masyumi party leader and later became prime minister. Some reports on the history of IHE in Indonesia claim that Satiman was known for his ideas and efforts to establish Pesantren Luhur, a sort of advanced programme for Islamic learning in Surakarta. His attempts were thwarted by the Dutch colonial government or interrupted by the arrival of the Japanese. Although the idea of establishing Pesantren Luhur is often attributed to Satiman, the only written record of such an idea is in an article written by Soekiman in which he does not credit his brother. The essay by Soekiman is entitled Pendirian sekolah tinggi Islam (The establishment of Islamic higher education) and appeared in Pedoman Masyarakat on 10 May 1939.

However, I found an article entitled Sekolah tinggi Islam (Islamic higher education), written in June 1938 by Natsir, that was published in Pandji Islam and Pedoman Masyarakat. Natsir stated that his article was in response to the ideas of Satiman, whom he viewed as the initiator and promoter of the establishment of IHE in Surakarta (Natsir 1961). From the dates of these articles, we can conclude that Satiman attempted to establish higher education in Surakarta sometime before 1938, and Natsir responded to Satiman’s ideas by writing an essay. In the article, Natsir pays a great deal of attention to the need for the
Muslim community in Indonesia to project their energy and establish private higher education by learning from the experiences of religious denominations in foreign countries. According to Natsir, Indonesian Muslims could start their own private higher education institutions, just as Protestants and Catholics had done in the West (Natsir 1961:83, 412), by reducing, first and foremost, political differences and ideological tensions. Natsir also addresses the most crucial issues within Indonesian Muslim society, such as the lack of teachers in Islamic schools, the existence of a great deal of religious tension and debate over differences in the religious schools of thought (madhab), and the lack of access to ‘modern’ and Western knowledge among students in Islamic schools (madrasah). Natsir also points out and reminds the public, especially Muslim leaders, that establishing higher education institutions creates bridges between existing Islamic schools and humanizes people (Natsir 1961:412).

In 1939, Soekiman re-emphasized these ideas. In Soekiman’s imagination, the Islamic community would provide Islamic teachers and Muslim employees, such as wedding officiants, with a higher level of knowledge. He claimed that Islamic teachers (kyai), village headmen (penghulu), and other Muslims studying Islam did not have ‘general knowledge’ (pengetahuan umum), while in contrast, intellectuals (intellectuelen) were never educated in Islamic teachings. Therefore, he argued, kyai and intellectuelen could not interact closely. Thus, according to Soekiman, ‘Sekolah Luhur Islam’ (Islamic colleges) could provide ‘knowledge’ (wetenschap) that will lead penghulu, kyai, and Muslim employees to a better life in which they can earn more money with their new knowledge. Even though there are kyai who do not expect higher salaries, they should still have a broader scope of Islamic knowledge’ (Soekiman 1939, quoted in Wiryosukarto 1984:28). Soekiman also noted that the teaching and learning process in Islamic universities should not use foreign (Dutch or Arabic) languages. The goal would be that, in the future, the ‘Indonesian language may become an educational and scientific language (bahasa wetenschap)’ (Soekiman 1939, quoted in Wiryosukarto 1984:30).

These two articles, published in the late 1930s, suggest that proposals for creating higher education institutions originated from Muslim attention being paid to students’ future careers and the capacity of the existing teachers at the time, as well as a desire to foster Indonesian identity in the higher education system. Until that point, even though Muslim students had been studying in Indonesia, they had been learning from foreigners and using foreign languages. Both Soekiman and Natsir are respected Muslim leaders whose ideas and writings were influential among their contemporaries. Their views on higher education emerged nearly a decade before Indonesian independence. Unsurprisingly, the beginnings of Indonesia’s first higher education institution also took place before independence.
The relationship between Masyumi and some of Indonesia’s iHE institutions is ideological rather than formally organizational. As a political party, Masyumi had neither an official nor a legal relationship with Islamic universities. However, in some areas, such as Sumatra, Sulawesi, West Java, and Central Java, networking and aspirational and ideological relationships connected Masyumi as an Islamic political party to its constituents, advocates, and sympathizers. Several iHE institutions are historically linked to Masyumi leaders at both the national and provincial levels.

Muslim societies represented by the leaders of mass and political organizations took the initiative to set up iHE institutions at a time when higher education institutions were still rare. According to Van der Kroef, in the early post-war period, the Islamic institution of higher learning (STI) offered ‘a rather haphazard curriculum’ (Van der Kroef 1955:370). At the beginning, some of these universities operated departments that fell under what is now called ‘Islamic Studies’, such as tarbiyah, da’wah, and shari’ah departments, and then grew to include departments such as economics, engineering, and medicine. Others began with the ‘secular sciences’ but did not neglect the Islamic subjects.

4 Early Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia (1942–1945)

The idea of establishing iHE became a matter for Muslim leaders before Indonesian independence, as expressed in the establishment of the STI, now Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII), in Jakarta. Founded on 8 July 1945, the STI was the first Indonesian iHE institution. The ascendant Indonesian Muslim leaders and the nationalists agreed to set up a new educational institution which would differ politically, ideologically, and culturally from the institutions set up by the Dutch colonial government. According to Yudi Latif, the STI originated from the Pusat Sastra dan Kebudayaan Islam (Centre for Islamic Literature and Culture), which was founded in August 1942 and led by a Minangkabau academic, Muhammad Zain Djambek. In August 1943, a Japanese man called

5 According to the Harian Asia Raya (26–6–1945), a month before the launch of the STI, 180 students had registered for the college.
6 Muhammad Zain Djambek (born 1908) is the son of the respected Minangkabau Islamic scholar (ulama), Syaikh Muhammad Djamal Djambek (born 1863), who in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century studied in Mecca with Syaikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi. Zain Djambek became an active member of Muhammadiyah. A compilation of his articles, entitled Kuliah Islam (Islamic Studies), was published in 1966.
N. Noguchi led this institution (Latif 2005a:245). In 1944, after a national meeting conducted in Yogyakarta, Masyumi announced two important decisions. The first was to set up Hizbullah, a paramilitary organization, and the second was to establish the STI.

During the preparation stage, Mohammad Hatta, who later became vice-president of the Republic of Indonesia, was appointed as the preparatory committee chairman of the STI. There is no clear explanation as to why Mohammad Hatta was chosen to chair the newly formed committee for the first time, but there are a few possible reasons. First, Mohammad Hatta was a well-educated personality. He had a university education, having graduated from Rotterdam University. Second, he was a Muslim from Minangkabau who had friendly relations with several Muslim political leaders. Although the establishment of the STI involved Mohammad Hatta, a non-Masyumi personality, most of those on the committee were Masyumi leaders (Bajasut and Lukman 2014). It seems that their engagement in the committee was due to a sense of personal duty rather than being on behalf of the organization. Hatta then chose Mohammad Natsir, also from Minangkabau, to practically and administratively support him on the committee. Hatta knew Natsir and his other fellow activists from their involvement on the Jong Islamieten Bond (JIB) (A. Kahin 2012:42).

Forty-one days after the establishment of the STI, Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta declared Indonesian independence on 17 August 1945. It appears, from the backgrounds of the founders of the STI, that Muslims from modernist circles played a profound role in its establishment. Mohammad Natsir, chair of the secretariat of the STI, was a follower of Persatuan Islam. Other public figures who played essential roles in establishing the STI were educated activists from Muhammadiyah, including Muhammad Rasjidi and Abdul Kahar Muzakir. They became the minister of religious affairs and the first rector of the STI, respectively. When the STI was launched publicly, Abdul Kahar Muzakir delivered a speech entitled ‘Pentingnya pendidikan tinggi Islam’ (The importance of Islamic higher education) (Bajasut and Lukman 2014). Arguably, the rise of the STI was part of a continuum of modernist educational tradition which focused on Islamic teaching but at the same time was open to ‘Western-

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7 Hasyim Asy’ari did not take part (or perhaps was not included) in the committee. Hasyim Asy’ari was represented by his son Wahid Hasyim, who later became the minister of religious affairs.

8 The launch of the STI in July was attended by P.J.M Guseikan (Japanese Military Government) and several other Indonesian leaders, including Sukarno (as the Jong Java representative), Wahid Hasyim (the Masyumi representative), and Kahar Muzakir (rector). See Harian Asia Raya, 9-7-1945.
style education’ such as ‘the teaching of classical subjects’ and the general sciences (Madinier 2015:26).

A year later, in 1946, Indonesia’s capital city moved from Jakarta to Yogyakarta due to political crises taking place in the country, and the STI also migrated from Jakarta to Yogyakarta. The purpose of the migration of the STI campus to Yogyakarta was to find a suitable place to settle and develop. On 10 March 1948, the founding fathers of the STI chose a new name for Indonesia’s first IHE institution. The STI was renamed Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII). Sukarno supported the new choice of name. As the president of the Republic of Indonesia, he wanted the UII to become the largest Islamic university in Asia. The development of the UII at that time was a milestone for Indonesian society and the government.9

At that time, the government saw the UII as an essential source of educated people and it expanded the influence of IHE by establishing different faculties (Buchori and Malik 2004). In 1950, the government took control of two of the UII faculties, the Faculty of Islamic Studies and the Faculty of Education, and separated them off into other universities to support their need for well-trained and educated personnel. Furthermore, the government took control of the UII’s Faculty of Islamic Studies and transformed it into Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (PTAIN, State Islamic Higher Education) through the passing of PP No. 34/1950 dated 14 August 1950. The Faculty of Education was integrated into the newly established, government-sponsored higher education institution Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM).

The Faculty of Islamic Studies was successfully converted into the PTAIN under the guidance of Prawoto Mangkusasmito, the Masyumi leader, who was appointed as curator on the board of the committee to establish the PTAIN. IHE institutions started to spread all over Indonesia under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The objective of converting the faculty into a state-run IHE institution was to expand and intensify the production of graduates with an Islamic Studies background, whom the Ministry of Religious Affairs needed. According to B.J. Boland, ‘seen in a wider context and from a Muslim point of view, this curtailing of the UII can be considered as something positive, because in this way the government could do more for the promotion of Islam than a private Islamic University’ (Boland 1971:120). Similarly, the Faculty of Education of the UII was converted into the Universitas Gadjah Mada to produce more teachers to support the government’s schools. The UII became a tool

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9 I would like to thank the rector of the UII, Prof. Fathul Wahid, for providing the pictures in figures 2 and 3.
FIGURE 2  The first campus building of the UII in the 1960s, located in Terban, Jl. Taman (Taman Street)
COURTESY UII

FIGURE 3  The integrated campus of the UII now is the educational home for around 28,000 students from all corners of Indonesia as well as overseas
COURTESY UII
used by Sukarno to accelerate his mission to educate Indonesian society with an 'original' Indonesian style of education that had not been inherited from the Dutch colonial government. At that juncture, the UII and its campus divisions, including the Universitas Gadjah Mada and the IAIN, located in Yogyakarta, became symbolic of Indonesian dignity.

It seems that in the early years of Indonesian independence, many political leaders still shared similar concerns and there were not too many ideological barriers between them. Sukarno, Hatta, and Natsir were able to work together and support each other to establish the first higher education institution in Indonesia for the sake of the nation’s dignity. While the nation was still in its infancy, and the rising leaders were busy with plans for the newly founded state, Islamic education operated under the supervision of Muslim activists.

In 1950, five years after the establishment of the UII, another higher education institution in Jakarta was founded, the Persiapan Akademi Islam, a preparatory committee for the establishment of Islamic colleges. This was then transformed into the Universitas Islam Djakarta (UID), which later became the UIJ. It is probable that some Muhammadiyah members were instrumental in the operation of this first higher education institution after Indonesian independence. This institution occupied Schouwburg Weltevreden (later the Jakarta Art Building), before moving to the Muhammadiyah office in Kramat Raya, Jakarta. The first rector was Professor Hazairin, an expert on Islamic and adat law who was born in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, and of Minangkabau descent. However, unlike other prominent Muslim writers, who usually became members of Masyumi or other Muslim organizations, Hazairin was the leader of the Partai Indonesia Raya (Great Indonesia Party) and later became the minister of internal affairs for Indonesia (1952–1953). Despite this, he paid great attention to Islamic issues, including Islamic law and customary law (Federspiel 2001:227; Boland 1971:118). The above shows how politics and academia were able to commingle without detriment to either aspect of life.

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10 Before that, the Dutch colonial government had already set up three higher education institutions: the Technische Hoge School in Bandung, the Rechts Hoge School in Jakarta, and the Geneeskundige Hoge School in Jakarta.

11 In the period 1960–1963, Prof. Mr. R.H.A. Kasmat Bahoe winangoen (1908–1996), a former activist of the Studenten Islam Studieclub and later a Masyumi member of the Konstituantie, acted as the rector of the UII.

Surprisingly, Masyumi’s first Islamic higher education institution outside Java after Indonesian independence was established in Medan, North Sumatra. Young Muslim activists in Medan who were involved in the Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI, Islamic Association of University Students), Al-Washliyyah and Muhammadiyah activists, and Muhammadiyah teachers were instrumental in the institution’s inception, even though they did not have university backgrounds. One of the founders was Bahrum Djamil (b. 1924), a Masyumi party leader in North Sumatra. Bahrum Djamil had been educated in an Islamic school in Medan and in the mid 1950s was active in the HMI. He was one of the young leading figures on the al-Jam‘iyatul al-Washliyyah Central Board. Following the 1955 election, Bahrum Djamil of the Masyumi party became a member of the Konstituante (no. 365). Another founder was Sabaruddin from Minangkabau, who was appointed as a teacher at Muhammadiyah Normaal School and Muhammadiyah Standard School in Medan.\footnote{Under the guidance of the Deli Sultanate’s Sultan Osman Perkasa Alam, these young activists set up the Akademi Islam Indonesia (AII, Indonesian Islamic Academy), which was then equivalent to the final year of secondary school. The academy was transformed into the Perguruan Tinggi Islam Indonesia (PTII, Indonesian Islamic Higher Education) and received support from the governor of North Sumatra, Abdul Hakim, and the minister for religious affairs, K.H. Abdul Wahid Hasyim.}

It was reported that on 30 November 1952, Mohamad Natsir came directly to Medan, North Sumatra to lay the first stone in the construction of this university’s al-Munawwarah building. Natsir was invited by the foundation’s chairman, Bahrum Djamil. The involvement of two senior Masyumi personalities, Natsir and Mr. Mohamad Roem, in the establishment of the Perguruan Tinggi Islam Indonesia (PTII, Indonesian Islamic Higher Education) suggests that there was a close relationship between the party and IHE. The newly established university was situated as part of the movement and was strongly supported by Masyumi members and sympathizers prior to the 1955 national election. Furthermore, the strong intellectual link between Al-Washliyyah and the founders of the Universitas Islam Sumatra Utara (UISU, Islamic University of North Sumatra), particularly the leaders of Masyumi, can be seen in part by Roem’s appointment as rector of the UISU (1953–1956). Mohammad Roem was a senior member of Masyumi and among the first lecturers at this university, together with several Indonesian Muslim intellectuals with higher education academic experience.
6 Universitas Muslim Indonesia in Makassar (1953)

A similar pattern can also be seen in the inception of the Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI, Indonesian Muslim University) or Jami’atul Muslimin Al Indunisiyyah in Makassar, South Sulawesi. The UMI is the oldest university in Indonesia’s eastern region. Its establishment was initiated and supported by several Masyumi party members. The relationship between local Muslim leaders in South Sulawesi and Muslim politicians in Jakarta was well established. One of the leading figures in the establishment of UMI was La Ode Manarfa (b. 1919), the son of Sultan La Ode Falihi Qaimuddin Khalifatullah Khamis, the 38th Sultan of Buton. As a member of the royal family in South Sulawesi, La Ode Manarfa had the opportunity to receive a higher education. He went to The Hague and Leiden University in 1948 (Velthoen 2011) to study Indologie (Indonesia Studies). Returning to Indonesia, La Ode Manarfa, as the first graduate of Leiden University from Makassar, was eager to develop the South Sulawesi education system. At the same time, he joined the Masyumi party. He was elected as a Konstituante member during the 1955 national election.

Other UMI founders had Islamic activist backgrounds, from either the Muslim modernist or traditionalist side. Although Nahdlatul Ulama had already distanced itself from Masyumi at that time and become an independent political party, the tension between Masyumi and Nahdlatul Ulama did not seem to affect relations among Muslim activists in Makassar. Haji Muhammad Ramly, as chairman of the UMI’s preparatory committee, culturally represented Nahdlatul Ulama, while Andi Sewang Daeng Muntu, a committee member, was from Muhammadiyah. In the late 1930s Andi Sewang Daeng Muntu (b. 1927) became the local leader of Muhammadiyah and founded the first Muhammadiyah school in Labbakkang district. In 1938, he was elected as the consul hoofdbestuur (chairman of the regional office) of Muhammadiyah in South Sulawesi and remained in this position until 1957. Interestingly, Andi Sewang Daeng Muntu was also a member of the Masyumi party. According to the Kementerian Penerangan RI (Ministry of Information) (1953:281–2), Andi Sewang Daeng Muntu ran for parliament in 1955, and was successful. Another Masyumi party member from South Sulawesi was Abdurrahman Syihab (or Sjihab Abd. Rahman, b. 1910), a professor, ulama, and politician of Arab descent. After resigning from politics due to the dismissal of Masyumi, he served as the second rector of the UMI from 1959 to 1965. Looking at the background of the founders of this university and the rector who led the campus, we can argue that Masyumi leaders were actively engaged and played a pivotal role in the spread of early IHE in Indonesia, especially outside of Java.
Universitas Islam Bandung, West Java (1958)

UNISBA was founded as a result of a long discussion between Muslim leaders in West Java and members of the Konstituante from the Masyumi party in 1957. Their ideas were implemented in 1958. West Java was one of the Masyumi party’s primary sources of votes. Bandung, the capital city of West Java province, was where the first Masyumi leader, Mohammad Natsir, had been active in Persatuan Islam after his meeting with Ahmad Hassan, a respected Islamic scholar in Bandung (G. Kahin 1993:160). Therefore, when Natsir became the leader of the Masyumi party, some of his contemporaries, as well as some members of the younger generation, such as Muhammad Isa Anshari (b. 1916 in West Sumatra) and Endang Abdurrahman (b. 1912), joined the party and supported him. Isa Anshari and Endang Abdurrahman were the chairmen of Persatuan Islam in the periods 1949–1962 and 1962–1983 respectively, and were secure chairs in the Konstituante representing West Java. Therefore, in the Masyumi party, Natsir, together with Isa Anshari and Endang Abdurrahman, represented the cadres of Persatuan Islam (Federspiel 2001:259–60).

Historically, the political movement of Masyumi was more dynamic in West Java than in other regions. During the formation of the state, the political turmoil in West Java was partly caused by the rise of Darul Islam in 1949. This was a radical movement led by Sekarmaji Marijan Kartosuwiryo (Van Dijk 1981; Formichi 2012). It seems that some Masyumi leaders, including activists in Masyumi-affiliated organizations such as Pelajar Islam Indonesia (PII, Muslim Student Association), Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam, and Hizbullah, had a stronger connection with Kartosuwiryo. The political context for the establishment of UNISBA and other IHE institutions in the late 1950s and early 1960s was more complicated, partly because the Masyumi party was critical of Sukarno.

Masyumi politicians were major players in establishing the first IHE institution in Bandung, especially those who had formerly been active in the PII, the GPII, and the HMI. In the 1950s, the Masyumi party offered a forum for well-educated Muslims in West Java and elsewhere to articulate their educational and political visions. Unsurprisingly, many younger Masyumi members in Bandung were involved in establishing the Perguruan Islam Tinggi (PIT, Islamic College) in that city under the Yayasan Pendidikan Islam (YPI, Islamic Educational Foundation, now Yayasan UNISBA). The idea of setting up an IHE institution in Bandung received attention and gained support from well-educated personalities affiliated with other educational institutions, such as the Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB, Bandung Technology Institute) and Padjadjaran University (Setiawan et al. 2009:137). On 15 November 1958, PIT
Bandung was officially launched, supported by Masyumi leaders as well as several Islamic organizations, notably Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, Persis, and PUI. Several leading personalities, politicians, and Islamic activists in Bandung were instrumental in the inception of PIT. Several younger Masyumi leaders were also key players in its establishment; these younger leaders were involved either in the Gerakan Pemuda Muslim Indonesia (GPII, Indonesian Islamic Youth Movement), a Masyumi-affiliated organization, or in the HMI.

The first rector appointed to UNISBA—the PIT at the time—was the Muslim academic Professor Sjafei Soemardja, who taught at a campus that is now the home of the Bandung Technology Institute. He was a lecturer and an artist who had graduated from Amsterdam University. Sjafei Soemardja was entrusted to lead the PIT and was assisted by the younger Masyumi activists, who acted as vice-rectors and lecturers. Interestingly, the Masyumi network played a profound role in accelerating the opening of UNISBA as the first university in Bandung. The process was not only facilitated by Masyumi advocates in West Java but also by advocates from Jakarta and Sumatra. One of his vice-rectors was Bahrum Djamil, one of the founders of the UISU in North Sumatra (Setiawan 2009:138). There is no record of how or why Bahrum Djamil came to Bandung and assisted at UNISBA at that time, when he was still an active member of the foundation of the UISU in Medan. His move to Java was probably due to his membership in the Konstituante and the Maysumi party. Most of the first generation of lecturers at the PIT were members of the Masyumi family, including Mr. Mohamad Roem and Mr. Kasman Singadimedjo (Setiawan 2009:139).

8 The Masyumi Network and Family: From Party to University

The spread of IHE institutions was the result of a complex political process. These political dynamics can be seen in the efforts to translate the vision of the Masyumi elites, combine the efforts of domestic and local activists with elite political support, and link Muslim activists, noble families, and the intelligentsia. The Konstituante became a place where Masyumi leaders shared, strengthened, and unified their ideas in order to establish more IHE institu-

14 In 1959, he became the chairman of the Organizing Committee to Establish the ITB, formally launched by President Sukarno.
15 Bahrum Djamil published an essay in the Masyumi daily newspaper, ABADI (23-11-1958), to build public awareness of the need to expand the Islamic mission through education. The essay discusses the reason for the establishment of the STI.
tions. Masyumi’s networks provided the tools for Muslim activists and the intelligentsia to support iHE in different regions.

The concept of iHE cannot be separated from the schools belonging to Muslim organizations such as Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam, al-Washliy-yah, Nahdatul Ulama, and the PUI. The Muslim educators in these Islamic organizations became the backbone of iHE, partly because not all politicians had experience of higher educational institutions. Muhammadiyah teachers had a unique position in accelerating the establishment of iHE by being part of university committees, as in the case of the UISU in Medan and the UMI in Makassar. Similarly, teachers from Persatuan Islam, the PUI, and Nahdlatul Ulama also played significant roles in supporting the establishment of iHE in Bandung, West Java.

By observing the rise of iHE, it can be argued that the scope of Masyumi’s networks in the 1940s and 1960s was vast. Masyumi became a magnet for Muslim politicians involved in different parties in the 1940s and 1950s, such as the Partai Arab Indonesia (PAI, Indonesian Arab Party) and the Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia (PSII, Indonesian Islamic Union Party), as well as for noble families who were interested in politics. Likewise, the idea of setting up iHE in regions such as West Sumatra, West Java, and South Sulawesi gained support not only from local governments but also from noble families. This can be seen in the engagement of Sultan Osman Perkasa Alam of the Deli Sultanate in North Sumatra, La Ode Manarfa (the son of Sultan La Ode Falihi Qaimuddin Khalifatullah Khamis) in South Sulawesi, and politicians from West Java, who had the noble title ‘Raden’. Thus the backing from aristocratic families and the sultanate suggests that Masyumi’s ideas were acceptable to noble families with Islamic backgrounds. Their support accelerated the political initiative needed to achieve the spread of iHE institutions and strengthened Masyumi with much-needed financial resources.

Efforts to establish and operate universities would not, however, have been fruitful without support from technocrats, academics, and the intelligentsia. Educated Masyumi families and networks, some of whom had graduated from the Dutch education system, became the academic backbone of the newly established educational institutions. In Bandung, West Java, the relationship between the Masyumi party and technocrats and academics from the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) and Padjadjaran University (UNPAD) has been well-preserved from its inception to the present. Ideas about how to implement the vision of the ideal iHE system involved consultations with academics and scientists with ‘secular’ academic backgrounds from the ITB and UNPAD (engineers, doctors, artists, et cetera). Thus, the big families of the Masyumi party functioned not only as political machines to gain votes from constituents
during elections but also as ideological tools to escalate *dakwah*. Beyond this, the aim of establishing *iHE* was to win a grass-roots contest with their rivals—the secular nationalists and the communists. It can be argued that the proliferation of *iHE* signifies the vibrant social-reform movement and intellectual-political reengineering of Muslim communities.

It is worth emphasizing that the ‘Minangkabau network’ can be seen as an influential factor in the spread of *iHE* that intersected with the Masyumi networks. Some have argued that there was a direct or indirect connection between the Minangkabau people and the Masyumi network when establishing *iHE* in the post-revolutionary movement. The central figure was, of course, Mohammad Natsir, whom George Kahin described as the ‘last of the giants among Indonesia’s nationalist and revolutionary political leaders [...]’ [Kahin] undoubtedly had more influence on the course of Islamic thought and politics in postwar Indonesia than any of his contemporaries’ (G. Kahin 1993:158). As a Minangkabau person, Natsir came to Bandung and allied himself with Muhammad Isa Anshari from Persatuan Islam, who was also born in Minangkabau (Latif 2005b:381). Both became prominent supporters of the establishment of the *STI* in Bandung (UNISBA).

Mahmud Yunus was another Muslim intellectual who played a crucial role in the development of *iHE* in Indonesia. He set up the first *iHE* institution in West Sumatra in 1940 and later became the first rector of what is now known as the State Islamic University. Although we cannot see a direct relationship between Mahmud Yunus and Masyumi, he also came from Minangkabau. Similarly, Muhammad Zain Djambek, whose family tree is similar to that of Syaikh Djamil Djambek, and who was the chairman of the Centre for Islamic Literature and Culture, was also from West Sumatra. Zain was a Muhammadiyah leader and one of the ‘most outspoken Kaum Muda activists in West Sumatra’ (Abdullah 1971:111). Likewise, the inception of the *STI* in North Sumatra (the *UISU*) cannot be disconnected from the Minangkabau networks, as evidenced by the involvement of Sabaruddin Ahmad, one of the founders of the *UISU*, whom Muhammadiyah sent to West Sumatra to teach at the Muhammadiyah Standard School in Medan. Similarly, one of the Muhammadiyah founders of the *UMI* in Makassar was Andi Sewang Daeng Muntu. Although Daeng Muntu was born in South Sulawesi, he was educated at Sumatra Thawalib, one of the oldest modernist Islamic education institutions in West Sumatra.

The Masyumi networks functioned as a tool to accelerate the process of decolonizing education. They sought to nurture Islamic reform and social changes, both intellectually and politically, through the intensified ‘collaborative efforts of religious scholars and native officials’ as well as through Western-educated scholars and political activists (Hefner 2007:17). These net-
works and collaborative efforts, in many instances, led to the rise of a newly educated Muslim elite in Indonesia that would have a strong influence on the formation of both political Islam (Van Bruinessen 2002; Fealy and Plat zadasch 2005) and Islamic reform movements in the years to come. In recent times, IHIE—represented by state IHIE institutions (UIN/IAIN/STAIN)—has become the backbone of Islamic academia (Lukens-Bull 2013).

9 Conclusion

In evaluating how the Masyumi networks operated in terms of assisting the spread of IHIE in Indonesia, this article focused on the connection of some key Masyumi figures to the inception of Islamic universities in Java (Jakarta and Yogyakarta), Sumatra (Medan), and Makassar (South Sulawesi) between 1945 and 1965. It explored how the Masyumi network functioned in the establishment of IHIE and how the connection between social actors (Wellman and Berkowitz 1988:3) presented Islam as a way to define national interests and communal identity (Leirvik 2004). The primary issue raised by Masyumi leaders was their concern for the future of the next generation, who had been educated in the education systems of the Netherlands and, later, Japan. The lack of confidence, knowledge, and academic skill among Muslim teachers in Islamic schools concerned Masyumi elites. Thus, the development of higher education became the only possible option to enhance and regenerate the capacity of Muslim communities to confront the political context after Indonesian independence. The Masyumi elites effectively reinforced Muslim debates on the need for an adequate formal and modern education system in the context of a newly established and politically contested Indonesia.

Surprisingly, Masyumi attracted the attention of diverse groups of people—from noble families to the intelligentsia—whose views of the Islamic state influenced IHIE. At the same time, the Masyumi political elites supported local political leaders in the modernization of Islam and the Islamization of grassroots educational institutions. This was evidenced by the direct involvement of Masyumi political elites in the provision of political and moral assistance in the establishment of IHIE in several regions including Sumatra, West Java, and South Sulawesi. This process of the modernization of Islam and Islamization coincided with Masyumi’s political contest with their nationalist and communist counterparts. Through IHIE, Masyumi elites relieved the suffering of the Muslim communities and produced a new generation of intelligentsia, professionals, and elites, whom they expected to continue their mission.
In the 1950s and 1960s, the multi-layered Masyumi networks showed that political Islam was quite complex, engaging multiple segments of Indonesian society. The involvement of government officials such as governors and ministers, the role of Minangkabau people—including the intelligentsia, activists, officials, and politicians—in different regions, and the participation of Muslim activists and educators from Islamic organizations such as the modernist Muhammadiyah in setting up Masyumi-sponsored *da'wah* suggest that the Masyumi networks were an extension of the Muslim modernist elite. That this was clear at the time was evidenced after the rise of the New Order regime, when Masyumi elites were not permitted to return to the political sphere. The Masyumi network played a political role in a non-political field—*da'wah* and education.

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